

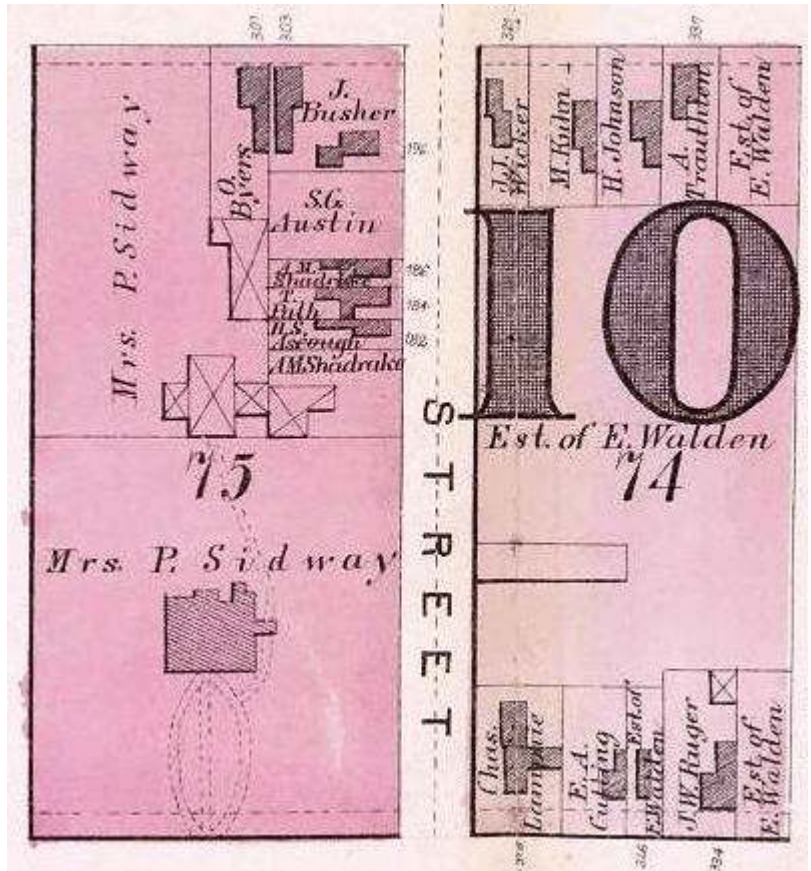
ginia Street to Elmwood Avenue, down Elmwood Avenue to Allen Street, down Allen Street to Days Park, down north side of Days Park (Norris Place) to Cottage Street, then down Cottage Street to Hudson Street, Hudson Street to Plymouth Avenue, then down Plymouth Avenue to Connecticut Street, finally down Connecticut Street to Niagara Street.¹² The turn from Pennsylvania Street to Wadsworth Street was too difficult for the streetcars and Frederick Law Olmsted's design for Symphony Circle had to be altered to accommodate the streetcars in the early 1880s.¹³ The intersection of Pennsylvania Street and Wadsworth Street, which was widened for the streetcars, was restored and narrowed back to its original Olmsted design in the late 1990s.

More streetcar lines soon followed in the 1880s: in 1882 the Allen Street; in 1884 the Jersey Street; and in 1886 the West Avenue line was opened. Before that time, unless a person owned a horse, walking was the only way to commute between Buffalo's northern neighborhoods and the waterfront or downtown districts where most of the commerce was carried out in the City of Buffalo, including the Sidway business block. In the late 1840s and early 1850s, the first block of Plymouth Avenue was very rural, a distinct contrast to its present day urban character.

The Sidways Get Neighbors

Although the Sidways were pioneers in the neighborhood that today is called Allentown, the rest of the neighborhood was not developed until after 1850 and the vast majority of it was not settled until after the Civil War. This was due to lack of water lines past Chippewa Street until after 1850 and lack of adequate transportation.

In an unusual development for a neighborhood so far removed from city conveniences, the Sidway family soon had neighbors after they moved into their remote home. About 1847, Ann Busher and her family purchased the northwest corner of Plymouth Avenue and Pennsylvania Street, one of the few lots that the Sidway family did not own on the block. Ann Busher, a widow with a family, then built a home at 196 Twelfth Street (present site of **56 Plymouth Ave.**) Ann lived at the home with her sons Frank, Philip, Frederick and Charles. By the early 1850s Ann's oldest son, Charles Busher, a Lake Erie mariner, built a home on the northwestern edge of the 99 x 115.5 foot lot, at the present site of **303 Pennsylvania Street** where he lived with his wife Mary F. and their daughters Flora and Sarah. Mary Busher was one of the earliest members of the Plymouth Methodist Episcopal Church.¹⁴



