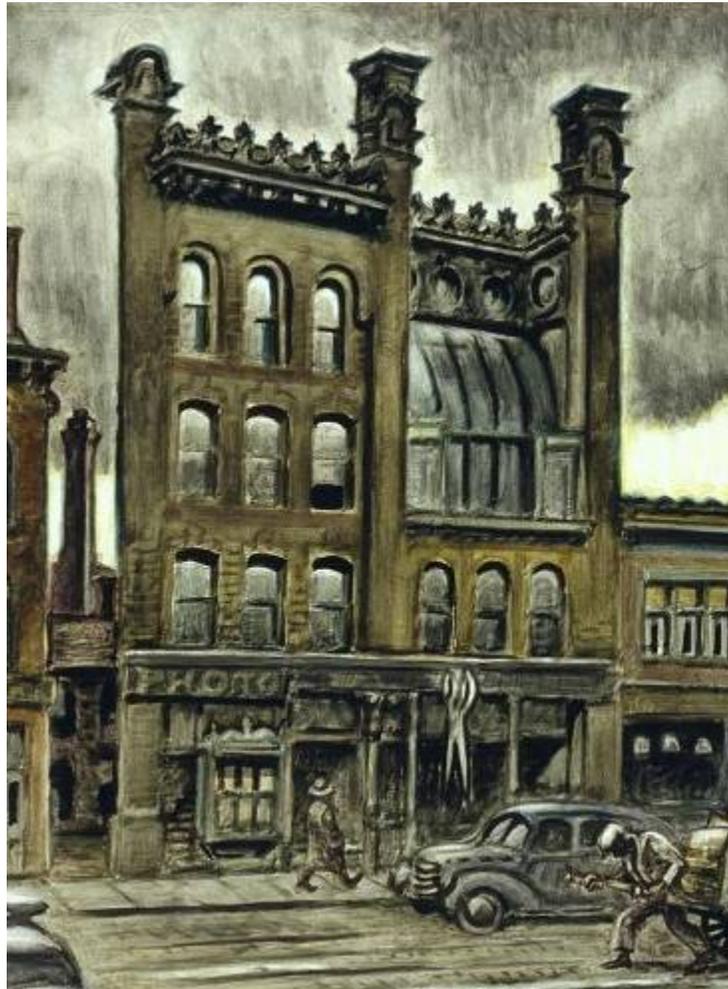


HISTORIC BACKGROUND  
January 11, 2011

# THE WERNER PHOTOGRAPHY BUILDING

101-103 Genesee Street, Buffalo, Erie County, NY 14203



*Detail from Charles Burchfield "Street Scene." (1940-1947)*

Prepared by:



Clinton Brown Company Architecture ReBuild  
The Pierce Building in the Theater Historic District  
653 Main Street, Suite 104  
Buffalo, NY 14203  
PH (716) 852-2020 FX (716) 852-3132  
*All contents Copyright 2011 CBCA*

## **The History of the Werner Photography Building**

The Werner Photography Building is a rare intact remaining example of late-nineteenth century commercial architecture specifically designed for the thriving photographic industry, located in the Genesee-Ellicott-Oak neighborhood. The Werner Building is a contributing building to the local Genesee Gateway Historic District based on Criterion C for its architecture. The period of significance for the architecture of the Genesee Gateway Historic District is ca. 1840s- ca. 1930s. The exterior of the building remains an excellent example of Commercial Neoclassical commercial architecture from the post-Civil War era; an architectural era which is becoming increasingly rare in representation in Buffalo. Throughout its more than 100 year history, spanning four generations, the Werner Photography Building represents a unique surviving example of commercial architecture designed specifically for the photography industry.

Constructed in 1895, the Werner Photography Building was designed by the internationally prominent Buffalo architect, Richard A. Waite for Mrs. Frederike Giesser and built for a cost of \$10,000. Local craftsman Nicholas Kenyss was noted as the builder for the project. Constructed during the heyday of the Genesee-Ellicott-Oak neighborhood as a center for trade, commerce and industry in Buffalo, the Werner Photography Building replaced earlier buildings on the site at 101-103 Genesee Street. Like many of the Genesee Gateway buildings, the site was previously occupied by a small, two-story wood frame ca. 1850s building which had a small service building towards the rear of the property. The earliest known tenant of this small-scale building was August Adler, who was noted in 1861 as having both a residence and butcher shop at the present 103 Genesee Street address (then numbered as 63). In 1866 the parcel was divided between two owners, A. Meyer, whose property included the small building, and Frank Pfennig, a cigar maker, who owned a large parcel of vacant property. By 1870, Gabriel Giesser was owner of the small structure at 101-103 Genesee Street, locating his family and his cutlery business in the building.

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.<sup>1</sup> 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

---

<sup>1</sup> In 1915 Charles Giesser would be responsible for the construction of the elegant new building located next door at 99 Genesee Street to the Werner Photography Building where he operated his own cutlery shop until the 1930s.

1890s. Also during this period son Charles would join his father's operation, acting as manager for the business. Following the construction of the Werner Building 1895 it appears that the family resided in the new building at 101-103 Genesee Street while the business operated from 99 Genesee Street next door. While Gabriel Giesser appears to have been owner of the 99, 101-103 parcels, Frederike's name appears on the building permits and as owner; the reason behind her ownership, and not her husband's, is unknown. After Gabriel's death around 1900, his widow Frederike inherited the Genesee Street property which appears to have included 99, 101 and 103 Genesee Street.

Perhaps as a response to the growing development along Genesee Street in the late 1900s and the increasing property values in the neighborhood, Frederike Giesser hired prominent local architect Richard A. Waite (information follows) to design a mixed use commercial and residential building on the 101-103 property. The family had a personal connection to Richard A. Waite; son Edward was employed as a draftsman in the Waite office from around 1890- 1898. Edward Giesser may potentially have served as designer for the new Werner Photography Building, but since Waite was well known to take a strong personal interest in all his buildings, it is very likely that Waite had the ultimate say in the building's design and construction. Plans were filed on April 10<sup>th</sup>, 1895 and according to the April 27<sup>th</sup>, 1895 issue of the journal *Engineering Record*, the building was described as a "four-story brick business block, cost \$10,000."<sup>2</sup> 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 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. The depth and modeling of the north façade of the Werner Building are also striking. The overall depth of the front façade of the building is several feet thick, giving the elevation a sculptural quality lacking in the more utilitarian, builder-constructed buildings of an earlier era, such as the H. Seeberg Building at 113-125 Genesee Street, which features a more traditional wall thickness. At the time of its construction, the Werner Building was one among several specially designed buildings which accommodated the photography industry, including the neighboring Caulkins Building (1886) located at the corner of Genesee and Ellicott Streets at 85-87-89 Genesee Street. Designed by prominent Buffalo architect, F.W. Caulkins, the centrally located "waterfall" skylight of the Caulkins Building likely influenced the design of the larger and more dramatic window of the Werner Photography Building.

---

<sup>2</sup> *Engineering Record*. April 27, 1895, Volume 31, page ix.

The earliest tenant of the new building appears to have been photographer Albert L. Werner. A popular photographer of German descent, Werner's photography business began at 289 Genesee Street east of the Genesee Gateway buildings in 1890. Werner appears to have relocated his business to the Werner Photography Building in 1896, shortly after its construction, and Frederike Giesser possibly had the building designed specifically for him. Despite this grand new studio building, Werner's photographic business appears to have left 101-103 Genesee Street in 1899. However short-lived Werner's studio was, he left a permanent mark on the building he occupied; his painted signage on the western façade of the building, which was still visible from the 1890s and more recently repainted, has given the building its name.

Because the building was designed specifically for the photography industry, and was likely one of the most architecturally elegant as well as technically superior studio buildings in Buffalo at the time, the Werner Photography Building accommodated many photographers and artists following Albert Werner. Many of Buffalo's artists and photographers worked in the studio space of the building at 101-103 Genesee Street, and the building was likely well-known among the photographic community. The building was so popular that often photographers appear to have shared the studio space, indicating how well the building suited their artistic needs. Photographer Hanson D. Tufford worked from the building between 1900 and 1906. In business since 1884 at 329 Main Street, prominent local photographer Jacob J. Ginther ran a second studio location in the Werner Building from 1901 until 1906. In 1908, Dora Barnhard used the photographic studio at the Werner Building for her work. In 1913 both Chauncey W. Rykert and Hernando O. Sickler operated their photography businesses from the Werner Building. Sicker relocated his operations to the building after working on Seneca Street since 1879. For ten years between 1915 and 1925 photographer John Garner operated from 101-103 Genesee Street, and his business appears to have continued as the Garner Studio until 1933. Between 1926 and 1938 Clarence S. Williams worked as a photographer as the Williams Studio.<sup>3</sup> In 1940, the studio of the Werner Photography Building housed the Foto-Art Studio.

Foto-Art Studio may have been the last photographer to use the building as a studio, as the building appears to have been accommodating more of a commercial tenancy throughout the early twentieth-century. In 1929 Lazarus Rosenfield operated a retail shoe store from the building, and Angus Bigelow used the building as a dentist office. In 1937 the City Mattress Company (apparently unrelated to the current City Mattress Company) operated a retail store from the 101 Genesee storefront. By the 1940s the men's clothing store, Charlie Baker Clothier opened in the Werner Photography Building. Operated by the H. Seeberg Company which occupied the eastern end of the Genesee Gateway, the Charlie Baker company was located in the building from the 1940s until the 1980s. In 1945 the Charlie Baker company

---

<sup>3</sup> Drawn from Rossi, Dale T. *Photographing the Queen (City): A century of photography in Buffalo, NY 1839-1939*.

expanded their operation into the neighboring 99 Genesee Street building (ironically reconnecting two buildings which were historically connected to the Giesser family but later separated), and altered and modernized the storefronts. Together, the H. Seeberg Company and Charlie Baker stores gave this stretch of Genesee Street the informal nickname of the "Garment District," although the proximity of photography studios at the Werner Building and in the Caulkins Building also suggests that "Photography District" may have also been an apt nickname for this neighborhood.

Like its neighbors, the Werner Photography Building suffered from the general neglect and decay which was rampant in the neighborhood in the 1970s and 80s, following the opening of the Kensington Expressway which effectively funneled residents and businesses from the Genesee neighborhood into the suburbs. The once-stunning copper "waterfall" skylight was painted over and boarded up, a symbol of the downturn in the neighborhood. The Werner Building was vacant in 1980 before it was purchased by Willard A. Genrich and PlatinumDome, Inc. Genrich, who owned many of the neighboring Genesee Gateway buildings, had high hopes for the rehabilitation of such a prominent row of rare commercial buildings. In 1986 he started a rehabilitation project which removed the interiors of all the buildings down to the studs and brick. Genrich's attempts were unfortunately misguided, but fortunately much of the original interior structure remains intact at the Werner Building. Genrich also restored the dazzling copper skylight, bringing back some glimmer of the building's once beautiful appearance. After several years of legal issues between Genrich and the City of Buffalo, who took Genrich to housing court seeking a demolition of the buildings, the future of the Werner Photography Building appeared bleak. In 2007 the building was purchased by Genesee Gateway LLC from J. Roger Trettel (who had purchased the building from Genrich in the attempt to save it), with support from the Margaret L. Wendt Foundation. Spearheaded by CityView Construction Management, the Genesee Gateway project is rehabilitating the vacant buildings along Genesee Street between Ellicott and Oak Streets, creating a series of commercial and office spaces that will restore the luster of this once dazzling commercial block for its next 120+ years.

The Werner Photography Building at 101-103 Genesee Street is a significant architectural work by one of Buffalo's most recognized architects. It has become a symbol of the Genesee Gateway buildings with its stately façade which has undergone blight and neglect but has always remained an elegant reminder of the Genesee neighborhood's once thriving past. Perhaps this spirit is best captured by artist Charles Burchfield whose "Street Scene" painting of 1940-1947 recorded a rather dreary, overcast day along this stretch of Genesee Street. At the center of the work rises the stately Werner Photography Building, whose elegant architecture and unique forms belie the somber color palate and impressionistic technique. Clearly the Werner Photography Building, a work of architectural art, attracted not only photographic artists, but artists who worked in many media and who appreciated the unique beauty of the brick and glass structure.

### **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 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 (image 11).

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 (image 13). 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, 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 (image 14). 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 (image 15).

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 (1892-95, demolished) at the corner of Franklin and Edward Streets (image 16). 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.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> 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.

Waite continued to receive several large commissions including the Canada Life Assurance Building (1895-96, image 17) 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.

### **A History of Photography in Buffalo, NY**

Throughout its history, Buffalo has always been a city fascinated with technology and passionate about its art. The city has countered its massive grain elevators and steel mills with art galleries and landscaped boulevards and parks. Perhaps it is no wonder that throughout the nineteenth and twentieth-centuries Buffalonians had a fascination in the medium of photography which combined technical innovation with the creative process.

The process of photography was initially developed by Louis Jacque Mande Daguerre, who introduced the method on August 19, 1839 in Paris. His technique, named the daguerreotype, created the first photographic method which created stable, fixed images. The process reached America soon after in September and by 1840 there were hundreds of daguerreotypists working in the northeast alone. In Buffalo, the first daguerreotype was said to have been taken in November of 1839 by S.P. Pease of the Weed's Hardware Store, although this image is not known to have survived.

