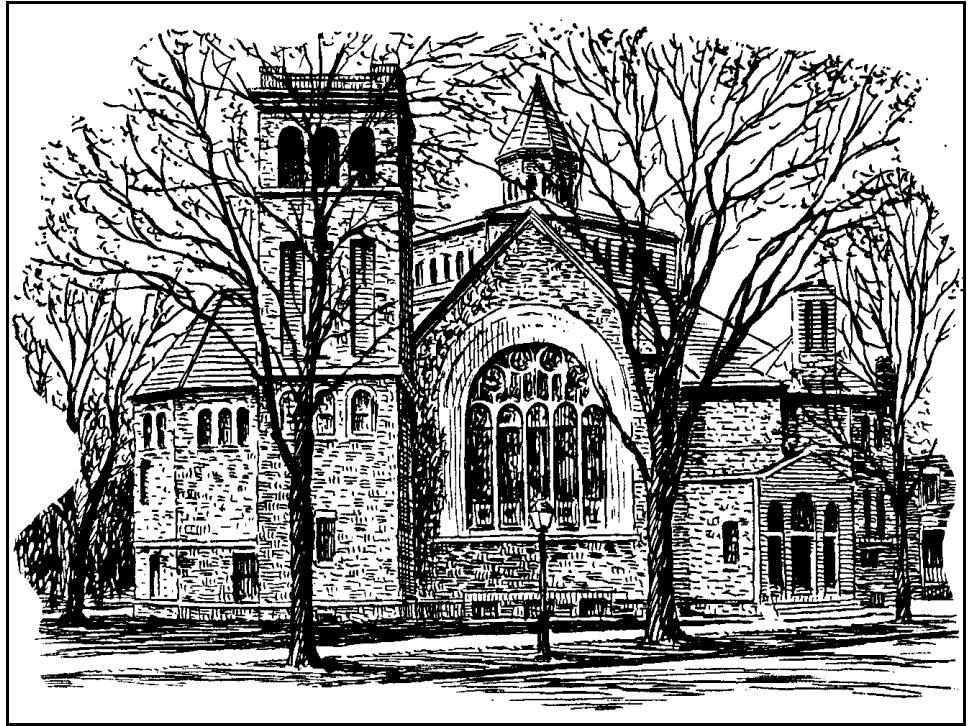


By 1925 the church membership had grown to 1,500, making it the largest Methodist congregation in Buffalo. In 1926, a 50th anniversary of the Men's Club and Annual Rally Day had a number of events including a Sunday School parade with more than 1,000 participants in which each class had an elaborate float.⁹³ The parade started at the church and proceeded down Porter Avenue to Symphony Circle, then down Pennsylvania Street to Prospect Avenue, then to Porter Avenue back to the church. Part of the parade included a procession of a replica of the 1874-1889 brick church, showing the fondness that the congregation had toward the old building.

Members of the congregation never fully agreed on the date of the inception of the Plymouth Methodist Episcopal Church; some claimed it was 1850, others in 1856 and still others in 1859. In 1931, the church celebrated its 75th anniversary, with the date of inception being 1856.⁹⁴

At a uniting conference held in St. Louis, Mo., in May 1939, the three largest Methodist groups became united and formed one church. The word Episcopal was dropped from the name and the church became known as Plymouth Methodist Church.

October 25, 1950 marked the beginning of an eight-day celebration commemorating Plymouth Methodist's centennial founding (the group who held this celebration evidently felt the date the church began was 1850). Its slogan was "Remembering Yesterday: 1850 -- Act Today, 1950, to Guarantee Tomorrow." The originators of this theme were already concerned about the church's future, for in 1925 the membership was 1,500; in 1940 it was 906 and by 1950 it was 718. Still, at that time, the congregation was hopeful for its future. Pastor Rev. Clytus F. Mowry extolled the strengths of the church as having a debt-free splendid



Plymouth Methodist Episcopal Church, 1911 edifice.

church edifice, a strategic location, a loyal supporting membership and a friendly-fellowship reputation.⁹⁵

From 1950 to the late 1960s, the church lost members at an alarming rate. The church attributed the loss of the congregation to the influx of Roman Catholics into the neighborhood (including Puerto Ricans) and the exodus of Protestants to the suburbs. By October 28, 1968, the congregation had dwindled to 155 members. With heavy hearts, the congregation authorized its Board of Trustees to close the church and sell it. The last service of the founding congregation occurred on Thanksgiving Sunday 1968. About 125 people attended the final service.

After the dissolution of the congregation, in 1970 the Western New York Conference of the United Methodist Church donated the property to the Western New York Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in America, in order to assist that church in ministering to its inner city members. The Shaw Memorial A. M. E. Zion Church congregation then occupied the property. By 1982 that congregation's membership had also shrunk -- to about 50 active members. The church requested that the State University of Buffalo School of Architecture conduct a feasibility study to show possibilities for reuse of the property.