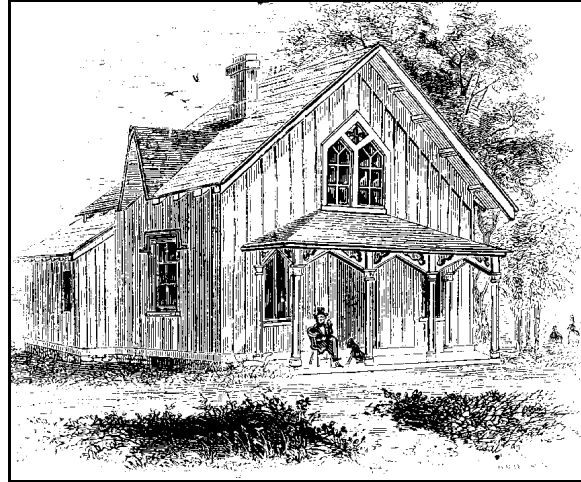
1872 atlas of Plymouth Avenue's first block, showing site of Sidway mansion and neighbors.

In the early 1850s, three other modest-sized houses were built to fill the gap between the Sidway family and the Bushers, creating a burgeoning community. In 1853 Thomas Bath built a house at 184 Twelfth Street (now **44 Plymouth Ave.**). In 1854 the Shadrake family built a house at 186 Twelfth Street (now **46 Plymouth Ave.**) and in 1855 Joseph Howe built a house at 182 Twelfth Street (now **42 Plymouth Ave.**). These homes were 1½ story frame structures, that, while dwarfed by the Sidway mansion, nonetheless represented a small community on Twelfth Street between Hudson and Pennsylvania Streets during the 1850s. It must have been a tightly-knit community in which each depended on the other for survival.

Mr. Thomas Bath (circa 1805-1882), who built the house at **44 Plymouth Avenue** in 1853, came to Buffalo from England in the early 1840s and entered the law profession as a clerk. Soon after his arrival, he began his career at the Erie County Clerk's office where he remained for 15 years, eventually becoming Commissioner of Deeds. After his tenure with the County Clerk's office, he worked for John Ganson's law office. The firm changed names

several times and was eventually called Sprague, Millburn & Sprague. Ganson was at one time a law partner with E. G. Spaulding, Franklin Sidway's father-in-law. Ganson and Spaulding were both U.S. Congressmen; Ganson defeated Spaulding in the 1862 Congress race.

The house that Bath built at **44 Plymouth Avenue** was modified several times. It appears to have originally been built as a one story cottage, located in the center of the present configuration of the house. The house appears to have been expanded toward the front of the lot and a second story added; then the house appears to have been expanded in the rear. The house appears to have had its last major remodeling circa 1880. The house had a double entrance door, a full front porch with woodwork typical of the 1880s, two large windows on the first floor and a second floor bay window on the front facade. Inside, an 1880s style newel post was installed at the main staircase and pocket doors separated the hall from the first floor living room. There was good reason to enlarge the house; Thomas Bath's family included his wife Louisa A. (1811-10/7/1885) and their seven children: William, Thomas, E. Jr. (1842 - 1/16/1876), Emma M. (1845 - 10/16/1928), Ellen, Benjamin F. (1850 - 4/10/1891), Mary A. (1852 - 9/14/1930), and Charles. Emma was very involved with the Plymouth M. E. Church and Sunday School. When Thomas Bath, Jr. was 35, he died from an apparent morphine overdose, distraught over the loss of his wife. At the time of Thomas Bath Sr.'s death in 1882, he was the oldest law clerk in Buffalo. The funerals of Thomas Bath, Jr. and Sr., were held at **44 Plymouth Ave.**¹⁵



1½ story cottage designed by Lewis Allen in early 1850s, probably similar to the original appearance of 42-46 Plymouth Ave. *Rural Architecture, Lewis F. Allen.*

Next door to the Baths, the little cottage at **46 Plymouth Ave.** was built in 1854 by Frederick Shadrake (9/8/1801 - 8/16/1867) and his wife Ann Miriam Hudson (7/29/1807 - 3/11/1878) as their family home. Frederick and Ann were born in London and married in 1828 at St. Matthew's Church, Bethnal Green, a neighborhood in Tower Hamlets, adjacent to the east side of London, England. The Shadrakes left England for Buffalo about 1834 and Frederick became a U.S. citizen in 1838. Frederick was a master house and sign painter and although he passed away in 1867, Ann continued to live in the home. Frederick and Ann had seven children: Frederick (d. 1849), Francis (1833-10/14/1907), Charlotte (10/15/1834 - 3/9/1877), Edward, Emma (1/21/1844 - 12/11/1880), Agnes (7/6/1844 - 3/26/1879) and Elizabeth, also known as Edith (3/17/1848 - 11/16/1886). The Shadrakes were longtime members of the Trinity Episcopal Church, joining when the church was located at Washington and Mohawk Streets. Their son Edward was baptized on 11/27/1837. In the 1840s, Frederick was a sexton for Trinity Church and his son Francis was a "blow boy."¹⁶

In addition to his home at **46 Plymouth Avenue**, Frederick Shadrake also owned a building, possibly used for their painting business, situated on a 73½ foot lot located at approximately **34-38 Plymouth Avenue**.