Although not initially valued as an art form in its own right, photography became popular as a way to capture portraiture. While many Americans could not afford the cost of commissioning an artist to paint a family portrait, the relatively inexpensive

daguerreotype provided an affordable alternative. Due to the long exposure times required by the daguerreotype process at the time, photography was largely done indoors in a studio, and required elaborate props and supports to keep the sitter steady during the up to 8 minute exposure time. In the pre-electricity age, buildings with even, natural lighting proved ideal for use as studios. By the mid-1840s, the photographic process had been refined, allowing for shorter exposure times which resulted in a clearer, more natural portrait.

Photography came to Buffalo at a time of significant development and growth for the area following the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825 coupled with the increasing grain trade and growing railroad industry. While transportation brought thousands of workers and residents to the city, thousands of people also flocked to the region for tourism and sightseeing. People traveling further west or to nearby Niagara Falls often stopped in Buffalo, and by the 1850s the city boasted a strong, permanent photography industry which catered to the influx of visitors and settlers to the area.

Many of Buffalo's earliest photographic studios sprang up along Main Street. Dr. Elliott Burwell established Buffalo's first studio at 266 Main Street in July 1840. In 1845 Charles and Henry Meade opened their daguerreotype studio at 232 Main Street. Not only a traditional portraiture studio, they also offered the first photographic gallery in Buffalo where people could view examples of their work. Many of Buffalo's early photographers became quite prominent in the field, including Donald McDonnell. McDonnell, who presented a report in 1851 on lighting to the Mathew Brady Gallery in New York City, was described as "among the most successful of modern operators in the art that took its name from that beautiful discovery of Daguerre."<sup>5</sup> McDonnell's elegant photographic studio was described:

*"Entering from Main you find yourself in a spacious reception room, hung with the finest specimens of art and furnished as richly as a parlor. Beyond this are three galleries lighted by skylights...among which are several ingenious arrangements we have never seen before. The entire length of this suite of apartments is two hundred and thirty-two feet, and no care of expenses has been spared in making this magnificent distance pleasing to the eye."<sup>6</sup>*

While certainly McDonnell's space was above the norm in photography studios, the description of his studio as a lavish, welcoming location which was elegantly appointed and provided a sort of escape through not only the photographic process but the architectural surroundings.

By 1855, the daguerreotype process was replaced by the wet plate collodion process, which offered a more convenient and popular method of photography. Also popular in this period were the ambrotype and tintype methods, which also provided simpler processes. However it was the invention of paper photographic prints after 1855, rather than glass or metal which was previously utilized, which revolutionized

---

<sup>5</sup> Quoted in Torok, George D. *Hidden Years: Early Photography in Western New York*. Buffalo: Burchfield Art Center, 1993; 9.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted in Torok, 9.

the photographic industry. This development, which created a medium which was easier to use and less expensive to produce, led to an explosion in the number of photographic studios in Buffalo; between 1855 and 1865 the number of photography studios increased from seven to nearly forty.

In the 1860s, paper photographic prints became the most popular method used by photographers, and the new technology allowed for a wide variety of new products and options. *Carte de visites*, a small photograph of about two by four inches, were an early favorite. Cabinet cards, a slightly larger version, also became extremely popular for recording portraits, landscapes and other images. Stereoviews also became extremely popular in the 1860s, creating a photographic card with two duplicate images at each end which could be viewed through a special handheld viewing apparatus, creating the illusion of three-dimensionality. Paper prints also allowed for artists to interact with the final print by hand coloring the black and white images with paints or pencils, allowing for tinting, shading and even retouching of a “blemished” image. It is in the 1860s that the term “photography” became widely used, and the medium also came into its own as a unique art form with a myriad of possibilities.

The period after the Civil War saw the maturation of the photography industry in Buffalo. Not only had the technological process of making the prints become simpler and more perfected, offering better results which were easier to produce, but the photographic industry began to become more organized and professional. Publications such as the *Philadelphia Photographer* offered information on the technological and artistic aspects of the process, creating an environment of education and discussion on photography as an industry. *Photographic World* (established in 1871) and *Photographic Times* (1872) allowed for advances in the field to reach photographers across the country.

Locally in Buffalo, several photographers and studios emerged as leaders in not only the technological aspects but also the artistic qualities of photography. William J. Baker, who owned a studio at 390 Main Street in 1867, became one of the city’s most respected practitioners. His work was highly regarded, and he also wrote numerous articles in photographic journals. Baker created a lighting technique for portraiture known as “Rembrandt” lighting, which created a highlighted and more contrasting image. His technique created a more life-like image in contrast to the even, flat light source typically used by photographers at the time, which resulted in images which lacked depth and shadow. Also a significant figure in the local photography industry was Charles L. Pond, who travelled to California to photograph the new lush scenery, which he then brought back to Buffalo to sell as stereoviews. Pond also captured some of the earliest cityscape and harbor views of the City of Buffalo, including large panoramic shots which reflected the advancements made in photographic technology. Horace Bliss and the Bliss Brothers’ studio was also a prominent local studio, opening at the former site of Donald McDonnell’s studio on Main Street.

In 1869 when the first national photographic organization was created, William J. Baker was instrumental in creating the local Buffalo chapter. The Buffalo Photographic Association was formed in 1873 as part of the National Photographic Association, and Baker served as its president. The association provided a local forum where members could discuss new ideas and techniques, share information, and invite guests to share papers. Baker also organized the Association's national convention which was held in Buffalo in July 1873, drawing hundreds of members from across the region.

During the mid to late-nineteenth century, much of the photographic work being produced fell into two categories; portraiture and natural imagery. As photographic equipment became smaller, more streamlined and more portable, cameras could be taken outdoors to more remote locations across the country. Portraiture, in contrast, was best suited for indoor studios. Artists could control the environment in which the sitter was posed; including not only the lighting and scenery, but the poses, costumes and effects used for the shot. As a result of the special needs for photography, many buildings throughout Buffalo which housed photography studios featured north-facing skylights or windows which allowed for the ample, even lighting in the interior required by studio photographers.

By the 1880s, the field of photography began to diverge between a more artistic, professional vein and an emerging amateur market. Rochester-native George Eastman mass-marketed dry photographic plates, establishing his photography empire with his introduction of roll film in 1888. This innovation opened up photography to the amateur general public, rather than being in the sole control of the specialized professional, creating an even wider market for photographic equipment and products. While the general public no longer needed to solely rely on the photographic artist for their image needs, whether portraits or artistic landscape photography, this broadening of the photography market served to enhance the respect for the work of professional photographers as more people became familiar with the skill and artistry required to create good quality work. In 1888 Dr. G. Hunter Bartlett organized the Buffalo Camera Club, bringing together both the amateur and professional photography community which was largely responsible for promoting and forwarding photography in Buffalo forward into the twentieth-century.

The decades around 1900 were generally a period of rapid modern technological advancement, many of which also effected the photographic profession. New developments such as electricity revolutionized the field of photography. While electrical light did not replace the reliance on northern light sources, artists could more subtly control light sources for studio work, creating not only a refinement in the current techniques but the invention of new ones based on the new possibilities. George Eastman pioneered a line of inexpensive, easy to use, mass produced cameras, introducing the first Brownie cameras in February 1900. Color photography had been explored as early as the mid-1800s and by 1907 the first commercially successful color process, the Autochrome, was created by the French Lumière brothers.

As photography gained a greater appreciation for its artistic and aesthetic value, photography studios likewise became more elegant and sophisticated buildings. Many of the earliest photography studios along Main Street had taken pre-existing commercial or residential buildings which faced either east or west and converted them for use as studios. Additions were frequently constructed on the buildings with specialized “photo light” skylights constructed in the roof and wall, typically facing north, indicating the usage as photographic studios. As early as 1849, publications such as *The History and Practice of the Art of Photography* by Henry Hunt Snelling advocated certain desired elements for a photographic studio. Snelling recommended that the studio be elevated from the street level as high as possible to ensure even, uninterrupted lighting. He proposed a studio be built at the highest level of a building with large, north facing windows ideally which offered top and side or front lighting. Walls which were not glass were typically painted white or pale blue to ensure the reflected lighting maintained its color value. In his book Snelling recommended the following to photographers:

*“In choosing your operating room, obtain one with a north-western aspect, if possible; and either with, or capable of having attached, a large sky-light. Good pictures may be taken without the sky-light, but not the most pleasing or effective.”<sup>7</sup>*

Snelling’s recommendations for an ideal studio, which was echoed for several decades following his publication, in many ways sounds like a description of the Werner Photography Building (101-103 Genesee Street) and the Caulkins Building (1886, F.W. Caulkins, architect) at 85-87-89 Genesee Street. Despite being constructed some forty years after this description, as late as 1911 daylight photographic studios were still recommended in publications such as Bernard Jones’ *Encyclopedia of Photography* despite developments in electrical and artificial lighting. Daylight studios, as both the Werner Photography Building and Caulkins Building would be classified, were considered to be the best type of photographic studio throughout the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, despite inherent limitations. Photographers in daylight studios were limited to working during daylight hours, and during dull, winter days when the light was low, portraits required overly long exposures, resulting in varied results. From a functional standpoint, the large skylights were often prone to leaking and required maintenance and upkeep, and since they were often elevated to the level of smokestacks and chimneys, they became dirty and clouded and required frequent cleaning. In an industrial city such as Buffalo, this would have been a concern for many photography studios.

Studio buildings appear to have had a tradition, going back to the description of Donald McDonnell’s studio in the 1850s, of creating spectacular, elegant spaces, but the earliest buildings appear to have confined this aesthetic focus to primarily interior spaces. Studios frequently featured elaborate props and backgrounds for the photographs. However by the late nineteenth-century, photography buildings in Buffalo became as artistic on the exterior as they were on the interior. Buildings such

---

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in Hannavy, John. *Encyclopedia of Nineteenth-Century Photography*. Vol. 1. New York: Routledge, 2007; 1356-1357.

as the Caulkins Building and the Werner Photography Building combined both the utilitarian needs of creating a functional photographic studio space with a more fantastical, artistic appearance emphasizing the bill-board like quality of the primary elevation. Advantageously located with their primary façade facing due north, the large “photo light” skylights previously utilized were in the late 1900s transformed into signature architectural features; graceful curved planes of glass and copper form “waterfall” windows and make both buildings unique and specialized among previous adapted photographic studio buildings.

Both types of photographic studios, whether adapted or new-built, featured specific, specialized elements such as the large windows and skylights and lavishly appointed interiors. Because of this specific design, buildings which were established as photographic studios typically remained in use as such for many years, becoming as identified by their architecture as the artists who worked within. It was not uncommon for artists to share photography studios during the nineteenth-century. It was common that if a photographer vacated or went out of business, another photography studio would establish itself in the building. Due to its highly specialized nature, good quality photography studio space, such as the Caulkins and Werner buildings, was hard to come by in the 1900s, and specialized buildings became rare commodities, recycled and reused to their fullest extent.

### **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 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,” which would develop into the site of the Genesee Gateway buildings (image 24). 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.<sup>8</sup> Andrews likely realized the potential for dividing

---

<sup>8</sup> 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*

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. 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 Forrest Lawn Cemetery.<sup>9</sup>

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-Ellicott-Oak neighborhood began to be settled by primarily German immigrants. While initial German settlers came to Buffalo via Pennsylvania, by the 1820s many Germans became arriving directly from Germany and German regions of France in greater numbers. Aided and encouraged by the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825, by 1828 the wide-spread settlement of Germans in Buffalo began. On June 19, 1826 Genesee Street was declared a public highway, marking increasing settlement and growth along this corridor.<sup>10</sup> As a major route in and out of 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 (image 25). 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.<sup>11</sup>

By the 1850s, people of German ancestry numbered about 15,000 of the approximately 42,000 total residents in the City of Buffalo. 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.<sup>12</sup>

---

*Streets, Public Grounds, Waterways, Railroads, Gas Companies, Waterworks etc. of the City of Buffalo from 1814-1896.* Buffalo: Wenborne Sumner Company, 1896: 285.

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

<sup>10</sup> *Index of Records of Streets*, 286.

<sup>11</sup> James, Isabel Vaughan. *Some Outstanding Germans in Buffalo.* Manuscript, BECHS.

<sup>12</sup> 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. Goldman,

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 building 1867).<sup>13</sup> 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).<sup>14</sup> 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 2.5 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 (image 18, 19, 20). 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. A majority of the buildings constructed in

---

Mark. *High hopes: the rise and decline of Buffalo, New York*. Albany: State University of New York, 1983: 76-77.

<sup>13</sup> 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. 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 150<sup>th</sup> year with Mass." *Buffalo News*. 29 Sep 2001, A-7.

<sup>14</sup> Refer to the State and National Register of historic Places nomination for School 13 (03NR05199), section 8, page 1.

the late nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries adjacent to the Washington Market along Ellicott, Genesee and Washington Streets were commercial buildings. One of the most notable buildings in this area is the Market Arcade Building (1892 by E.B. Green) 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. The Caulkins Building at 85-87-89 Genesee Street 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. 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. 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. 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.

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. 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 (image 21, 22).<sup>15</sup> 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.<sup>16</sup> 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 (image 23). 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 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. In this capacity, they act as a "gateway" welcoming suburban travelers into Downtown.