That study erroneously concluded that any reuse of the church would be hampered by a deed restriction limiting the use of the property to activities of the Methodist church. To be sure, there is such a restriction in deed liber 457/170, but the study overlooked that deed liber 654/358 of September 24, 1892 removed that restriction. The study nevertheless recommended the reuse of the church as an art center. The irony of that fact is that 14 years earlier, a purchase offer of \$35,000 was made to the Plymouth Methodist Church by the Ashford Hollow Foundation for the Visual and Performing Arts.⁹⁶ Artists Larry and Rod Griffis hoped to use the building as an art and theater center in conjunction with the State University of Buffalo.

In 1982 the Shaw Memorial congregation disbanded, its members having joined other congregations. The church was shuttered and talks of demolition began. Soon thereafter, the church was the first target of the Preservation Coalition of Erie County's "Making Monuments" program. The program was designed to train members and the general public in historic research and to systematically designate significant structures. The effort resulted in the building being designated a city of Buffalo historic landmark in 1989. The church's status as a designated landmark was crucial at several points to ensure the structure's continued existence and integrity.

The fate of the building was still uncertain, however, except for a fortuitous conversation in the early-1990s by Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra cellist Joel Bechtel while visiting a Karpeles Manuscript Library Museum in Santa Barbara, California. That conversation eventually led to David Karpeles, owner of Karpeles Manuscript Library Museum, to purchase the building on August 7, 1995 after many months of negotiations. The building was purchased to house part of Mr. Karpeles' private manuscript collection, the largest in the United States.

After Karpeles purchased the building, he found that the many years of neglect resulted in the building needing more than \$2 million in extensive rebuilding including a new modern high power electrical service, a new main heating boiler system, and much more. The first task of removing truckloads of pigeon droppings took more than two months. Molds were created to replace lost ornate interior pillar capitols. Even some of the huge and ornate copper roof gutters were duplicated and replaced.

On December 18, 1996, the first provisional exhibit was installed while work proceeded. The work continued for more than three years until October 1998 when the first phase of the rebuilding was finished. The building has hosted many community events as well. The former parsonage is now privately owned.

Architectural Assessment - Exterior

The impressive limestone building at **453 Porter Avenue** is styled after an early medieval church. The gabled entrance on Porter Avenue has three round arched entrances flanked by engaged Corinthian columns. The church consists of various bays and wings, two portico-like structures and a bell tower which arrange themselves about a central octagonal form, to a certain extent obscuring the central body from view. Above the center of the building arises a broad octagonal tower surmounted by a lantern or cupola.

The asymmetrical form of the church gracefully fills out the triangular lot which the building shares with the former parsonage at **443 Porter Avenue**. It allows room for the illusion of spacious lawns and creates facades which are significantly oriented to the many streets which approach them. Consequently there is a rewarding view of the church from virtually every direction.

The walls are made from quarry-faced Onondaga limestone cut into rectangles which have straight edges. The stone is laid in subtly irregular coursing, its rustic surface enriched by natural striation, pitting and hints of fossilization. The cupola walls are made of brick faced with stucco which succeeds in looking like smoothly faced limestone. The lantern consists entirely of cut-stone ornament.

Above the walls there is, except for the large window bays, a continuous roof line. This is marked by a wide, elaborately molded gutter, however, not a cornice. This focuses the viewer's attention all the more on the walls, while emphasizing the massive, weighty quality of the red tile roof above them.

The ornamental copper gutter continues across the three sides of the bell tower, where there is no functional need for it. The gutter reappears prominently on the cupola and on the lantern. The capstones over the gables above the large windows are conspicuous because they too are clad in copper.

There is an interesting distribution of decorative stonework in the church: generally, the richness of decoration increases with the height of the area in which it appears. However, the two portal bays, which comprise the most elaborately ornamented stonework on the building, appear within and contrast with the otherwise almost ornament-free lower regions.

Above the doors is wood paneling, enriched by tiny wooden attached columns, and above this, the tympanums are filled with leaded windows.

The church has a number of small windows filled with simple geometric designs made from leaded glass. The windows on the first and second floors are a mixture of yellow and semi-opaque glass while those in the cupola are colorless.