By the mid-1860s, the Shadrake's son Francis had married Eliza and moved to 27 13th Street (now Normal Ave.) between Pennsylvania Street and Porter Avenue. Francis joined his father in the business and by 1867 it was known as Shadrake and Son, painters at the corner of Swan and Washington Streets. In June 1876, Francis and Eliza had their only child, a daughter, Una F. Shadrake. In 1881, Francis Shadrake built the twin Second Empire style cottages at **95-99 Plymouth Ave.**, north of Pennsylvania Street, just a short distance from the family homestead. Francis initially rented out the twin houses he built, but moved to **95 Plymouth Avenue** by 1890.

Death was no stranger to the Shadrakes, like many Victorian-era Buffalonians. In that era, death was romanticized and the Shadrake family erected a beautiful marble columnar memorial in Buffalo's picturesque Victorian cemetery, Forest Lawn. Frederick and Ann's first son, Frederick Jr., died when he was a young boy in 1849 of smallpox. When Ann passed away, her wake was held in the family home and her obituary reminded her friends and family that she left **46 Plymouth Avenue** for "a better and happier world - to her home beyond the skies - there to mingle ceaseless hallelujahs with the spirit of the faithful departed awaiting in sweet communion and in the comfort of a holy hope in the final entrance into everlasting glory. Truly, blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."¹⁷

By 1880, **46 Plymouth Avenue** had passed into the ownership of Ann and Frederick's daughter, Emma Shadrake-Baker and her husband James H. Baker (9/1/1836 - 2/6/1914), who were married in 1864. Baker was a boat builder who operated his business (called Baker and Shadrake) on Plymouth Avenue in the old Shadrake barn

building (demolished, formerly located approximately at **34-38 Plymouth Avenue**). James and Emma lived at **46 Plymouth Avenue** with their children: Frederick J. (6/1865 - 3/5/1887), Sarah A. M. (b. 1868), Charlotte (Lottie) K. (b. 1871), Agnes E. (1873 - 4/13/1934) and Hattie E. (b. 1876) along with Emma's sister Edith. Sadly, Emma died in 1880 and Edith died at the end of 1886. Just two years after Edith died, the Shadrake homestead and barn property was sold. It briefly passed into Sarah Baker's hands. She had married George R. Vaughan, a grocer with a business called George Vaughan and Son (227 Allen Street), but the house was quickly sold after that. The former barn property at **34-38 Plymouth Ave.** was also sold and soon thereafter, two beautiful homes were built on the site.

It is obvious that the Bath family at **44 Plymouth Avenue** and the Shadrake-Baker family at **46 Plymouth Avenue** were close friends. Emma Bath was one of the executors of Edith Shadrake's will. Sisters Emma, a nurse, Ellen, a dressmaker, and Mary Bath never married. For over 30 years, Ellen and her sister Mary Bath lived with Agnes E. Baker. Perhaps Mr. Bath, influenced Mr. Baker's son's vocation, for his child, Fred J. Baker, became a law student.

The last house within this group of pre-Civil War cottages at **42 Plymouth Ave.** was built for Joseph H. Howe, a house painter, and his wife, Sarah Ann Howe. They moved from 111 S. Division Street to **42 Plymouth Avenue** in 1855. By 1867, 42 Plymouth had been sold to William and Hannah C. Ascough (b. 1819). William was a manufacturer and machinist. William and Hannah were longtime members of the Plymouth Methodist Episcopal Church, being members as early as 1866.¹⁸

The east side of Plymouth Avenue between Hudson Street and Pennsylvania Street was undeveloped except for its southeast corner at Hudson Street. Charles Lamphier, who owned a house, sign and boat painting business at 95 Main Street, constructed a substantial brick home in the late 1850s. The address of the home which Lamphier built was known alternatively as **5 Plymouth Avenue** or **316 Hudson Street**.

The Sidways' new neighbors had a very different economic status than the Sidway family. According to an 1860 census, after the Sidways, the most valuable property on the block belonged to Frederick Shadrake of **46 Plymouth** and it was valued at \$2,600 (the price was high because in addition to his house at **46 Plymouth Ave.**, Shadrake also owned a barn-building at **34-38 Plymouth Avenue**). In descending order of value was Charles Lamphier's home on Plymouth and Hudson across from the Sidway family, \$2,500; the Busher property at **56 Plymouth Ave.**, \$2,000; Joseph H. Howe's house at **42 Plymouth Ave.**, \$1,000, and Thomas Bath's home at **44 Plymouth Ave.** was valued at \$800. By significant contrast, Parnell Sidway's home was valued at \$198,000 in 1860. While separated by economy, the Plymouth Avenue families shared a close geographical space and formed a small yet cohesive community.