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 a somewhat shabby exterior, the buildings along the south side of Genesee Street between Ellicott and Oak Streets 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

---

<sup>15</sup> "Washington Market to Close July 1, Banas Announces." *Buffalo Evening News*. 11 Jan 1965.

<sup>16</sup> Today, the church has about 200 registered members. Refer to Condren, A-7.

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 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, ending 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.<sup>17</sup> 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 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.

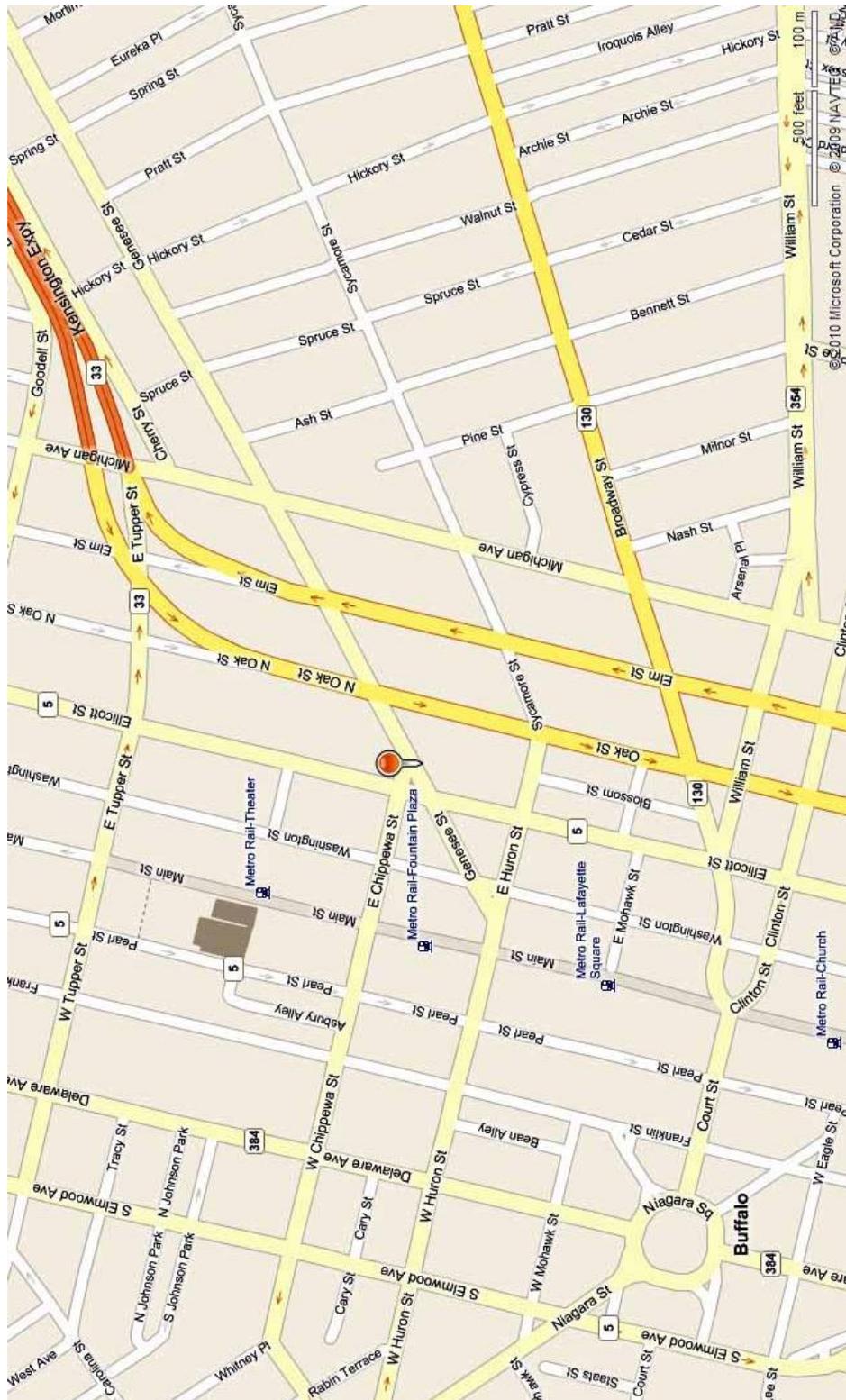
The Genesee-Ellicott-Oak neighborhood along Genesee Street and running north on Oak and Ellicott Streets retains numerous significant examples of commercial architecture from a period which spans over 120 years. While this neighborhood features a wide variety of architectural styles from simple, builder-designed utilitarian Italianate examples to elegant architect-designed, highly styled Beaux-Arts examples, the Genesee-Ellicott-Oak area has a period of architectural significance which spans between ca. 1850s and the early 1930s. This period of history for the City of Buffalo 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 and the H. Seeberg Building at 113-125 Genesee Street, also combined manufacturing with the retail shop. The Genesee-Ellicott-Oak neighborhood reflects a significant period of Buffalo's history, representing the city at the pinnacle of its international prominence. This area 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.

The Werner Photography Building at 101-103 Genesee Street is an excellent example of the development of commercial architecture within the Genesee-Ellicott-Oak neighborhood, and it is an increasingly rare example of post-Civil War era

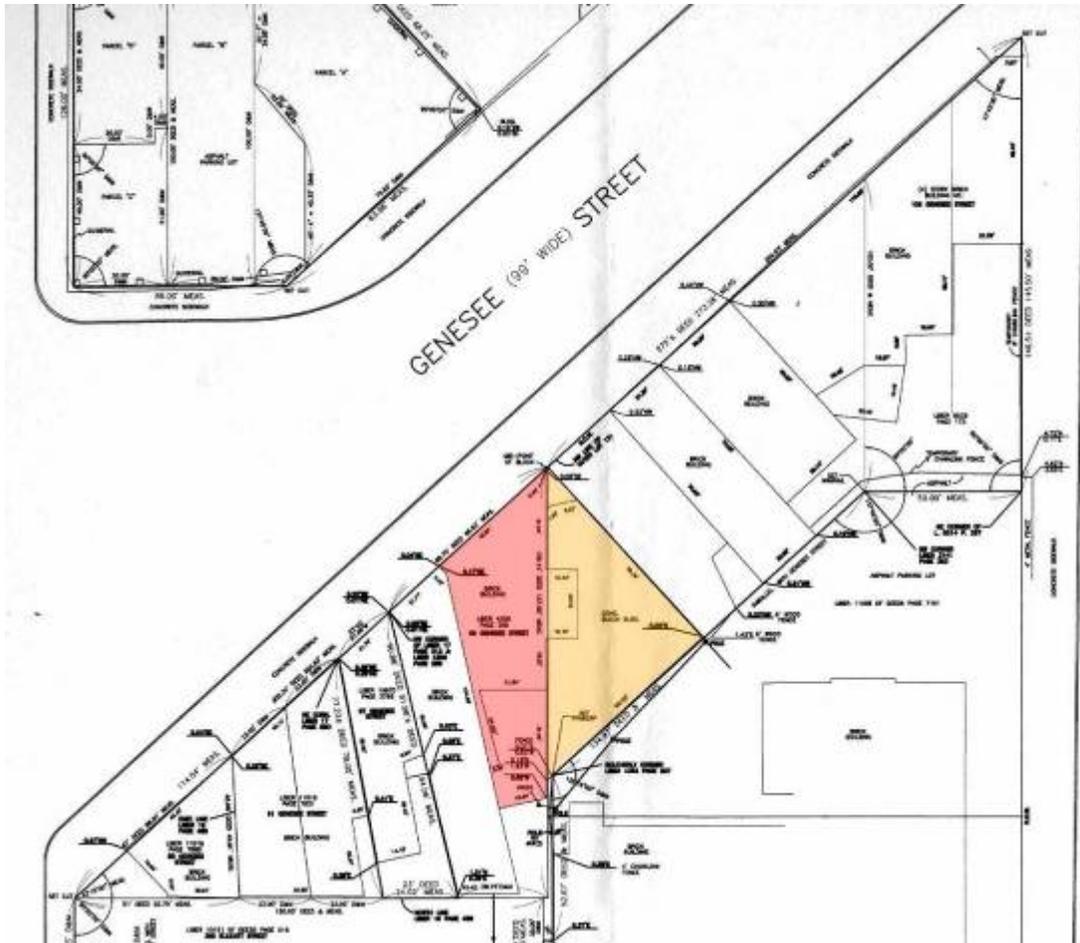
---

<sup>17</sup> 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.

architecture in the City of Buffalo. The building is a contributing building to the local Genesee Gateway Historic District, and is an excellent example of commercial architecture and an uncommon example of a daylight photography studio. The building is an extremely rare surviving example work by prominent Buffalo and Canadian architect, Richard A. Waite, whose architecture shaped much of the appearance of Buffalo in the mid to late-1900s but is now largely lost. The building is a rare remaining survivor of the once-thriving studio photography industry in Buffalo, which grew up not too far removed from one of the earliest national centers for photography at Eastman Kodak in Rochester, NY just a few miles east.

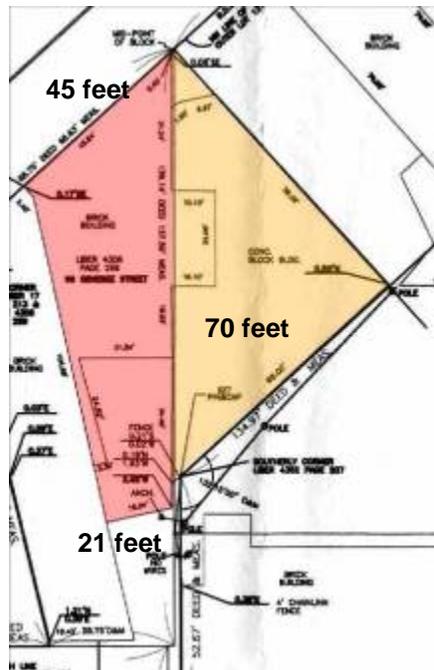


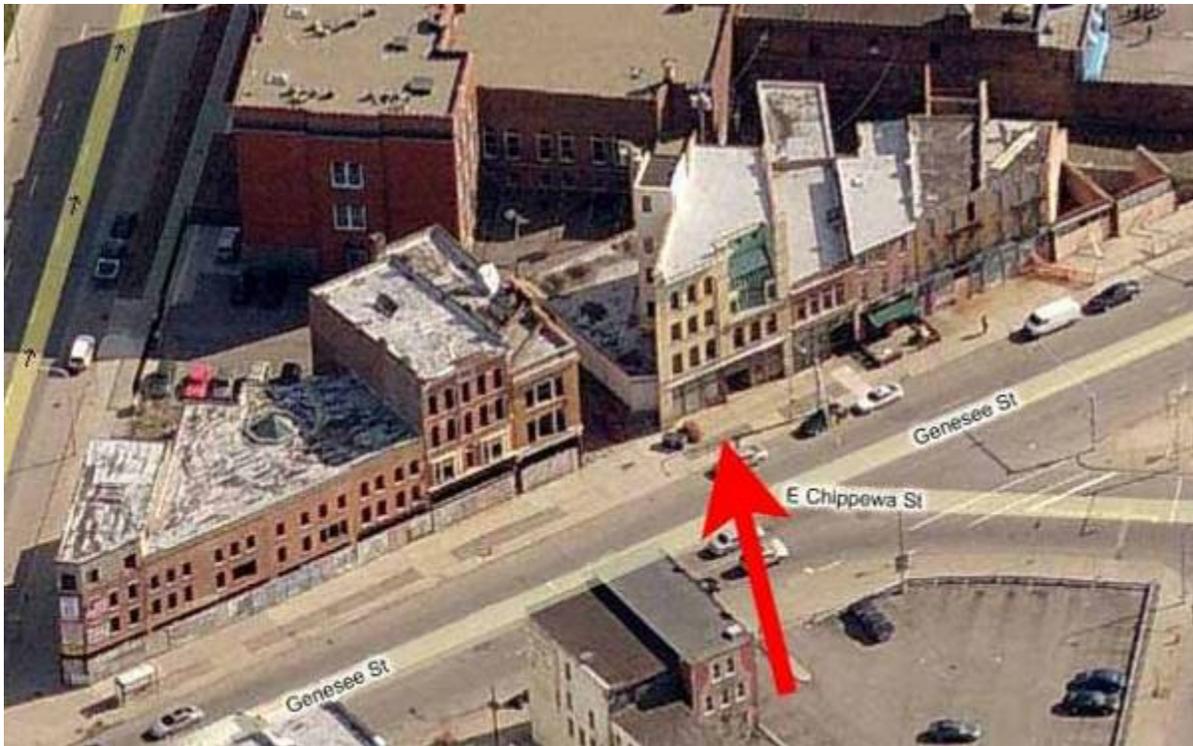
(1) Location of the Werner Photography Building, 101-103 Genesee Street, Buffalo, Erie County, NY 14203



(2) Detail, Survey (2008)

Showing location and parcel size of The Werner Building (red) with non-contributing addition (orange)