Two large pictorial windows are an impressive feature of the church. As early as 1931 the windows had earned a reputation for being "among the finest in the city," in a city filled with significant ecclesiastical stained glass. The windows are between 15-20 feet wide and are between 20-25 feet high. The large windows contrast with the small windows not only in their size, colorfulness, and enrichment with stone tracery but also in the fact that they, with their wide framing of smoothly cut stone, occupy more area than does the surrounding masonry of their high

gabled bays. Stone tracery divides each one into a five-part arcade with rounded arches surmounted by a simple geometric tracery in which four circles are enmeshed in other, less regular forms. The color of the Tiffany-style translucent glass is visible on the outside, where its blues, blue-greens and violets contrast pleasantly with the slightly yellowish gray of the stone. The tympanum section (arched part of the window) contains symbols -- the four gospels, alpha and omega, the lamb of God -- in the circular panels, other traditional motifs in the other spaces, all integrated into geometric patterns which fit the tracery.

The two pictorial windows are Christ the Good Shepherd in the east (Porter Avenue) window and Christ in the Temple in the south (Jersey Street) window. Each depiction encompasses all five arcade panels of its window.

The window facing Porter Avenue portrays the story of Christ and the lost lamb, or Christ the Good Shepherd. Christ is life-sized, as are the sheep with which he is returning from the hills. In the background are the purple hills of Judea rolling toward the sea of Galilee. The massed clouds in the background are opalesque in color. Houses with curiously domed roofs, characteristic of Eastern architecture, nestle on the shores of the lake at the foot of the range of hills. Trees, rolling meadows, flowers and rocks are portrayed with amazing realism, considering the difficulty of obtaining accurate perspective on glass. The blending of colors also is amazingly realistic. Several shades of green have been applied to the meadows, hills, trees, shrubs and flowers. Christ, bearing the lost lamb back to the fold, is garbed in a robe of white and a mantle of a rich, deep red color. While the window is divided into five panels, the dividing ribs not impair the perspective or general impression of the picture. The window as a whole resembles a real Judean scene.⁹⁷

The second large pictorial window facing Jersey Street portrays the boy Christ in the temple where he is astounding the wise men with his profundity. The lifelike appearance is mesmerizing including the appearance of the robed figures of the wise men grouped around in various attitudes. The boy Christ stands in their midst and his face is radiant as he answers the questions of the Magi. The beautifully blended colors amaze the viewer. The sky in the background is azure blue behind fleecy clouds. There is a robe of a deep red hue, one of green, hangings of green and objects naturally colored such as books, illustrated in detail.⁹⁸

Architectural Assessment - Interior

The structure of the interior is far more complicated than that of the exterior. Under the cupola there is not just one centrally organized space, but two. One of these, the sanctuary, is larger. It is built according to the Akron plan, the pews arranged in arcs along the diagonal of a basically square room so that they face the pulpit and choir which are spread out across one corner. The organ is typically in an alcove or bay behind them.

In line with the diagonal of the sanctuary, separated from it by another large archway filled with a movable curtain wall is another centrally-planned room with a skylight above it. This is the Sunday school assembly room. On two floor levels classrooms, offices, etc. radiate in such a way that they can all open to the assembly room and when the large curtain wall is raised, to the sanctuary itself, of which they then become a part. With the exception of the removal of the pews, the interior is nearly intact.⁹⁹

West Side of Plymouth Avenue

During the time that William G. Fargo owned the west side of Plymouth Avenue between Pennsylvania Street and Jersey Street (block 91) most of it remained undeveloped, especially the Plymouth Avenue boundary. The only structure on the block, in addition to a conservatory that ran along Jersey Street from **281 Jersey Street** to the mid-block of Plymouth Avenue, was a brick building on the southeast corner (presently the site of **281 Jersey Street**). William Fargo died in 1881 and in 1883 his widow Anna remarried William's brother Francis F. Fargo. Anna and Francis continued to live in the Fargo mansion until Anna's death in 1890 and Francis' death in 1891. The Fargo mansion was sold in 1900 and demolished to build the many duplex style houses that currently occupy the site.

Beginning about 1887 executors of William G. Fargo's estate began to sell block 91, one block east of the Fargo mansion bounded by Jersey Street, Plymouth Avenue, Pennsylvania Street and West Avenue for building lots.

The first house constructed on the site of the former Fargo mansion gardens was **88 Plymouth Avenue**, built in 1887. It set the precedent for large substantial houses to be built on the block beginning in the late 1880s and continuing through the early twentieth century. It was the era of the Victorian manse, a house designed with an inexpensive heating source, entertaining and



Howell & Gill of 312 Pennsylvania Street 1897 sidewalk marker near 54 Plymouth Avenue.

servants in mind. Such houses typically had a limestone or sandstone foundation and a full cellar that was divided into laundry, wine, vegetable and furnace rooms. The first floor was often one solid mass of hardwood, containing a large reception hall with grand staircase, two beautiful parlors, a dining room, a conservatory/library, a lavatory and a kitchen with a rear staircase for servants. The second floor would contain four or five bedrooms and a bathroom. The third floor would typically contain a billiard room, rooms for servants and an unfinished attic area for storage.¹⁰⁰