A Tale of Two Sons

By 1860, the Sidway household on Hudson St. and Plymouth Ave. included Parnell Sidway; sons Franklin and James; daughter Katherine and her husband Asaph S. Bemis; and Le Grand St. John, Parnell's brother. Also in the household were four servants: a 26-year-old Irish coachman named John McGinnis and his 25-year-old wife Bridget, along with two seamstresses: 23-year-old Margaret Hoag and 21-year-old Agnes Kearns.

Both the Sidway family and the Shadrake family, on Plymouth Avenue, lost sons in the prime of their lives during the 1860s: James Henry Sidway and Edward Shadrake.

James Henry Sidway (8/9/1839 - 1/25/1865) grew to become a handsome and heroic young man, volunteering as a fireman and assistant foreman for the Taylor Hose Company Number 1. A terrible fire had erupted at the American Hotel, located on the west side of Main Street between Court and Eagle Street, where Main Place Mall is today. While battling the fire on January 25, 1865, a large brick wall along Pearl Street collapsed, instantly killing James along with two other volunteer firemen. James Sidway was only 25 years old when he died. The social gaiety that frequently took place at the Sidway mansion came to a sudden end after James Sidway's



James Sidway
BECHS Collection.

death.

The American Hotel where James Sidway died was also the place where Abraham Lincoln delivered a speech from its balcony in 1861 when he stopped in Buffalo on his way to his inauguration. That same year on February 28, E. G. Spaulding gave an elaborate dinner at the National Hotel in Washington in honor of the President-elect. Charlotte Spaulding, E. G. Spaulding's daughter and Franklin Sidway's future wife, was at the dinner. The site of the American Hotel was located just a block away from where James' grandmother Margaret had saved the St. John house from fire just over half a century before.

Just a year and a half before James Sidway's untimely death, Plymouth Avenue lost another young man in an equally selfless act of giving his life for others. Far from his home at **46 Plymouth Avenue**, Lieutenant Edward Shadrake (2/1/1837 - 6/10/1863) died in the service of the Civil War in New Orleans at the age of 26 on June 10, 1863. Shadrake was in Co. K, 1st Regiment, United States Volunteers, Colonial Daniel Ullman's Brigade.

The U.S. Volunteers were soldiers not associated with any particular state nor were they in the regular U.S. army. Daniel Ullman was a Yale-educated New York City attorney who was commissioned in 1863 as a brigadier general of the U.S. Volunteers through President Lincoln, who sent him to raise African American regiments in Louisiana. This was an historic event because previously African American troops, when organized, were used strictly for the purposes of labor. But Ullman's brigade was different. It was formed so that African American troops could actually fight for the Union cause. Ullman met with much resistance from both the Confederacy and the Union because of prejudice toward African Americans. Confederate leaders in particular were enraged with Ullman's brigade, because the thought of African Americans bearing arms realized the Confederates' worst fears. The Confederates swore to return the African American troops to slavery, if captured, and to hang their white officers (all of the officers of these units were white).

The regiments first started out on March 11, 1863 as "1st Regiment, Ullman's Brigade, U.S. Volunteers," later to be known as the "6th Regiment Corps d'Afrique" and finally known as the "78th U.S. Colored Troops," but the troops had its beginnings even earlier, in 1862. Ullman's brigade was a three-year volunteer unit and the officers of companies B through H were largely from Erie County, NY. Ullman granted commissions to hundreds of officers in New York State during February and March 1863 in preparation for the regiments he would organize in Louisiana later that year. All through March 1863, Buffalo newspapers ran items about the regiment, as the formation of the African American troops must have been a controversial and passionate endeavor.

It is likely that Edward Shadrake, who was born in New York State, was in the service only for a few short months, as he probably enlisted as a Second Lieutenant in March 1863 and went to Louisiana, likely for anti-slavery reasons. The U.S. Colored Troops attracted many idealists and purist abolitionists (not to mention a few black sheep allured perhaps by the officer status).

Shadrake's specific contribution to the war effort is difficult to ascertain, because of the poor quality of the records collected about the U.S. Colored Troops. They were not appreciated nor given full credit and many of the records were not properly archived or were lost. Nonetheless, the U.S. Colored Troops were crucial to the Union war effort. While the Confederate army didn't release its enlistees at the end of their agreed-upon term of service, the Union army allowed soldiers to leave service after their term was up, typically a three-year period. In 1864, after their three-year term had expired, many Union soldiers left and didn't reenlist. Without the help of African American soldiers, many of whom enlisted in 1863, the Civil War may have taken much longer with many more lives lost.