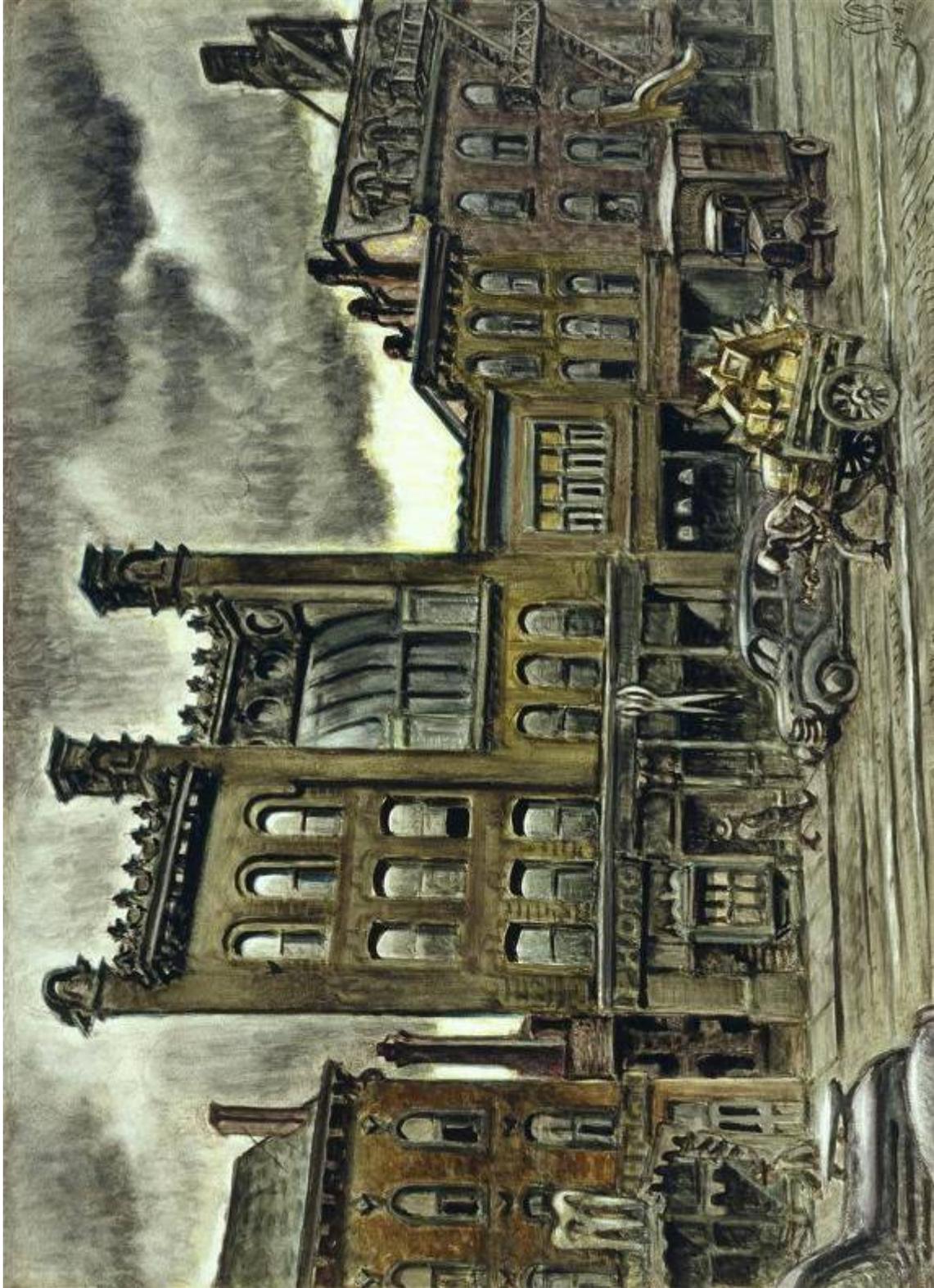


(3) Aerial View, facing south

Note the regular, continuous line of the Genesee Gateway facades along the south side of Genesee Street. The Werner Photography Building stands out for its unique architectural features and design.

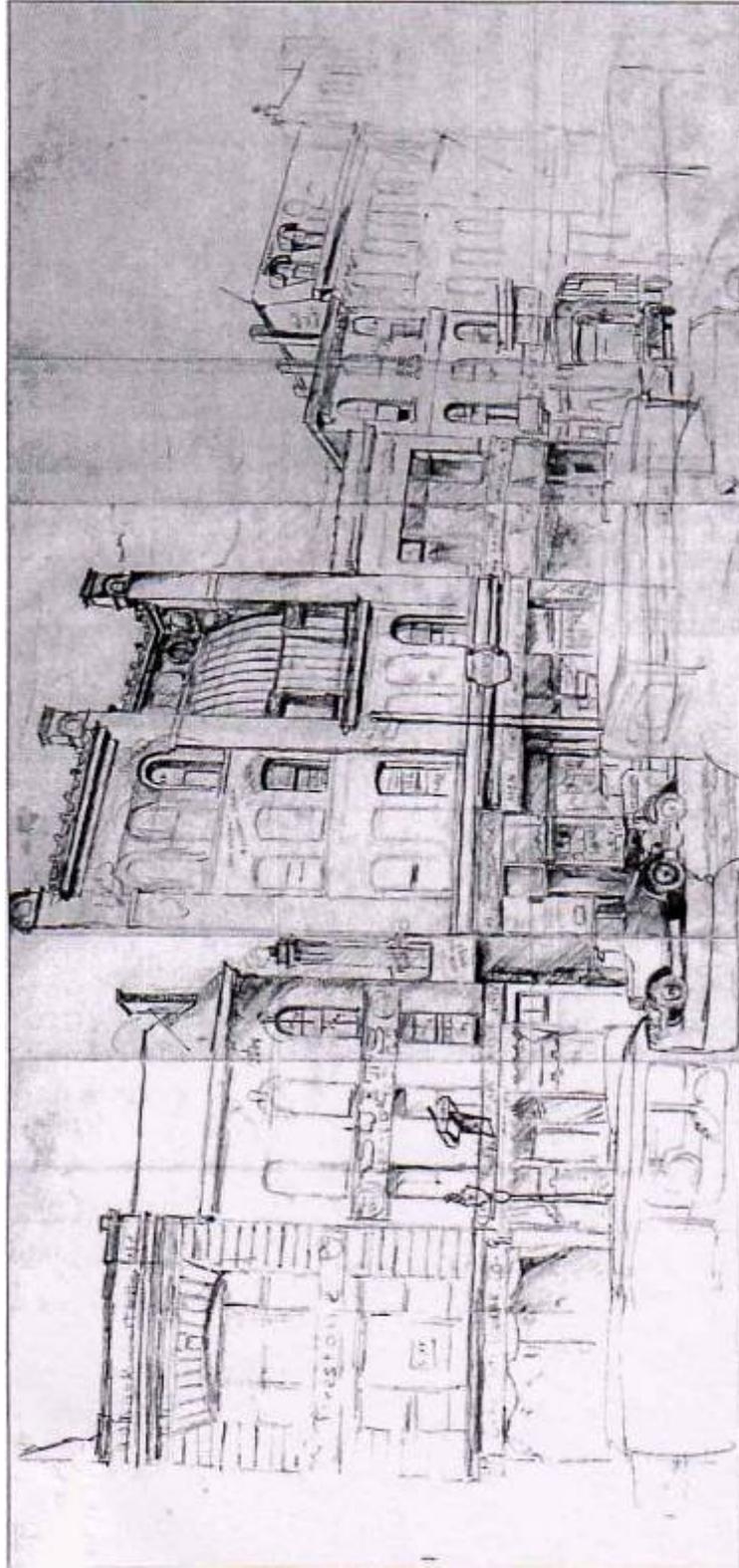


(4) Aerial view, facing north



(5) "Street Scene" by Charles Burchfield, 1940-1947 (Watercolor on paper)

The earliest located image of the Werner Photography Building which plays a central role in the piece, this painting depicts the elaborate pinnacles on the top of the building as well as the "waterfall" window. Note also the "photo" signage on the left storefront.



(6) "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.



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



(8) 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.



(9) The Genesee Gateway Buildings, ca. 1986

Note the presence of the Caulkins Building and the mansarded Denzinger-Sigwalt Buildings towards the image foreground, which were lost in 2002. The Werner Photography Building is located towards center.



(10) Richard Alfred Waite (May 14, 1848- January 7, 1911)

One of Buffalo's most prominent and influential architects in the mid- to late-nineteenth century, many of Waite's masterpieces have been demolished due to later development and construction. Today his works are rare, even in the City of Buffalo which was his hometown for much of his life.

**RICHARD A. WAITE,**  
**ARCHITECT**

---

Sketches, Designs, Elevations, Plans, Sections, Specifications, Details, Working Drawings, General Draughts for Churches, Public Buildings, City and Suburban Residences, promptly furnished.

---

**STUDIO, AMERICAN BLOCK,**  
**402 MAIN STREET.**

(11) Advertisement, Richard A. Waite, Architect (1875 City Directory)  
An advertisement for Waite from early in his career

**RICHARD A. WAITE,**  
**ARCHITECT**

---

SKETCHES, DESIGNS, ELEVATIONS, PLANS, SECTIONS, SPECIFICATIONS, DETAILS, WORKING DRAWINGS, GENERAL DRAUGHTS FOR CHURCHES, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, CITY AND SUBURBAN RESIDENCES PROMPTLY FURNISHED.

---

**OFFICE, GERMAN INSURANCE BUILDING,**  
**CORNER LAFAYETTE AND MAIN STREETS.**

(12) Advertisement, Richard A. Waite, Architect (1885 City Directory)  
An advertisement for Waite following his relocation to his German Insurance Building



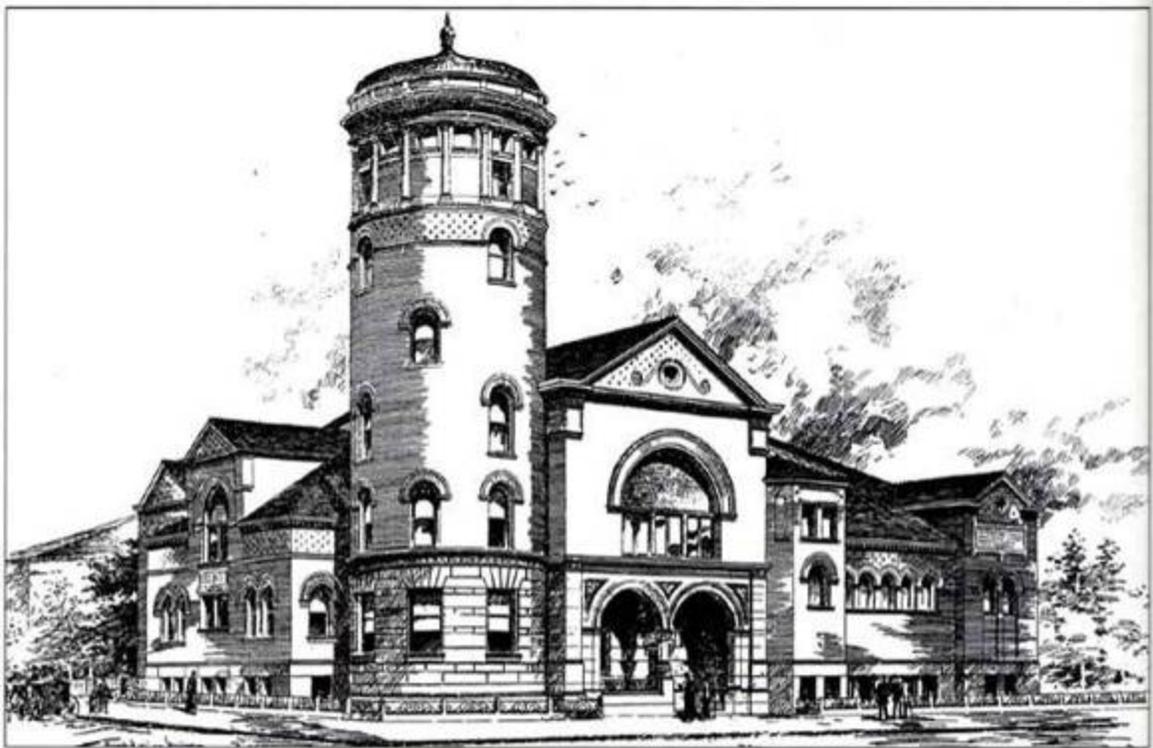
(13) The German Insurance Building, Richard A. Waite (1874-75, demolished 1957)  
Located at Main Street and Lafayette Square  
An excellent example of a Second Empire style building with a cast iron façade. Now the site of the  
Modernist style Tishman Building by Emory Roth & Sons (1957).



(14) Pierce's Palace Hotel, Richard A. Waite (1876-78, destroyed 1881)  
Perhaps the high-point of Waite's Second Empire and cast iron design in Buffalo.