312 Pennsylvania Street, photo circa 1940. Courtesy of Ann M. Angelo.

Many of the homes built on the west side of Plymouth Avenue on the former Fargo mansion gardens were constructed of all brick or at least brick on the first floor. One such house is **312 Pennsylvania St.**, on the northwest corner of Plymouth Avenue. It is a large brick and frame Queen Anne style home built in May of 1890 by contractor Harvey Howell. Howell was a native of Ontario where he was a lighthouse builder before moving to Buffalo about 1880.¹⁰¹ Mr. Howell was from a long line of Buffalo builders and carpenters. Their family home was at 443 York Street near 15th Street. Some of the Howell family members were active in the Plymouth Methodist Episcopal Church. By the turn of the twentieth century, **312 Pennsylvania Street** was home to William W. Clark, a caterer. Later, during the period of 1910-1920, it became the home of Homer Swick. He operated a neighborhood grocery store diagonally across the street at **321 Pennsylvania Street**. Like many corner houses built in Buffalo during the period, **312 Pennsylvania Street** was constructed with a turret on the corner of Pennsylvania Street and Plymouth Avenue, affording commanding views of the surrounding neighborhood. Other corner houses that can be found in the vicinity with turrets include **314 Hudson Street** and **315 Jersey Street**.

Next door at **82 Plymouth Avenue** is also found a home that is a fine example of the Queen Anne style. It features a two-story front porch with a rusticated stone base supporting paired Ionic fluted columns. Interesting modillions peek under the cornice. The main entrance door is given a decorative touch with its round arched multi-lighted panel. Perhaps the home's most impressive architectural feature is its turret rising three stories, capped with a bellcast roof and crocket finial. The detailing never seems to end with the second floor bay windows leading one's eyes upward to gaze at the low relief carvings at the top of the gable. The left side of the house has a large shingled pedimented gable supported by brackets. The house was built for the Heinold family in 1895 who moved there from a few doors down the street at **116 Plymouth Avenue**, a home the family built in 1888. John G. Heinold and his family (wife Wilhelmina, daughter Ruth and son William J.) lived at **82 Plymouth Avenue** for many years; William J. Heinold was reported living at the home in 1934.



82 Plymouth Avenue, photo circa 1940. Courtesy of Ann M. Angelo.

No. **88 Plymouth Avenue**, the first house built on the west side of the block, is a large clapboard-sided house built in 1887 for William F. Duckwitz, general manager of the Ziegele Brewing Company, later known as the Phoenix Brewing Company of Buffalo. Duckwitz was born in New York City on October 16, 1855 and moved to Niagara County with his family when he was young. He attended Bryant & Stratton Business College of Buffalo. At the age of 20, he entered the employment of A. Ziegele. He began as a collector and later was promoted to general manager. Ziegele's successor, the Phoenix Brewery, was incorporated in May 1887 and made more than 100,000 barrels of beer per year.¹⁰² By 1903, he was manager of the International Brewing Company at 1088 Niagara Street.

Several of the homes on Plymouth Avenue were designed by local architects and a lovely example is found at **94 Plymouth Avenue**. The first owner of **94 Plymouth Avenue** was Fred Knoll who owned a piano and organ business at 78 East Seneca Street and other locations. In 1887 Knoll paid \$3,420 for the lot from the estate of William G. Fargo. An announcement in *The American Contractor* stated that Knoll had erected a "handsome dwelling on the Fargo estate."¹⁰³ Knoll's new home was designed by Buffalo architect Charles Day Swan, who often went by "C. D." Swan. He was an important Buffalo architect who actively designed from 1881 until after the turn of the twentieth century. He was quite skilled in the Victorian Queen Anne and Shingle domestic architectural styles. No. **94 Plymouth Avenue** is a fine example of Swan's work. The house is designed in the Queen Anne style with a gabled roof and side wing with an additional gable. The front gable has a pair of windows with a carved wood molding over the pair, joining them. On the second floor of the home, there is a bay window placed asymmetrically and a band of wooden panels unites the bay window with two other windows on the second floor. There is a wonderful original carved geometric panel between the other two windows on the second floor. The first floor features a generous full porch and double carved entry doors. The Knoll family, which included Fred (b. 3/1841), his wife Margaret Caroline Knoll (b. 1/1850), and their two daughters Lu Lu Knoll (b. 4/1871) and Clara J. Knoll (b. 5/1878) lived in the house for many years. After Fred passed away and Lu Lu moved out, Clara and her mother converted the house into a two-family dwelling. They lived on the first floor and rented out the second floor. Clara was obviously influenced by her father's business: although she never married, she became a music teacher and remained in the house for about 50 years until the late 1930s.