In any event, it is known that Shadrake passed away on June 10, 1863 in New Orleans from disease, but his death may have been hastened by his participation in the battle of Port Hudson, Louisiana from May 21-July 9, 1863, which had more than 12,000 casualties. Ullman's first three regiments fought in this battle as the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Regiments of the Louisiana Native Guards (as they were known in 1862) but these regiments became Ullman's first three units.

All in all, Ullman's Brigade is a fascinating chapter in the Civil War and a testament to Edward Shadrake's principles and dedication to both abolition and preserving the Union. Both Shadrake and Sidway - selfless and heroic neighbors - died as young men in the act of saving others. And both parents - the Sidways and the Shadrake's - shared their grief and bittersweet knowledge that their sons gave their lives so that others may live. Even in death Edward and James are neighbors, as they are both buried in Buffalo's Forest Lawn cemetery.

The Byers Family

In the 1860s, another family, the Byers family, shared the south side of the block of Pennsylvania Street between Plymouth Avenue and West Avenue. James William Byers (7/28/1831-1910), a Scotsman, left Cavan County, Ireland for the United States on March 31, 1849 arriving in New York City. There, he learned the baker's

trade and lived at several locations in New York State and Canada until arriving in Buffalo in 1862 where he would live the rest of his days.

In Buffalo, J. William Byers became a successful carpenter. He married Olivia Anderson and together they had four children: Sarah Jane, Martha Ann, William Henry and James Newton.

The family moved into what would eventually be called the Kleinhans neighborhood about 1867 and built **301 Pennsylvania Street** in 1868. When it was built, their home was one-story in height. In 1878, the Byers family moved next door into **299 Pennsylvania Street**, a richly detailed two-story gabled Italianate-style home that they had built that year. They then rented out **301 Pennsylvania Street**. By the late 1870s, it was rented by Frank Darrow, a carriage manufacturer. In 1886, **301 Pennsylvania Street** was rebuilt and it took on the two-story appearance that it has today.

Until 1874, carpenter J. William Byers worked for other contractors but that year, he decided to strike out on his own. He started a company that would become a major force in the Buffalo construction business and was in operation for more than 55 years from 1874 until 1930. By the 1880s, J. William Byers' youngest son, the Buffalo-born James N. Byers (8/2/1863 - 4/2/1928) was incorporated into the business. The firm became very successful and the father and son firm were prolific residential builders in the Buffalo area during the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century.

Byers not only lived at **299 Pennsylvania Street** but his business was based at **299-301 Pennsylvania Street**. The Byers' carpenter shop in the rear of **299 Pennsylvania Street** in addition to a shop in back of **301 Pennsylvania Street** was a beehive of activity that employed about 15 carpenters during the season.¹⁹ J. William's wife, Olivia Anderson, died on February 1, 1896 and in 1897 he remarried Mrs. Emma McFadden, widow of Rev. William McFadden. J. William died on August 28, 1910 at his home at that time, **337 Pennsylvania Street**.

James N. was married in October 1886 and moved soon thereafter with his new bride Emma G. Spitzmiller to a home at 31 Elmwood Avenue near the corner of Virginia St. to raise his family. The firm thrived even after J. William's death and James N. became increasingly famous for the fine quality of his firm's work. A third generation then joined the firm, James N.'s son J. Newton Byers, Jr., adding engineering expertise after his graduation from Yale University in 1912. From 1912-1930, J. N. Byers & Son, an engineering-construction firm, built some of Buffalo's most prominent homes and commercial buildings. Some of the buildings constructed by the firm included: the Root Building, 70 W. Chippewa St. (Designed by Esenwein & Johnson); the Lincoln Building, 323 Washington St.; the U.S. Rubber Co. warehouse on Swan St. near Michigan Ave.; the Byers Building at 700 Main St.; and the Film Building, 505 Pearl Street. In 1902 James Newton Byers built the Seymour H. Knox home at 1035 Delaware Ave. at the corner of W. Utica St. and in 1915 he built another Knox home at 806 Delaware Avenue. James N. Byers and J. Newton Byers, Jr. also built the Knox residence on Oakland Place and the Forman Mansion on Oakland Place, now the residence of the bishop of Buffalo. The firm also built the Rand residence on Delaware Avenue and the Albert F. Laub home at 1272 Delaware Avenue, and the Ansonia building among others.²⁰ According to the *History of the Niagara Frontier*, James "closely adhering to the policy of honest, straightforward dealing instituted by his father, carefully supervised every phase of the work, never allowing the smallest detail of a contract to be slighted, and made his organization a recognized leader in this field."²¹

James N. Byers' last home was at 900 Delaware Avenue. Two children survived his death in 1928: Mrs. J. Sterling Deans, Jr., and J. Newton Byers, Jr.²² The Byers construction firm was dissolved by 1930, within two years of James N. Byers' death.

1870-1900 Period

1870-1880

While the early residents' pioneering settlement from the 1830s had influenced the first block of Plymouth Avenue, the 25-year period from 1870 to 1895 indelibly shaped the street and has essentially formed it as it appears today.