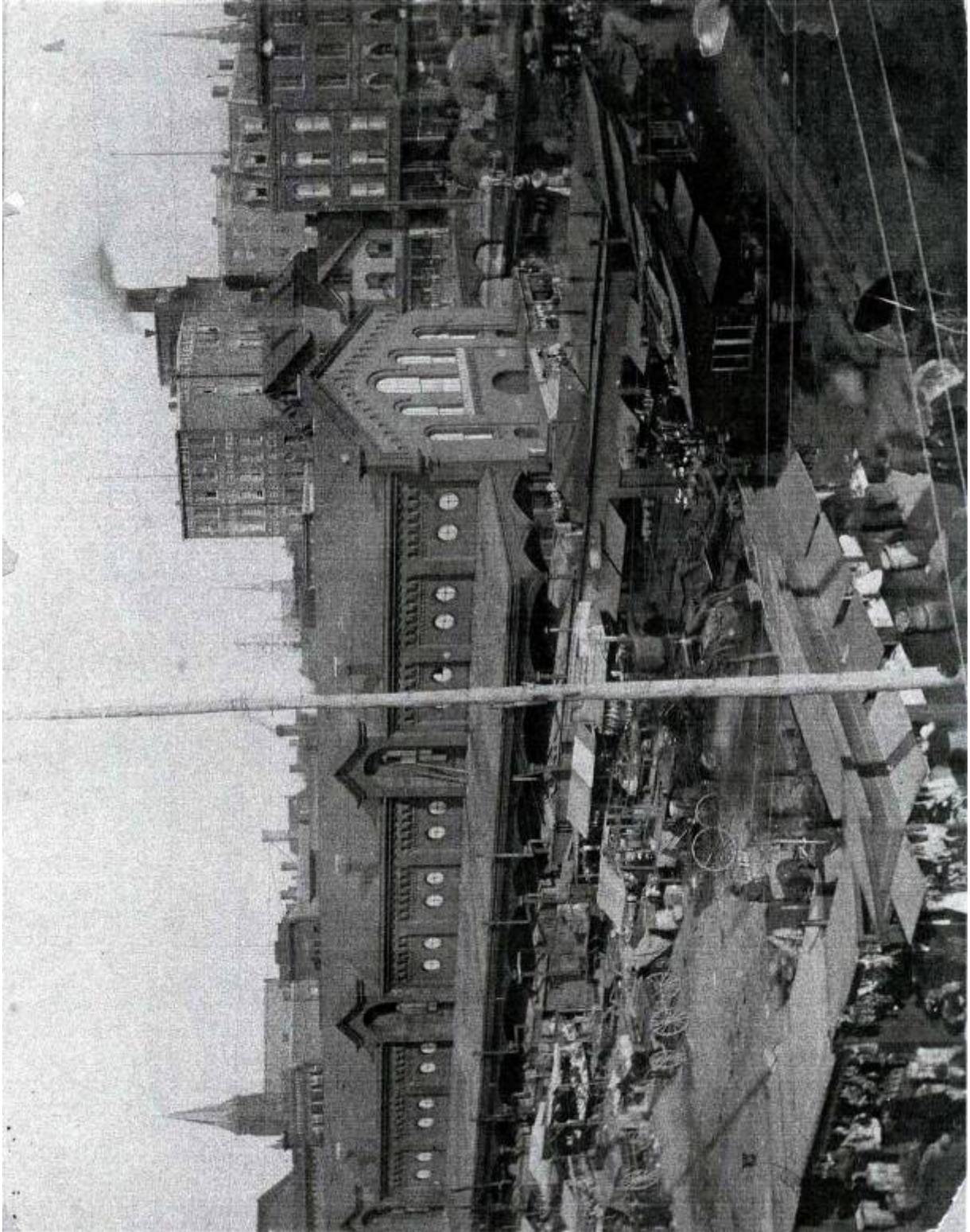
(15) Ontario Parliament Buildings (Queen's Park, Toronto) Richard A. Waite (1886-1892)  
A substantial extant public building which shows Waite's mastery of the Richardson Romanesque style.



(16) The Grosvenor Library, Richard A. Waite (1892-95, demolished)  
Was located at the corner of Franklin and Edward Streets in Buffalo



(17) Canada Life Assurance Building, Montreal, Richard A. Waite (1895-96)  
Photograph ca. 1898. This building is roughly contemporary with the  
Werner Photography Building (1895).

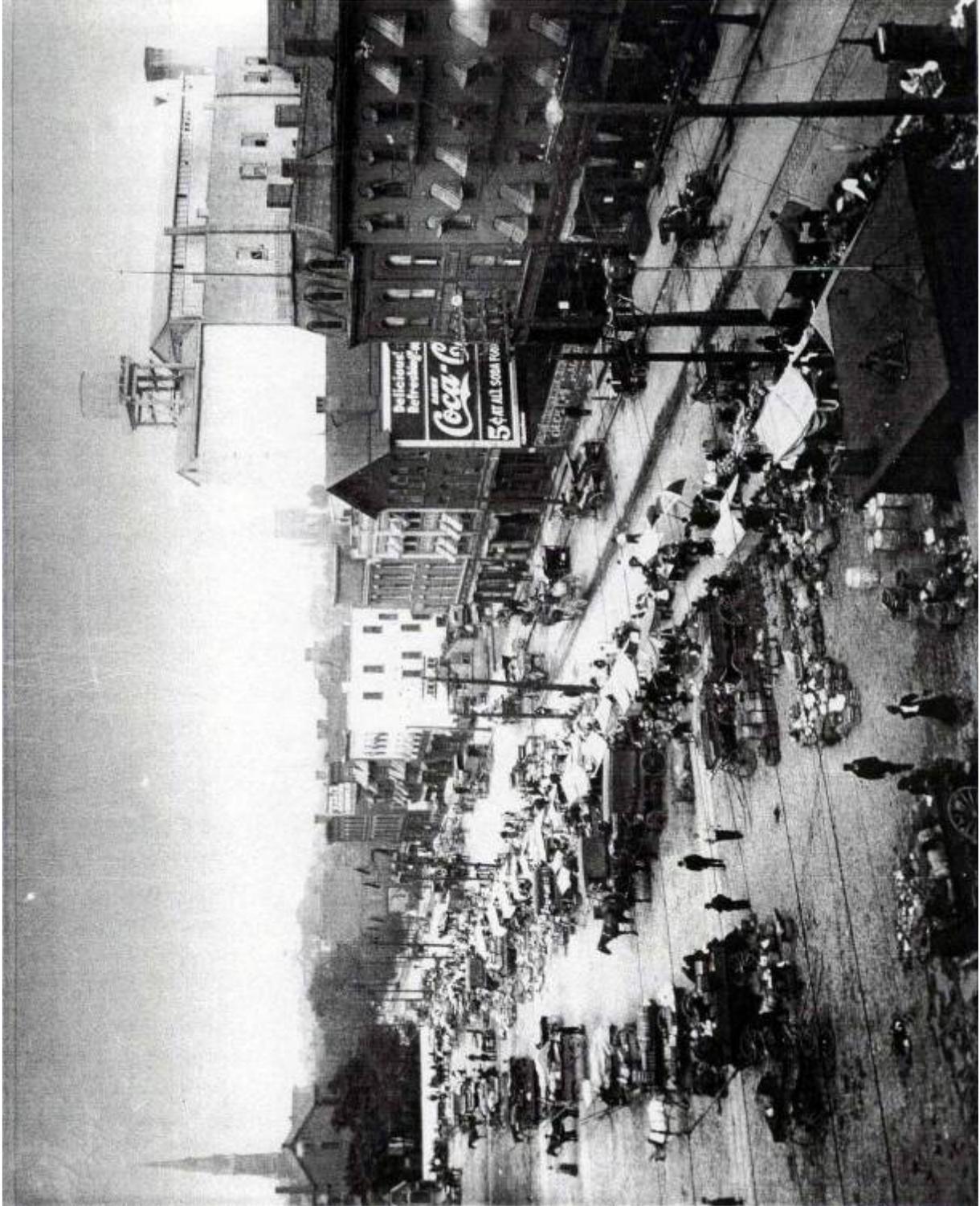


(18) The Washington Market looking east towards Ellicott Street, 1890  
Note the growth of other commercial buildings along Ellicott Street which developed as a relationship to the bustling market. The tall structure in the right background behind the market building is the Urban Roller Mills milling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

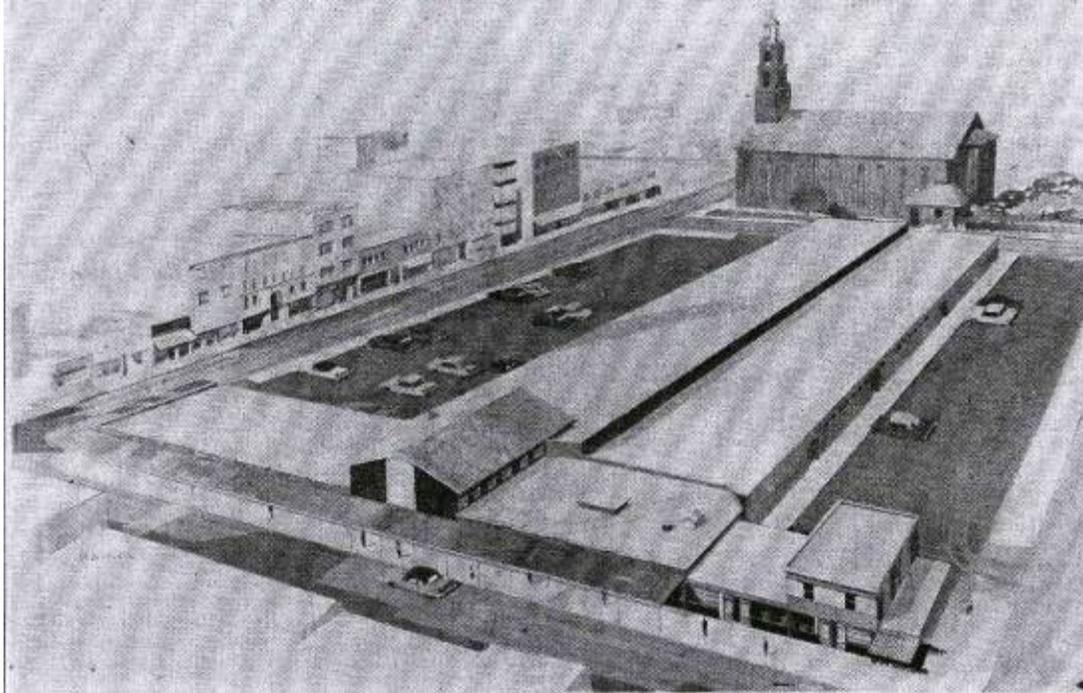


(19) The Washington Market looking north-east along Ellicott Street, 1905

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.

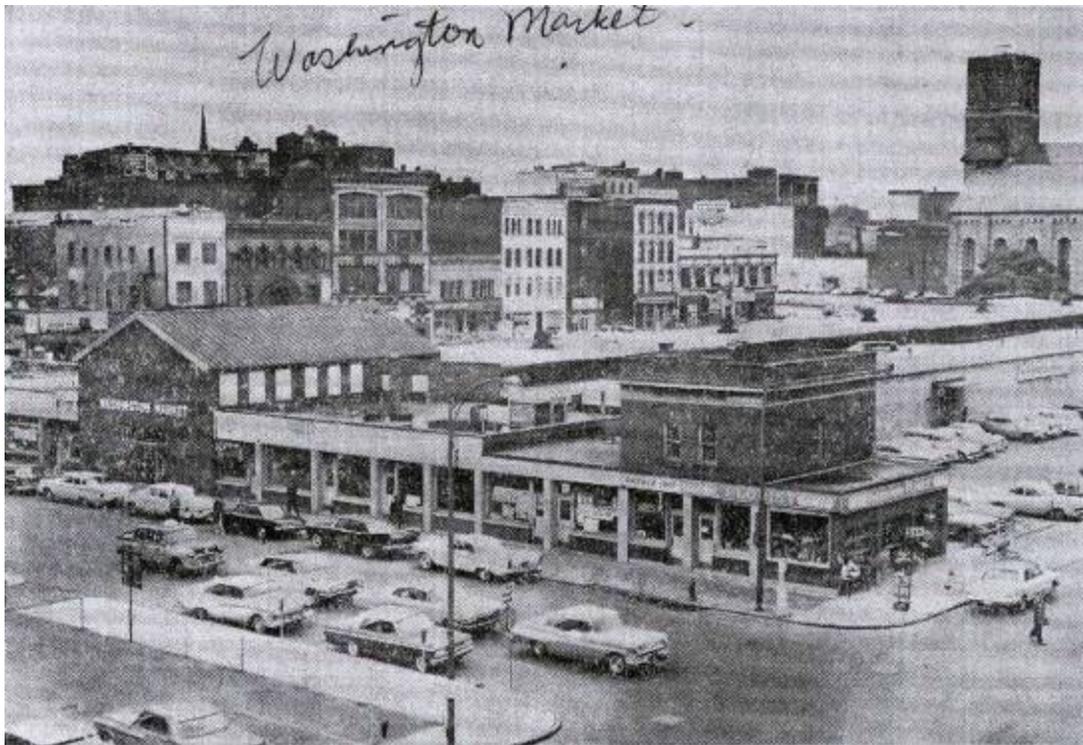


(20) The Washington Market looking north-east along Ellicott Street, 1912  
A view of the fine collection of nineteenth- and early-twentieth century commercial architecture which characterized the Genesee-Ellicott-Oak neighborhood at this period.



(21) "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.