The homes at **96 and 100 Plymouth Avenue** are linked historically. They were both built for Captain Alexander Clark, a great lakes steamboat captain. Clark (5/1844 - 4/3/1908) was born in Aura, Ontario, Canada and moved to Buffalo about 1850. While still a young man, he began sailing and soon became a captain. He served as a captain for 35 years and for several years owned his own boat, the *Robert Mills*. After retiring from an active sailing career, he opened and managed the Buffalo Ship Chandlery and Supply Company at 11 Main Street. Clark

was one of the founders of the Ship Masters' Association of the Great Lakes and was the organization's president for nine years. Clark was a member of the First United Presbyterian Church located on the corner of Richmond Avenue and Summer Street.¹⁰⁴

Capt. Clark married Buffalo native Eliza Greene and they had one child, a daughter, Anna Christina Clark, born in July 1869. Eliza Clark purchased the vacant lot at **96 Plymouth Avenue** from the Fargo estate in March 1888. Sadly, Eliza died on December 16, 1889, and her death delayed the construction of the house. Eliza's sister, Nellie Isabella Greene-Breese, (9/20/1857 - 4/8/1929) had recently become widowed from her husband, Frank L. Breese. Shortly thereafter, Alexander Clark and Nellie were wed - it was a common practice in the Victorian era for a man or woman to marry their deceased spouse's sibling. In 1890, the new Clark family decided to go forward and build the house at **96 Plymouth Avenue**. The house was occupied by Eliza and Alexander's daughter Anna, and Nellie's two children from her first marriage: Jane (also called Jennie, 2/1883 - 9/20/1975) and John Clark Breese (b. 10/1886). Changes were soon coming to the household: in 1893, Anna married Edward J. Lannen and left the Plymouth Avenue home. However, her departure was soon followed by a new family addition when in November of 1893, Nellie and Alexander had a daughter together, Henrietta Clark.

A sensational incident occurred at **96 Plymouth Avenue** on Feb. 23, 1900. Alex and Nellie Clark were out of the house and their son, 13-year-old John Clark Breese, brought his neighborhood schoolmates John Huntington, Russell Carrick and brothers Charles and Harry Fillbrick to their home. The boys were playing upstairs when John Clark Breese decided to show off Capt. Clark's 32-caliber revolver. Breese pointed it at his friends "Wild West style," and the gun went off, hitting 13-year-old Huntington. The bullet went through his right lung and was lodged in his back. Although shot, Huntington was able to walk with Breese and the other boys to the home of Dr. W. E. Marshall, a dentist who lived at **322 Pennsylvania Street**, who in turn took him to Dr. Henry Baethig, a physician who lived at 350 Pennsylvania Street. Baethig made arrangements to take the boy to the Fitch hospital where the bullet was removed. Although his injuries were serious, Huntington was expected to recover. John Clark Breese was arrested and held for questioning.¹⁰⁵

Perhaps the shooting incident had an impact on John Clark Breese's sister Jane, who spent her adolescent years at **96 Plymouth Avenue**. She became one of Buffalo's early women physicians. She graduated in 1916 from the University of Buffalo Medical School and worked for many years in the Buffalo public schools.¹⁰⁶ Breese later married Ernest Fowler and lived for many years nearby at 441 Franklin Street.¹⁰⁷

The Clark family lived at **96 Plymouth Avenue** until Capt. Clark retired in 1901 and **96 Plymouth Avenue** was sold to Edward Smith (10/13/1849 - 2/17/1936) and his wife Margaret. The home was then occupied by the Smiths and their six children: Edward J., Frank, Arthur, Howard, Clara and Laura. The Smith family would occupy **96 Plymouth Avenue** for nearly 50 years. Edward Smith was a pioneer of the meat packing industry in the United States. He was one of the founders of Swift & Co. of Chicago, being a partner with brothers Edward P. and Gustavus Swift. Being born on Seneca Street in Buffalo, Smith preferred to live in his hometown rather than move to Chicago. Subsequently Smith, along with several partners, founded the livestock industry in Buffalo and formed several packing companies. The last company that Smith was involved with was the Edward Smith Packing Company, of which he was president until the time of his death. Smith was considered one of the most expert judges of cattle in the U.S. and at the East Buffalo stockyards his judgement of cattle was final and undisputed. Edward Smith loved horses and owned several trotters. Smith remained at **96 Plymouth Avenue** until the time of his death and his funeral services were held in the home on February 19, 1936.¹⁰⁸ At his death, his gross estate was worth \$123,805, a large sum in the midst of the Great Depression.

The Victorian manse at **96 Plymouth Avenue**, so beloved by the Clark and Smith families, is a fine example of Queen Anne style architecture with a brick first floor and frame second and third floors clad in clapboard. A large turret is found on the southeast corner of the home along with a prominent third floor gable with a recessed porch area. The turret roof appears to have been truncated in the twentieth century. Decorative brackets are found beneath the eaves on the second floor.