Over a three-year period, from 1873 to 1876, events occurred to rename "Twelfth Street" "Plymouth Avenue." In 1868 the Jersey Street Methodist Episcopal Church was built at the northwest corner of Jersey Street and Twelfth Street. After a disastrous fire in 1873, members of the Methodist congregation were determined to build another church. They sold the lot where their old church burned down to the city of Buffalo, and ironically the city of Buffalo built a firehouse on the site in 1875. In 1873 the congregation purchased the triangular-shaped lot across Twelfth Street bounded by Porter Avenue, Jersey Street and Twelfth Street and built a new church there. Inspired by the colonists at Plymouth Rock, they renamed the church Plymouth Methodist Episcopal Church. So it was that

in May 1876, Twelfth Street was renamed Plymouth Avenue at the request of Buffalo Mayor William G. Fargo, a Jersey St. resident himself, along with Frederick W. Gridley, who lived in a mansion located on a triangular estate bounded by Porter Avenue, York Street and the newly renamed Plymouth Avenue. The houses on Plymouth Avenue were renumbered at the time of the renaming of Twelfth Street to Plymouth Ave.

While the west side of the street, where the Sidways, Shadrakes, Ascoughs, Baths and Bushers lived, was well established by the 1850s, the east side of the street was mostly undeveloped. Except for Charles Lamphier's home at the northeast intersection of Hudson Street and Plymouth Avenue and the Wickser family home at the southeast corner of Pennsylvania Street and Plymouth Avenue, the rest of the block was unbuilt. That was to change by the early 1870s.

In 1872, the Ascoughs remodeled their home at 182 Twelfth (**42 Plymouth Ave.**), and then built a house across the street at **39 Plymouth Ave.**; both houses were designed similarly in the gabled Italianate style.

Also in 1872, builder John Cook, Jr. (b. 1842), constructed nine houses on a large lot he owned on the first block of Plymouth Ave. Cook was the son of John Cook, Sr. (b. 1826), a carpenter; their family lived in the neighborhood on Plymouth Ave. near Connecticut Street. Between November 1872 and April 1873, John Cook, Jr. sold the houses he built to the following individuals:

<u>Address</u>	<u>Purchaser</u>	<u>Price</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Purchaser</u>	<u>Price</u>
17 Plymouth	Frank Hammond	\$3,787	31 Plymouth	Luther G. Fish	\$2,700
21 Plymouth	Hannah E. Spencer		33 Plymouth	James Kelley	\$3,000
23 Plymouth	James H. Rodebaugh	\$3,500	35 Plymouth	Ann Frame	\$3,000
25 Plymouth	William Guy	\$3,500	49 Plymouth	Sarah S. Jones	\$2,600
29 Plymouth	Rosmond P. Johnson	\$2,400			

Cook subdivided his land into building lots that were about 25 feet wide and were two-to-three feet above street level. Although all built at the same time, Cook designed the houses to be slightly different from each other, following two basic designs: either a gable or "L"-shape Italianate style. The general design of the homes consisted of a primary structure and rear wing. Although Cook built the primary and wing portions at the same time, it was common practice for Americans of the era to build a one or 1½ story wing and then as their budget permitted, the front portion house would be built. The houses that Cook built were two stories high, wood-frame, had partial cellars, natural gas for lighting, sewer service and each had a spring-fed water well. Cook installed cane-fiber felt insulation between the planks and siding of each house. Decorative architectural features included double entrance doors; arched or segmental windows; wide overhanging eaves; single or paired Italianate-style brackets and dentil moldings applied to the front gable. Some had front and/or back porches. Inside, on the first floor, each home featured a hallway, parlor, dining room, library and kitchen wing. An elliptical staircase with an octagonal newel post led to the second story containing three or four bedrooms and a bathroom.²³ For a time, Cook lived at **49 Plymouth Ave.** and in sales literature from early 1873, he described the homes as "well-built" and in a "splendid neighborhood."²⁴

Except for the Italianate styling details adorning the houses that John Cook, Jr. built on Plymouth Ave. in 1872, they were of the type that had been built for decades earlier during the nineteenth century. Cook, a builder and not an architect, likely took his cues from then-contemporary building periodicals that published house designs.

An architect of the period, Samuel B. Reed, published house plans in the periodical *American Agriculturist* from 1875-1878 that were then reprinted in the book form *Village and Country Residences* in 1878. Like the houses that Cook built on Plymouth Avenue, the houses that Reed designed were for village sized-lots 25 feet wide.

Reed shared his designs for the wing and the main house separately. Typical of Victorian house building literature of the day as popularized by A. J. Downing in the 1840s, Reed waxed as much philosophically about his house designs as he did about the technical aspects of construction.