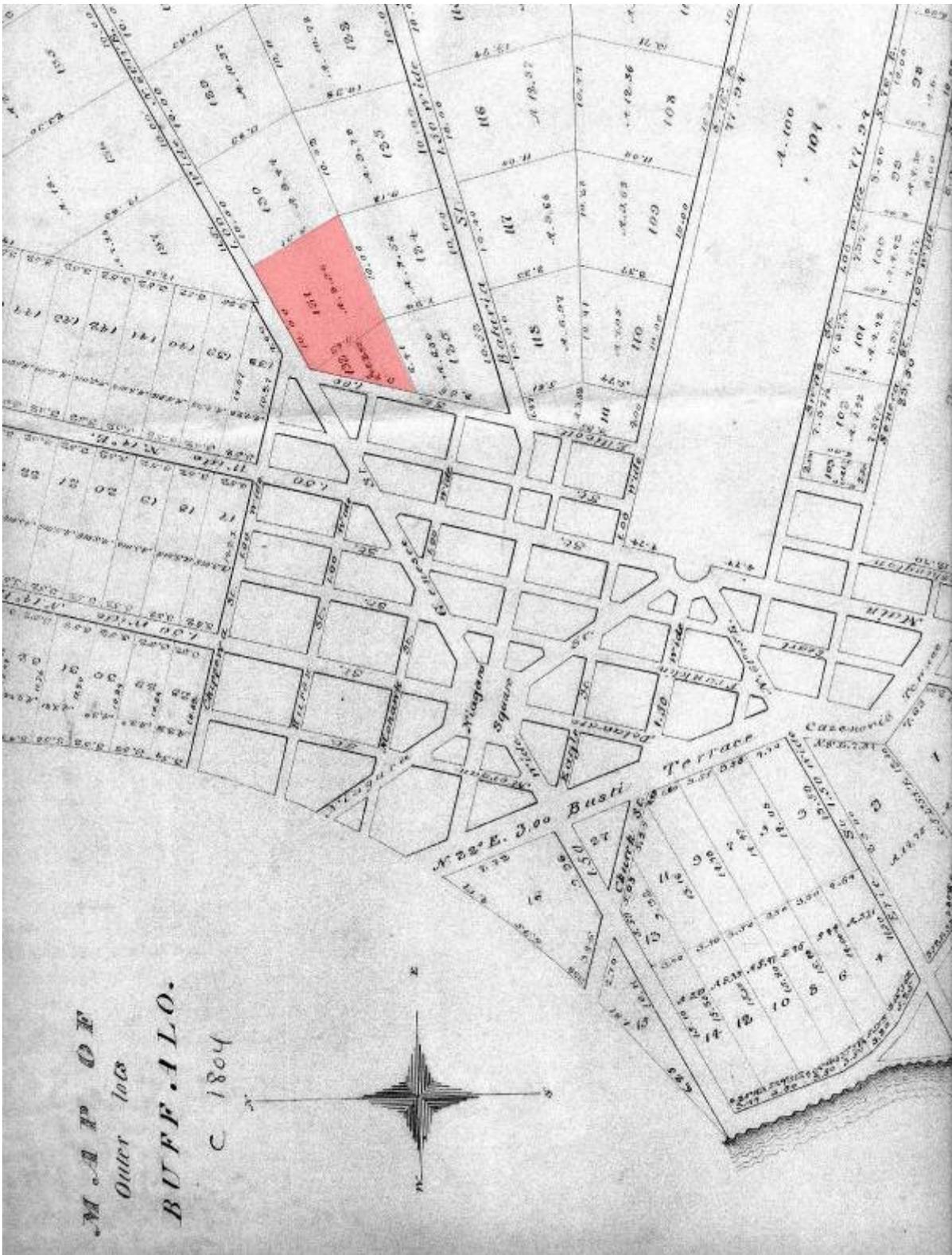
(22) The Washington Market in view from Ellicott and Chippewa Streets

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.



(23) "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.



(24) Detail, Map of Buffalo Outer Lots, 1804/05

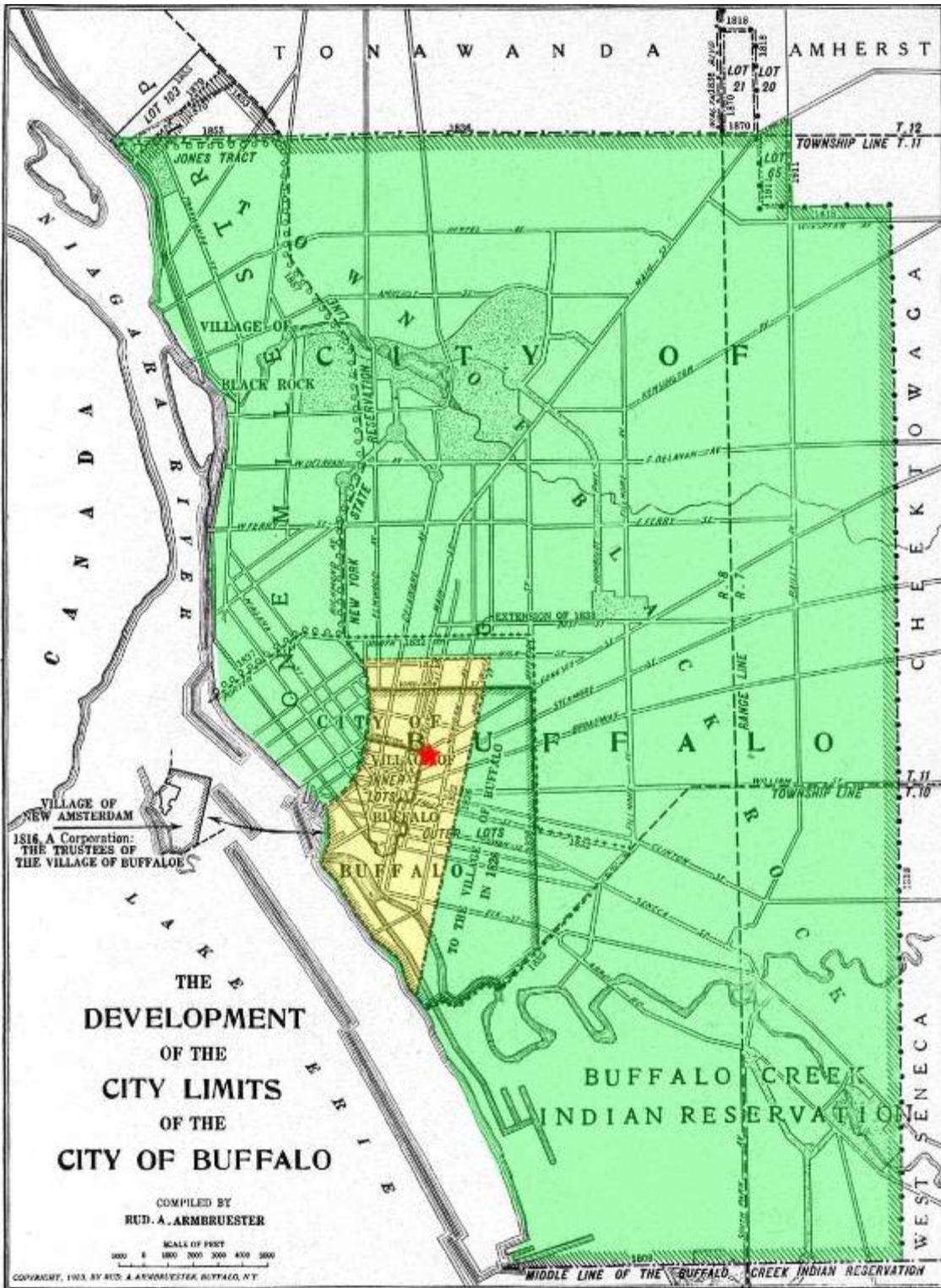
The red highlight indicates plots 131 and 132, purchased by Major Andre Andrews circa 1821 at the outer edge of Buffalo at the time, and current location of Genesee Gateway buildings. Notice how the road narrows just past the corner of Ellicott and Genesee Street.





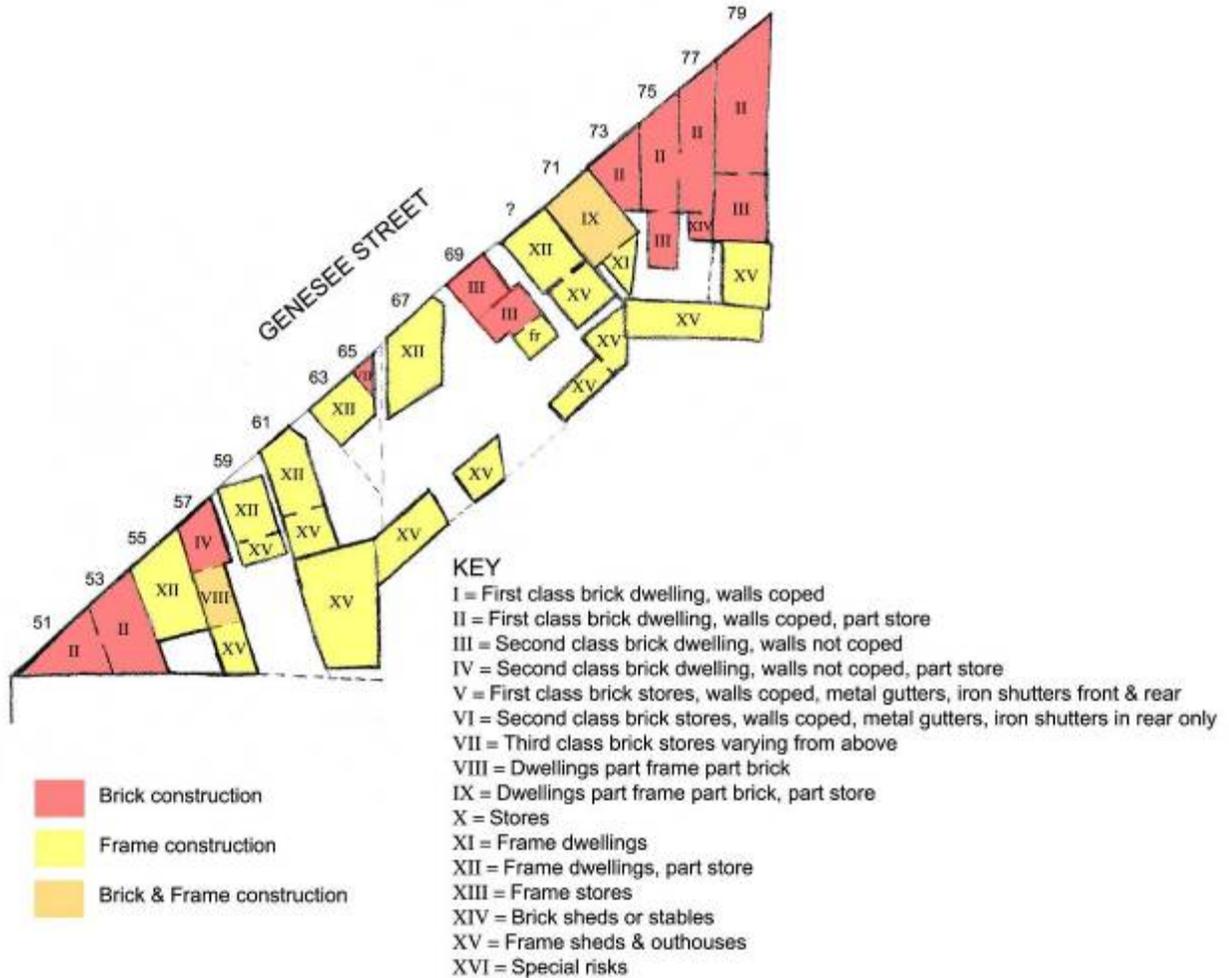
(26) Pocket Map of the City of Buffalo, 1847