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Advertisement for Fred Knoll, first owner of 94 Plymouth Avenue.

Like many houses in the area, **96 Plymouth Avenue** has been adapted to the changing needs of its occupants. Most recently, the large dwelling has been divided into three apartments; one on the first floor, one on the second floor, and one on the third floor. The formal entrance of the home boasts fancy turned oak woodwork surrounding the staircase and two large stained glass windows enhancing the staircase landing. The house is in well-preserved condition, perhaps because only five families have owned the house: 1.) the Clark family (1890 - 1901); 2.) the Smith family (1901 - 1948); 3.) the Tagliarino family (1948 - 1956); 4.) the Randazzo family (1956 - 2001) and 5.) the Hand family (2001-present).

In 1892, Capt. Clark of **96 Plymouth Avenue** decided that he wanted to choose his next door neighbors so he built the home at **100 Plymouth Avenue** and rented it out for income. The idea stuck: even when Clark sold his home to Edward Smith, the Smith family also retained ownership of **100 Plymouth Avenue** and rented it out. The house that Clark built at **100 Plymouth Avenue** is a fine example of a Queen Anne style home that features a gabled roof offset with a two-story frame tower with a pentagonal roof. The gable is given a distinctive look with tri-part windows, pilaster strips and an entablature. The top of the gable is decorated with a center medallion supported by brackets. Pedimented dormers on the side of the home add to the detailed accents. The first floor is made of brick, achieving the goal of the Queen Anne style to have a mixture of surface textures. The home's first floor interior retains its detailed wooden ornamentation. Among the first tenants of **100 Plymouth Avenue** were Mr. and Mrs. Hiram Exstein of Exstein & Co., manufacturers and jobbers of men's furnishing goods. After living a few years in this home, the Exstein family moved around the corner to **295 Jersey Street**, built by Richard and William Caudell in the 1890s.



100 Plymouth Avenue is designed similarly to 96 Plymouth and were owned for many years by the same families. They are excellent examples of Queen Anne style architecture designed for small lots. Illustration by Don Mayer.

At **104 Plymouth Avenue** is found another fine example of a Queen Anne style home. The first floor is made of brick and the structure retains its full front porch. The house appears to have been built in 1891 by James N. Byers.

At **108 Plymouth Avenue** is a house built by H. H. Boughton in 1889. Soon after the home's construction was completed, Boughton sold the dwelling to Nathan L. Webb, who had a partnership called Briggs and Webb, owners of the Erie Ice Company.

The large Queen Anne style frame home built in 1888 at **112 Plymouth Avenue** has had an interesting history. Its construction was well publicized as it was announced in three national architectural journals. The home retains most of its original detailing, although as designed, this house was to be built with a slate roof.¹⁰⁹ It was also described as "30x65 feet in size and two stories high, built of brick with metal or slate roof, have carpets, electric

work, furniture, plate and common glass, mantels and grates and hardwood finish and all improvements.”¹¹⁰ The architect of **112 Plymouth Avenue**, Milton E. Beebe, was one of Buffalo’s foremost nineteenth century architects. While it was built of wood instead of brick, it is undoubtedly a Beebe-designed home. The home was built for Henry Zink, whose company was Zink & Hatch. Zink was a prosperous real estate broker who also dealt in stocks, bonds, mortgages, government securities and commercial paper. In addition to Zink’s home on Plymouth Avenue, Beebe also designed Zink and Hatch’s headquarters on Niagara Street at Eagle Street. By all accounts, Henry Zink (born May 1, 1848) was a kind man who began his real estate career at the age of 15 as an errand boy for Pickering & Otto. The firm later became Lee & Pickering and eventually he rose to become the owner of the firm at which time it was called Zink & Hatch. Mr. Zink married Christina Neber in 1870. Mr. Zink lived in the home for only a short time, as he passed away on April 21, 1890. Zink’s funeral was held at **112 Plymouth Avenue** and was largely attended.¹¹¹ Festivities returned to the family after a period of mourning, for in 1891 it was reported that “Miss Mildred Zink of Plymouth Avenue has sent out cards for a dancing party for January 2d at 8 o’clock. The card of the Seminary Class of ‘92 is inclosed.”¹¹² Widow Christina Zink married Frederick Wolter and continued to live at **112 Plymouth Avenue** for a number of years.