Reed advocated that the construction of a house "starter" wing was an expression of one's "progressive character, rather than a conclusive result." He recommended that "beginning a home by starting with a room or two, as present means will allow, and increasing its dimensions as can be afforded, without the precarious aid of the money-lender, is honest, independent, and best



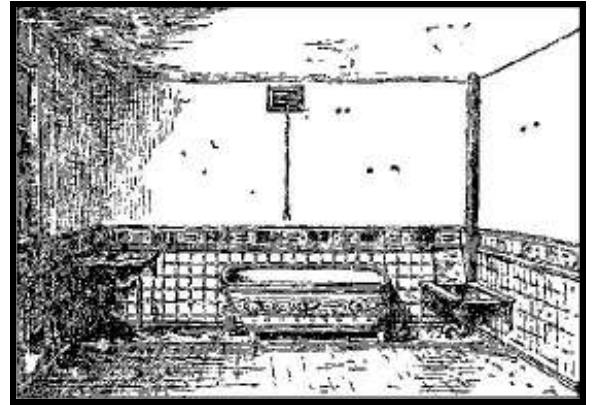
House designed by E.C. Gardner in 1875, very similar to houses built by John Cook on Plymouth Ave. in 1875.

provides against the ever-changing vicissitudes [circumstances or fortune] of life.”

As the owner’s financial situation improved, Reed recommended that the owner enlarge the house by building a main portion adjacent to the wing. During the Victorian era, if an owner had followed Reed’s advice, it would have been very common for the owner to move the wing to the back of their lot and then construct the front portion closest to the street. Although Cook built the houses on Plymouth Avenue completed with the wing attached, the style and philosophy was something with which Buffalonians would have been very familiar.

Reed called his design (very similar to the one that Cook built on Plymouth Ave.), “complete in convenience, appearance, and economy.” While the house was not grand, it was indeed a comfortable house and large enough for a family. To add to the feeling of spaciousness, Reed specified a ceiling height of nine feet on the first floor and eight feet on the second floor.

Another nationally-known architect of the period, E.C. Gardner, wrote in 1875, that “the sooner a man resolves to limit his desires, in the way of a house, to such a one as he can reasonably hope to own without sacrificing the best part of his life for it, the longer and the happier he will live.” The house that Gardner designed was very similar to the ones that Cook built in 1872. Key features of the house included: the irreproachable front hall and petted front stairs; the orthodox parlor with delectable sliding-doors into the sitting and dining-room; the respectable family-room with a closet for *paterfamilias*, ditto for *mater*; cabbage cut-off between kitchen and dining room; the adorable back stairs; the accommodating side entrance; the coveted bath-room, “chief station on the heavenward route;” the indispensable cellar and a hospitable pantry. Four bedrooms were located upstairs. The room height on the first floor was nine feet. Gardner described his client’s wish for the house to be a “two-story house with green blinds and them sort of fixin’s under the eaves,’ meaning scroll-sawed brackets.”²⁵



Indoor bathrooms became common in Buffalo during the 1870s like this bathroom designed by E.C. Gardner.



35 Plymouth Avenue as it originally appeared.



Design of home published in 1870s in *American Agriculturist* by Samuel B. Reed, very similar in size and appearance to the homes that John Cook, Jr. built on Plymouth Avenue in 1872.



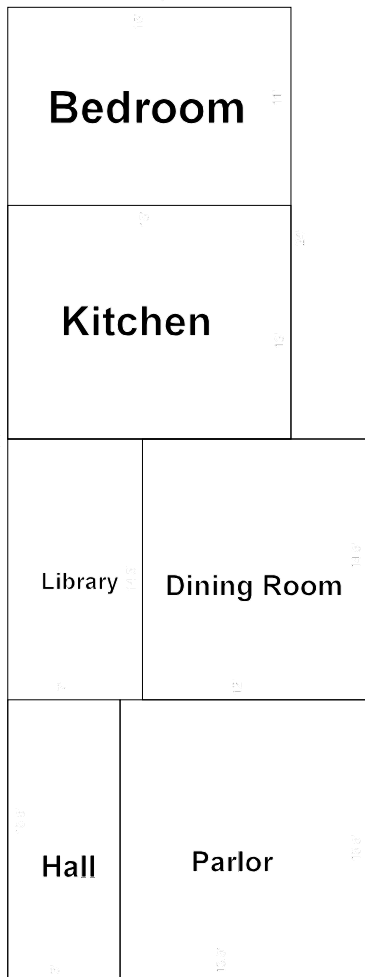
Facade diagram of 21 Plymouth Ave., as built by John Cook, Jr. in 1872.