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



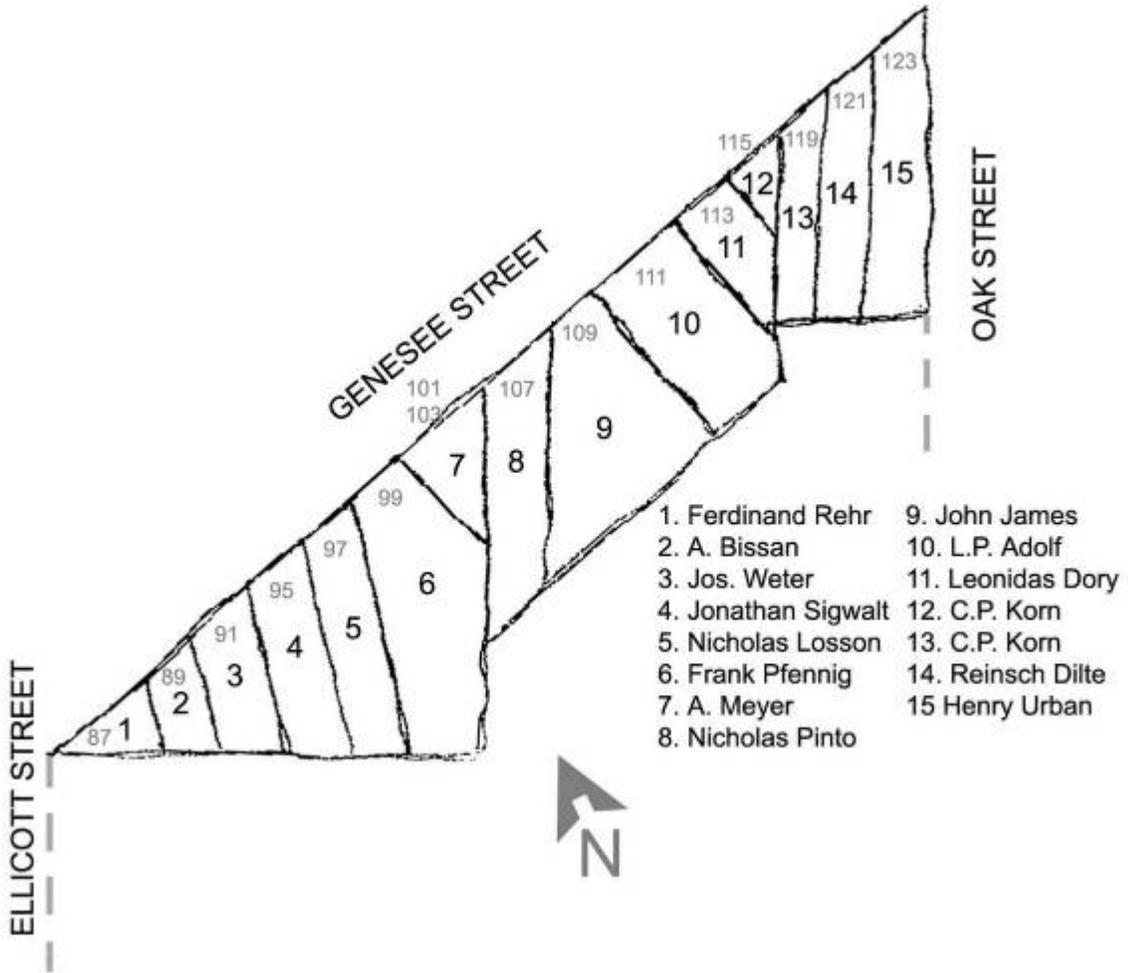
(27) The Development of the City Limits of the City of Buffalo (1923)

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.



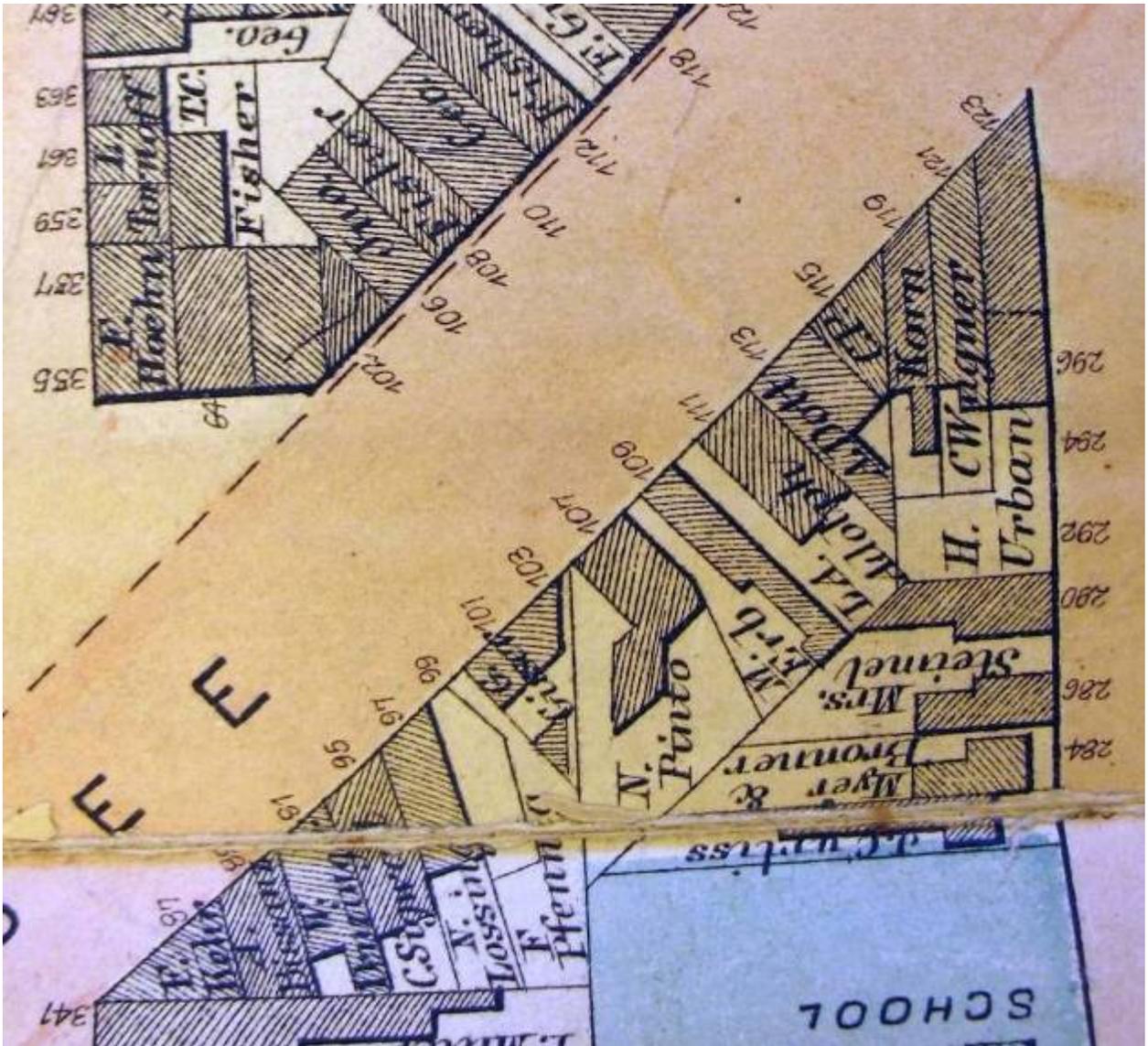
(28) Sketch detail, 1854 Fire Insurance Map of the City of Buffalo

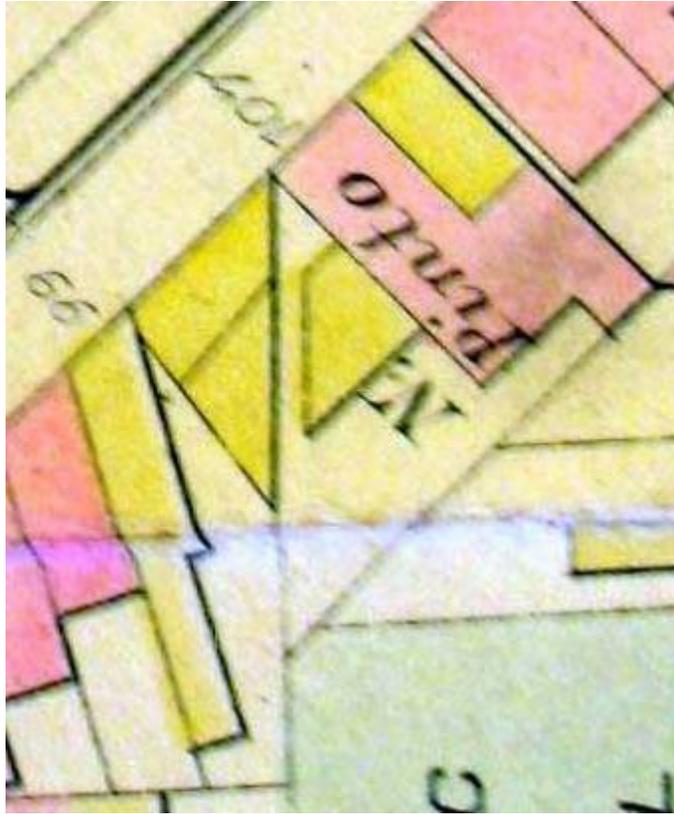
This map represents the earliest record of buildings along Genesee Street. Note that brick construction was used at both corners of the block, but a majority of the building fabric was of frame construction. 113-125 Genesee Street is approximately labeled as 73-79 Genesee Street on this map; note the presence of a series of brick dwellings/ stores at the eastern end of the block.



(29) Sketch detail, 1866 Deed Atlas of the City of Buffalo

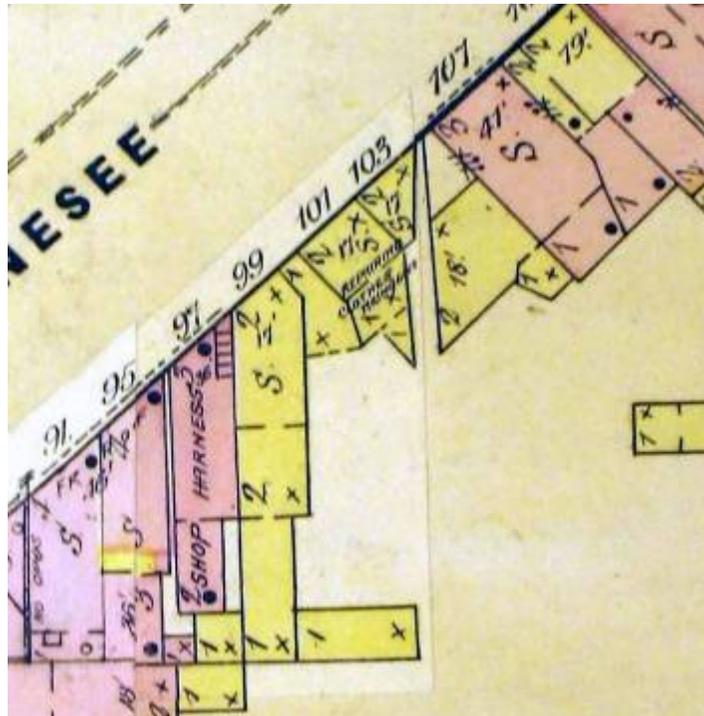
While this map does not indicate buildings or structures which were constructed, it does list the owners of the various Genesee Gateway parcels. Note that the present 101-103 Genesee Street correlates approximately with the boundaries of portions of 6 and 7, both owned by the Giesser family by the late 1800s.





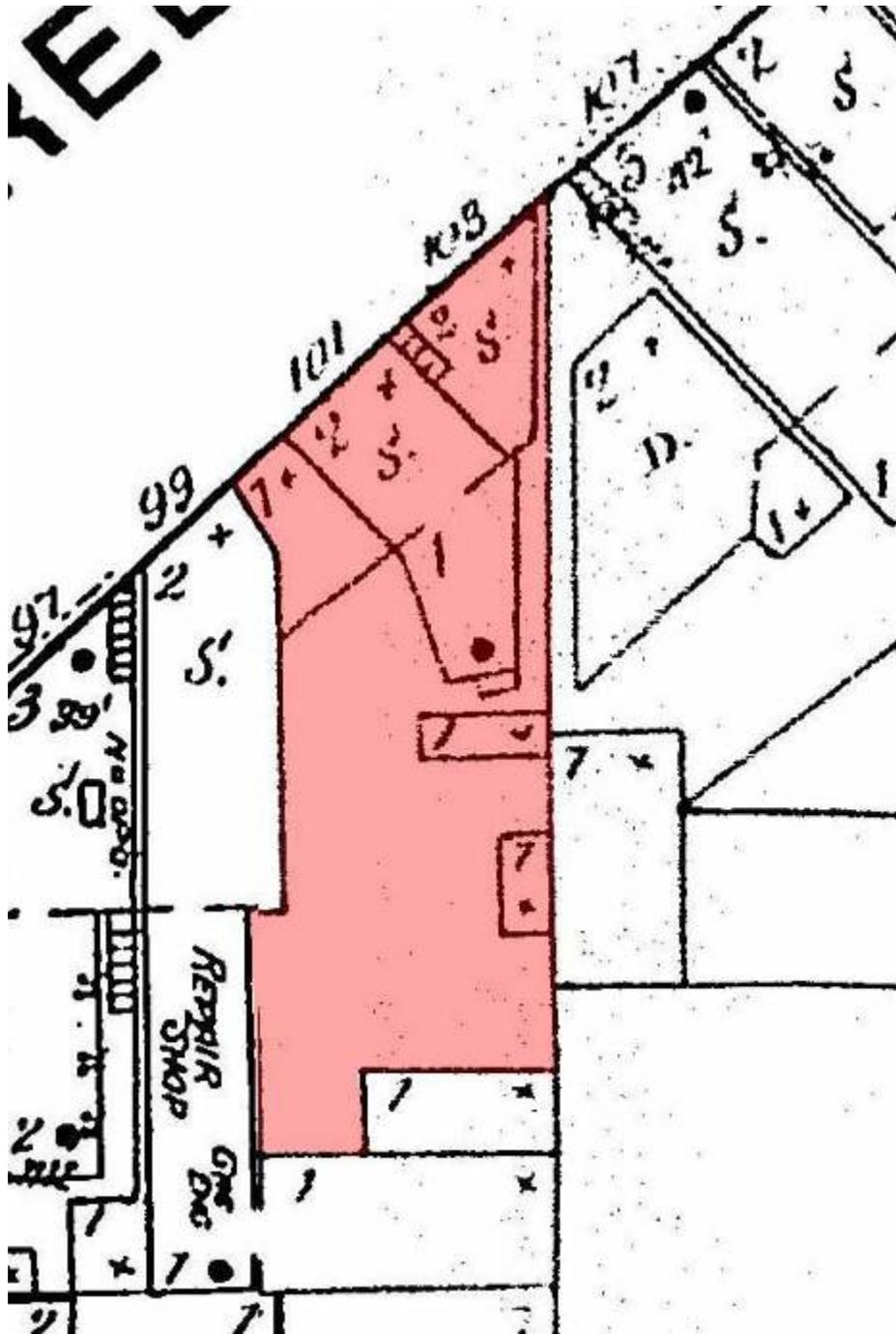
(31) Detail, 1884 Atlas

Note the previous triangular shaped wood frame commercial building located on the property