The house at **116 Plymouth Avenue** was built in 1888 for John G. Heinold, of the grain shipping firm of Heinold & Rodebaugh. Heinold & Rodebaugh was founded in 1882 by John G. Heinold and James H. Rodebaugh, and the firm was prominent in the grain and mill feed shipping trade of Buffalo. The co-partners were active members of the Merchants’ Exchange; Mr. Rodebaugh was a trustee of that organization and both gave valuable support. Mr. Heinold was a Civil War veteran and was a member of the Post Wilkinson, G. A. R. During the Civil War he served with honor in the 187th New York Volunteer Infantry.¹¹³

Heinold’s partner, James H. Rodebaugh, was the original purchaser of **23 Plymouth Avenue**, on the first block of Plymouth Avenue between Hudson and Pennsylvania Streets in the 1870s. He also built **115 Plymouth Ave.**

The lovely wood-frame Queen Anne style home at **118 Plymouth Avenue**, built in 1888, was originally constructed with a front porch that had a pair of slender fluted supports with fan brackets, a stick balustrade and shingled pediment over the stairs. The home’s main gable is given distinction with tri-part windows with an apron and supporting brackets. The peak of the home’s gable is shingled.

The house was built for Dr. Joseph Williston Grosvenor (1837-1929), a Civil War surgeon. Grosvenor lived to be 93 years old at **118 Plymouth Avenue**. Dr. Grosvenor was born in July 1837 in Brookfield, Mass. and was a graduate of Dartmouth College, class of 1859. He received his medical training at New York University Medical Department. When the Civil War broke out, Grosvenor served as assistant surgeon for the 3d Rhode Island Heavy Artillery and the 11th Rhode Island Infantry. At various times, he had charge of hospitals in Fort Pulaski and Morris Island, Charleston, South Carolina and Alexandria, Virginia.

Grosvenor was married twice. He had a daughter, Mary F. (b. April 1870 in Massachusetts), who later became Mrs. J. N. Noble. Sometime after 1880, Grosvenor moved to New York State and married the widow Maria L. Ely (b. Nov. 1838). **118 Plymouth Avenue** served as the home to Dr. Grosvenor, his wife Maria, his daughter Mary and his two stepsons: Van Horn Ely (b. July 1864) and Fred W. Ely (b. May 1869). Van Horn entered the family real estate business of Bell and Ely. Fred was a 1886 graduate of Buffalo High School and a 1890 graduate of Cornell University.

Dr. Grosvenor practiced medicine in Buffalo and Lockport for 50 years. For many years, he paid 50 to 100 calls a year to the schools in Erie County to speak on patriotism. Grosvenor was an ardent believer in temperance. He was one of the leaders of the Royal Templars of Temperance, a local organization that advocated not to use liquor. He was a distant cousin of the donor of the Grosvenor Library, located at Edward St. and Franklin St., now a part of the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library.¹¹⁴

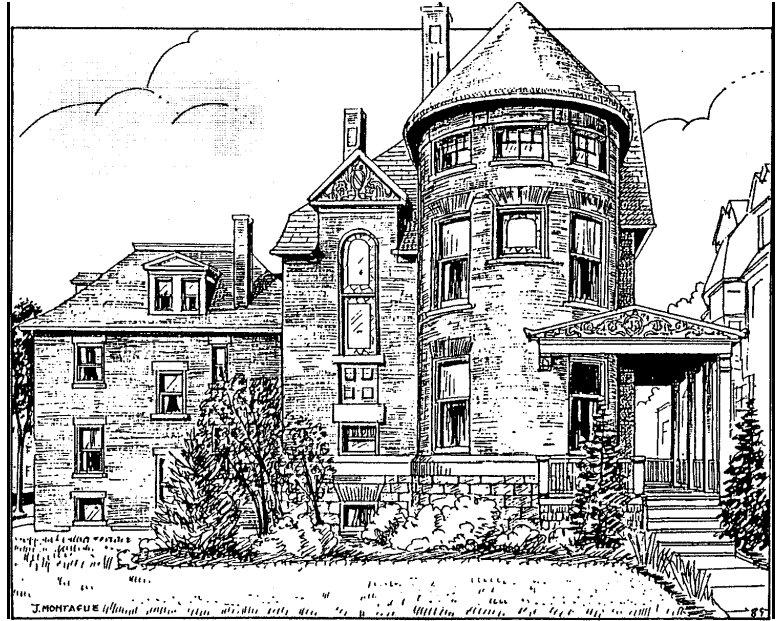
At **124 Plymouth Avenue** is found a brick home built in 1904 (the last built on the block) by James N. Adam,



John G. Heinold, long-term resident of Plymouth Avenue. He built two homes on the street: 116 Plymouth Ave. (1888) and 82 Plymouth Ave. (1895).

Mayor of Buffalo from 1906-1909. It was constructed by John H. Knight and originally cost about \$4,000 to build. Adjoining the property is the beautiful brick home at **303 Jersey Street** built about 1890 in the Queen Anne style with Romanesque influences.