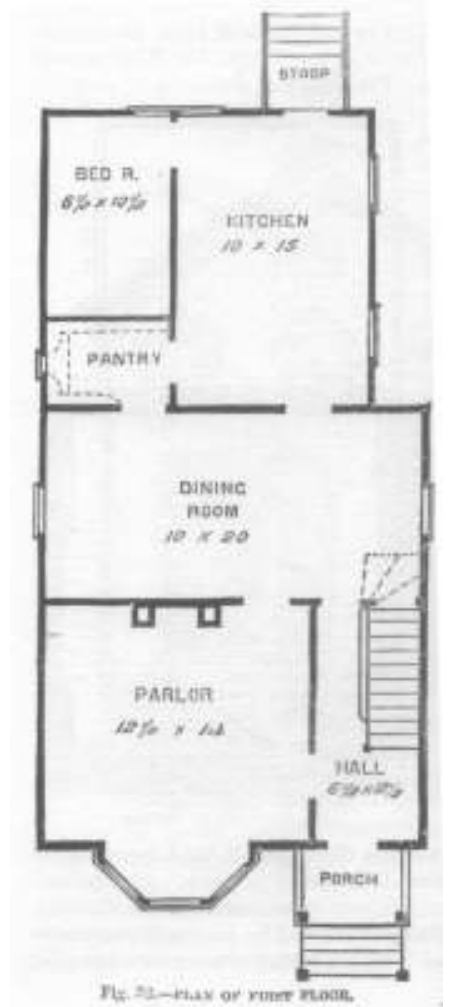
1870s design by S. B. Reed for a “wing” of a house that could be expanded. Architects of the day advocated that young families should build a 1 or 1½ story wing and then build a larger house adjacent to it as their fortunes expanded. It was in this style that John Cook, Jr. built on Plymouth Avenue and elsewhere and it was familiar to Victorian-era Buffalonians.



A house that John Cook, Jr. built during the 1870s on Seventh St. that retains its arched windows and porch. This house is very similar to those he built on Plymouth Ave. and to the designs published by S.B. Reed.



Floor plan of 21 Plymouth Ave., as built by John Cook, Jr.



First floor plan of house designed by Samuel B. Reed in 1870s, very similar to houses built by John Cook, Jr. on Plymouth Ave.



Map of Plymouth Avenue area with landmarks identified. City of Buffalo, 1880, E. H. Hutchinson.



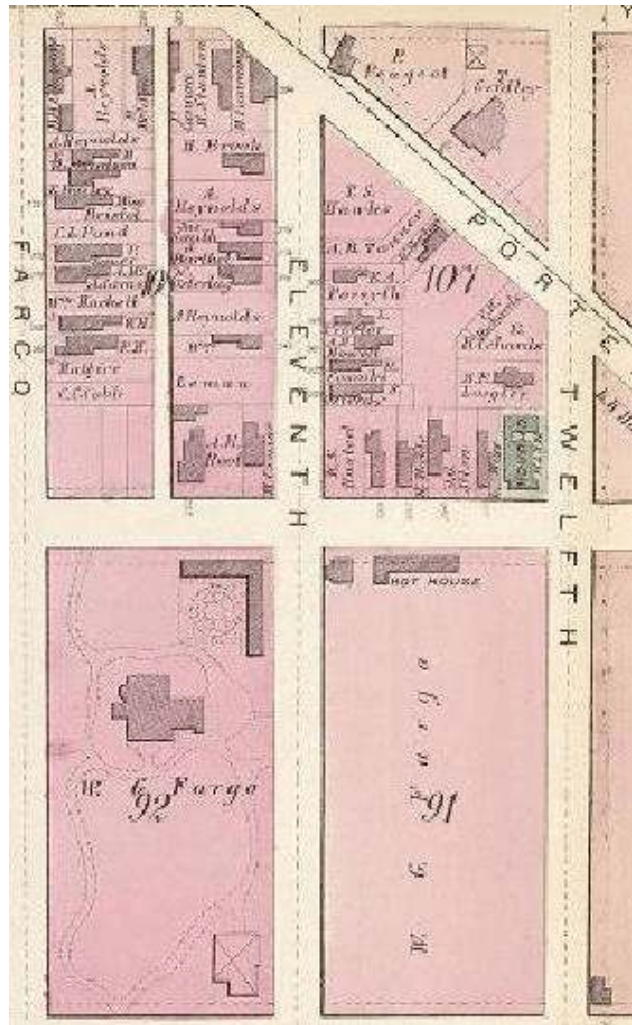
Octagonal newel post found on homes built on Plymouth Ave., from the 1870s.



Typical staircase decorations found on homes built during the 1870s on Plymouth Ave.



When John Cook, Jr. built houses at 17-49 Plymouth Ave. in 1872, Wm. G. Fargo had just completed his mansion two blocks to the northwest. The west side of Plymouth Ave. (between Pennsylvania & Jersey) was the site of Fargo's gardens until developed for housing in the late 1880s.



1872 Hopkins Atlas showing Plymouth Ave. from Pennsylvania St. to Porter Avenue and location of the Fargo mansion.