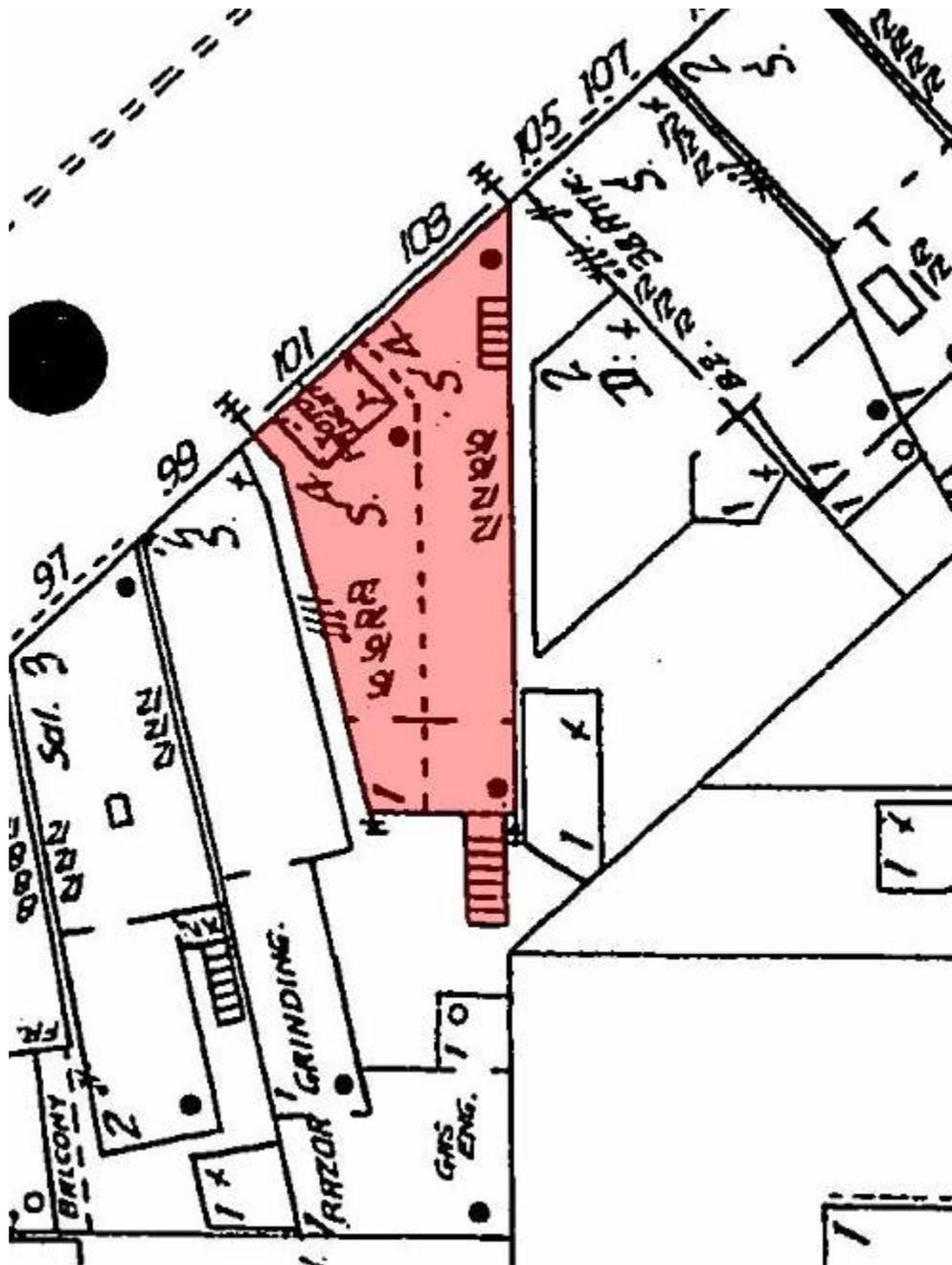


(32) Detail, 1881 updated 1888 Sanborn Map

Note the small, wood frame two-story commercial structure previously constructed at 101-103 Genesee Street. Also note the adjacent wood frame building at 99 Genesee Street.

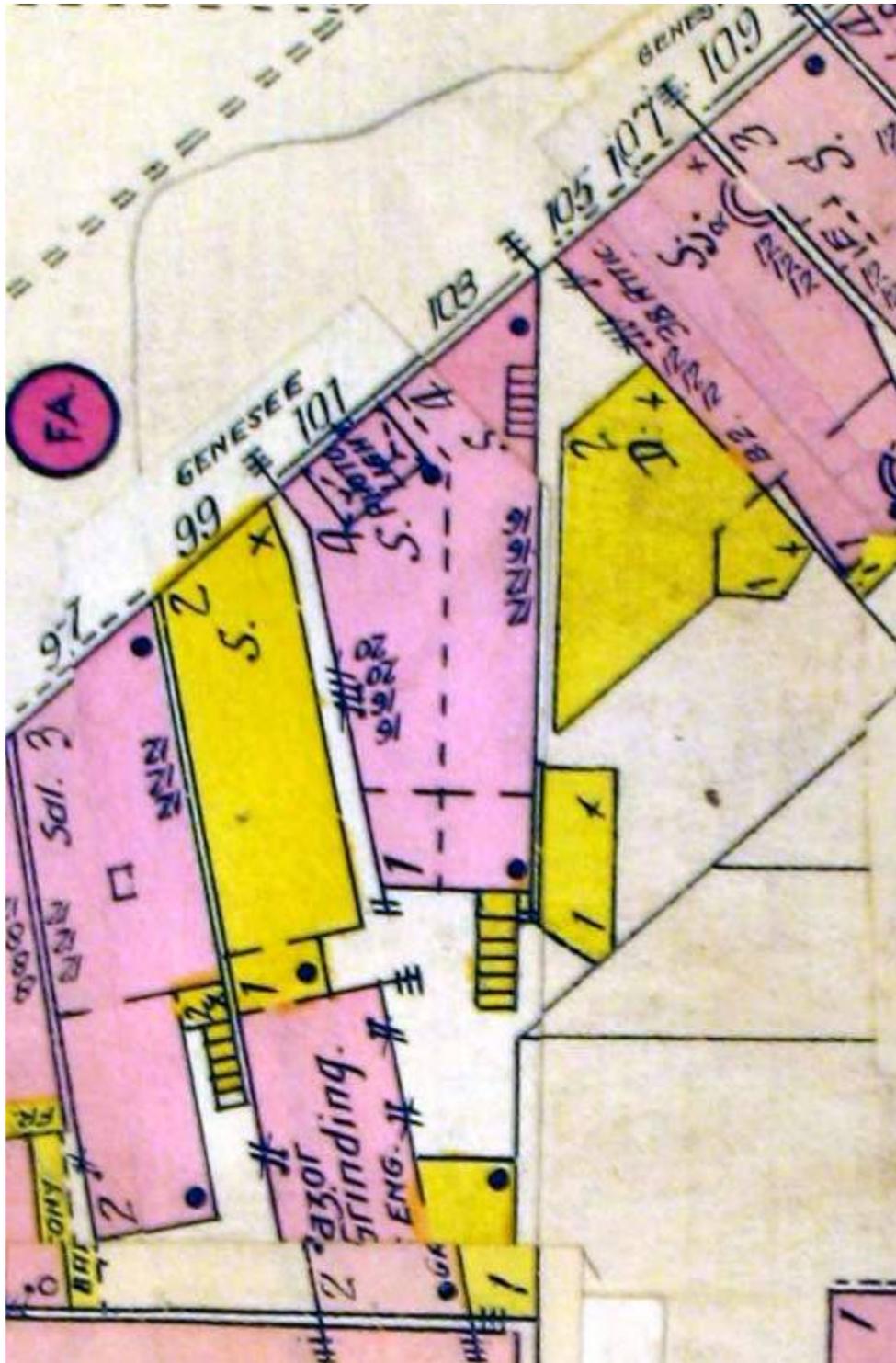


(33) Detail, 1889 Sanborn Map  
Highlighted is the current area of the Werner Building.

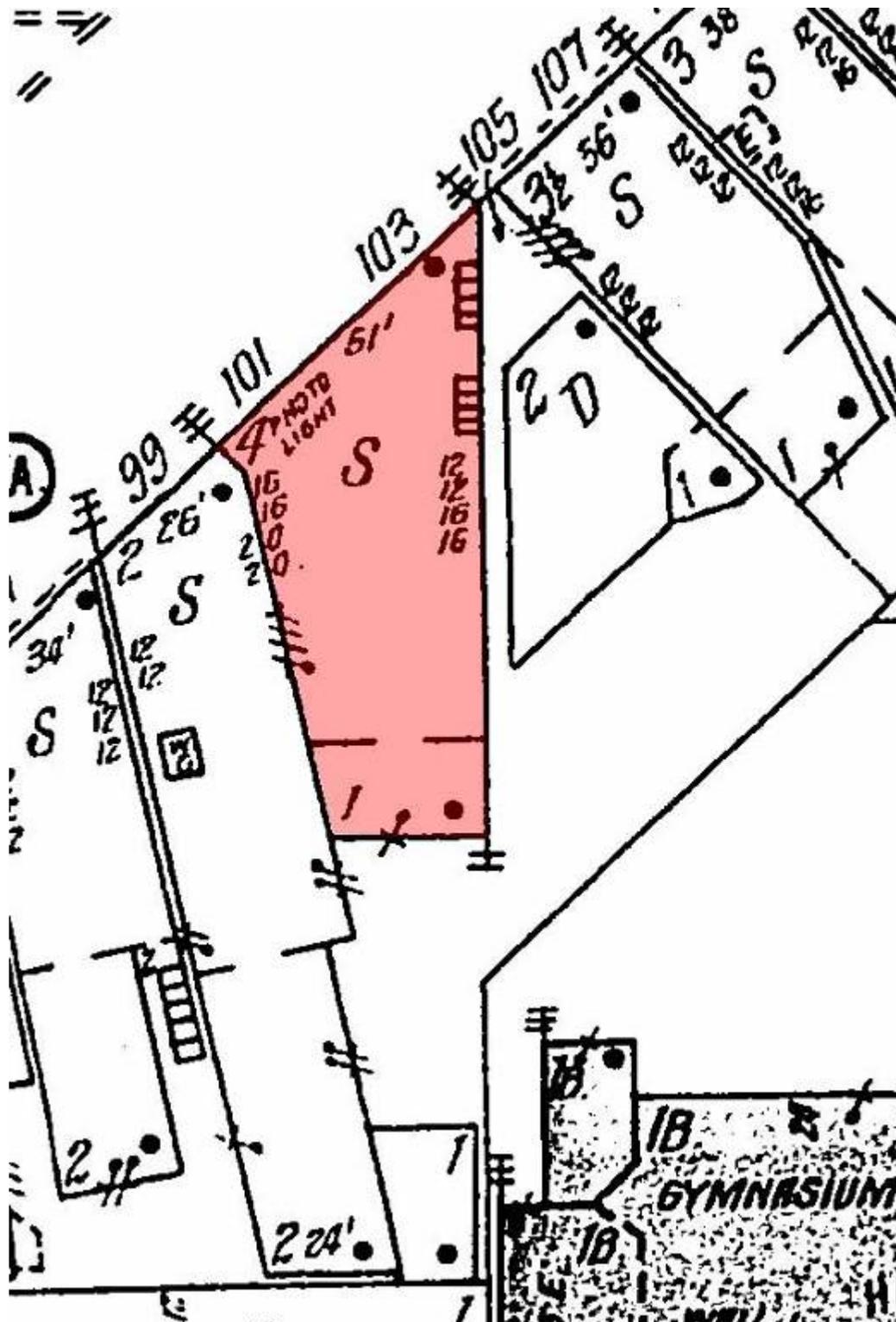


(34) Detail, 1899 Sanborn Map

Note that the Werner Photography Building in 101-103 has been constructed. Identified is the interior partition, the "photo light" and an interior stair. Also note that the building at 99 Genesee Street does not connect to the western façade of the Werner Building, indicating it is still the previous wood frame pre-1870s building.



(35) Detail, 1889 Updated 1916 Sanborn Map  
Note that the building remains largely unchanged since the 1890s when it was constructed.



(36) Detail, 1925 Sanborn Map

Note the construction of the building at 99 Genesee Street, adjacent to the pre-existing building at 101-103 Genesee Street.