As Plymouth Avenue terminates at Porter Avenue, the view is dominated by three massive buildings; an old firehouse at **310 Jersey Street** on the northwest corner of Plymouth Avenue, a large brick parsonage at **443 Porter Avenue**, and the former Plymouth Methodist Church at **453 Porter Avenue**. Each building was constructed in a slightly different era; the firehouse was built in 1875, the parsonage in 1889, and the church in 1911. What is interesting and unique about these buildings is that they are products from the same architectural firm of Cyrus Porter and his various associates through the years. Like Hudson (formerly Delaware) and Pennsylvania Streets, Jersey Street was originally part of the village of Black Rock's "state" streets, formerly known as New Jersey Street.



303 Jersey Street (Right) and 124 Plymouth Ave. (Left)
Illustration by John Montague.

Engine #2, Hook & Ladder #9

With all the wood-frame housing development occurring in the Allentown neighborhood following the Civil War, there arose a need to create a firehouse to serve the area's many new residents.

Even more people moved to the neighborhood after 1868 when landscape architects Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux designed the new Buffalo park system and the residential parkways that linked them. In the early 1870s the Buffalo Park Commissioners focused their efforts on the implementation of Delaware Park, The Front (now Front Park) and The Parade (now Martin Luther King, Jr. Park).



Engine #2, Ladder #9; Jersey Street at Plymouth Avenue. *Illustration by Dick Lunsford.*

After the initial park implementation efforts, they then constructed the parkways and circles in Olmsted's plan. Olmsted and Vaux's plan designated Porter and Richmond Avenues as parkways and created the parkway system's first juncture, Symphony Circle, to connect them. Fine residential homes soon sprung up along all these roadways.

Joseph R. Williams, the Superintendent of the Fire Department took notice of all the new homes being built and on December 14, 1874 informed Buffalo's Common Council of the "immediate necessity" for a steam fire engine and hose cart near Symphony Circle.¹¹⁵

By early 1875 it was decided to build a fire engine house in the vicinity, although not everyone was in agreement. Clark & Co., a dealer in building hardware at 426-428 Niagara Street, between Hudson and Maryland

Streets, was staunchly opposed to its creation and filed a formal remonstrance with the City. The Common Council denied the remonstrance and designated property which the City owned on Symphony Circle be used for the erection of the new engine house.¹¹⁶ The area the Council designated is presently the site of the Birge Mansion.

Perhaps the Aldermen thought better of using the valuable property around Symphony Circle for an engine house, because they quickly changed the proposed location and purchased a 60 by 126 foot lot on Jersey Street at the northwest corner of Plymouth Avenue.¹¹⁷ According to oral history and tradition, the reason for the change was that William G. Fargo, who had his mansion built a block to the west, wanted the fire engine house built closer to his home in the event of a fire. As an ex-mayor and powerful businessman, he may have wielded that kind of influence.¹¹⁸ The site that was finally selected was the former home of the Jersey Street Methodist Episcopal Church, erected in 1868 but ironically lost to fire in January 1873. The Church sold the lot to the city of Buffalo for a sum of \$3,000 and built a new church across Plymouth Avenue where its 1911 successor still stands, today known as the Karpeles Manuscript Library Museum Porter Hall.



Earliest known photo of Engine #2, circa 1880. *The Buffalo Fire Historical Society.*

Edward Hager, the Commissioner of Public Buildings, was entrusted with the job of erecting the engine house. Hager commissioned Cyrus Kinne Porter and George Watkins of the firm Porter & Watkins to design the building.¹¹⁹ Porter was already familiar with the site proposed for the new engine house because it was his firm that designed the Plymouth Methodist Episcopal Church across the street in 1873. Porter's edifices graced the east and west side of Plymouth Avenue: on the west side was Firehouse Engine #2, and on the east side was the church.

After Porter & Watkins completed the plans for the new engine house, its construction contract was opened to competitive bid. In April of 1875 Hager awarded the building contract to carpenter Julius Schramm who had bid the job at \$10,020.¹²⁰

The building was complete by the end of 1875 and Hager invited the Common Council to tour the building during Engine House #2's grand opening on December 14, 1875.¹²¹ The building was praised as being the handsomest of its kind in the city of Buffalo and among the finest in the United States.¹²² Besides the fire engine, the house was equipped with four horses, a sleigh, a wagon and "furnishings."¹²³ In addition to the standard mechanical items one might consider necessary for an engine house, the furnishings also included seven black walnut bedsteads, twelve black walnut chairs, one centre table, one black walnut table, seven arm chairs, one stair carpet, two Brussels carpets, five chandeliers, and seventeen spittoons.¹²⁴ The furniture was provided by Burns & Lombard Furniture Company of 61 E. Seneca Street.¹²⁵