

Home to the Upper Crust

Residential Main Street 1850s to 1890s

With the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825, Buffalo grew from a population of 2,000 in 1820 to over 42,000 by 1850. The city became a dense cluster of houses mixed with industry and commerce, suffering ever-increasing pollution, dirt, noise, and crowding.

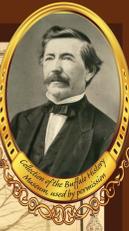
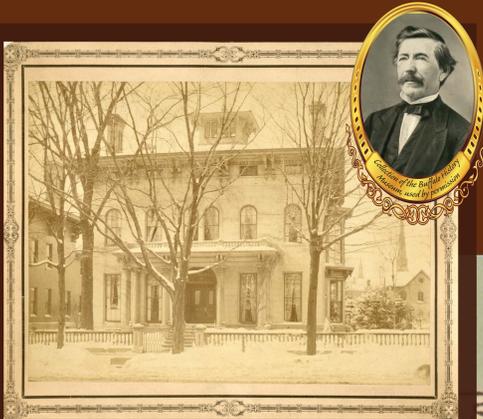
The wealthiest residents looked to the green pastures of today's 500, 600 and 700 blocks of Main Street. Mayors, politicians, and business tycoons built houses ranging from modest brick and wood frame buildings to large marble-clad mansions. By mid-century, the elegant homes they built had transformed these acres into the most fashionable neighborhood of an increasingly cosmopolitan city.

However, by the late 1800s, commercial activity dominating the southern end

of Main Street crept northward. When the city expanded its borders in 1854 to encompass more than 42 square miles, new areas farther north emerged as more fashionable residential districts, and the flight of residents away from the crowded central city was further encouraged by the expansion of streetcar service.

As wealthy residents moved on, some Main Street mansions were temporarily converted into upscale boarding houses, but by the early 1900s all these grand homes had been demolished in favor of commercial structures, leaving an architectural legacy that lives only in photographs.

For much more information scan the QR Code to the right or go to www.buffaloplace.com/history/theatre/residences.



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The Marshall House

As a child, attorney Orsamus Holmes Marshall relocated to Buffalo from Connecticut with his family. He is remembered as one of the 1862 founders of the Buffalo Historical Society and a prolific author who documented early Western New York and Native American history. After retiring in 1867, Marshall purchased the home at **700 Main Street** originally constructed in 1841. Marshall's son Charles inherited the property and resided there until it was demolished in 1910 to make way for the current EMI Building.



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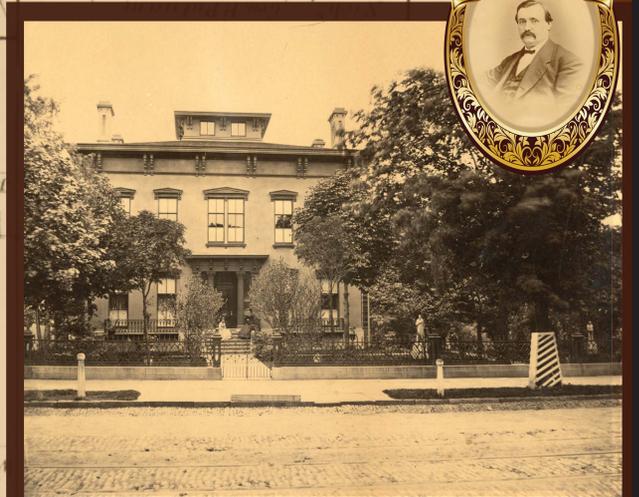
The Pratt House

In 1848, Buffalo-born Pascal Paoli Pratt established the Pratt & Letchworth Company which manufactured saddle and carriage hardware. He later founded the Manufacturers' and Traders' Bank (now M&T Bank), supported the Buffalo Female Academy (now Buffalo Seminary), the Buffalo Fine Arts Academy (now the Albright-Knox Art Gallery), and was a driving force behind the Frederick Law Olmsted-designed Buffalo Park and Parkway System. Pratt built a substantial house at **736 Main Street** in 1854. Shortly after his death in 1905, the house was demolished, giving way to the Ansonia Building.



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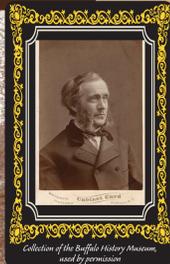
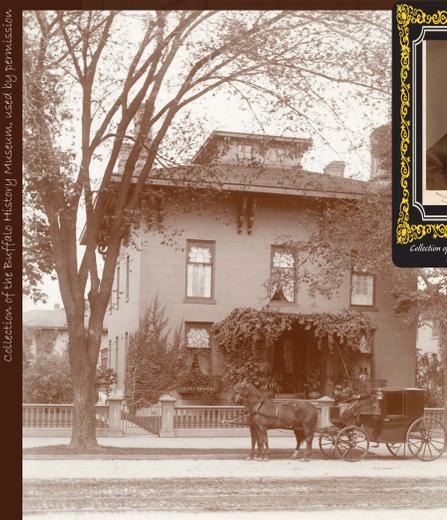
1872 Hopkins Atlas
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The Rich House

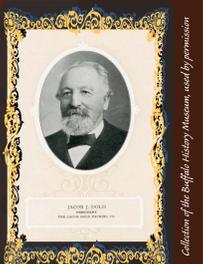
Gaius Barrett Rich, founder of the Bank of Attica, brought his banking business to Buffalo in 1840. His son Andrew was working as a humble dry goods clerk, but his father hired him, took a liking to him, and he rose quickly! By 1850, Andrew Jackson Rich was building a massive, lushly landscaped, Italianate style house on the east side of Main Street just north of Tupper. He served as the bank president until his death in 1870. The home at **727 Main Street** was razed in 1900 to make way for the two-story commercial block that stands today. The Bank of Attica ultimately merged with The Marine Trust Company in 1902.



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The Glenny Residence

Irish-born William H. Glenny lived an immigrant "rags-to-riches" story. Arriving in Buffalo in 1836, he worked as a clerk until opening a small crockery store in 1840. The William H. Glenny Company became a successful importer of fine china, glass and other merchandise. In 1877, Glenny hired prominent architect Richard A. Waite to design a new store at 249-253 Main Street, south of Swan Street. Now known as the Dennis Building, it is Buffalo's only remaining full cast-iron façade. Glenny took up residence at **692 Main Street** in 1863. After his death, his widow continued to reside there until 1895 when, like other historic homes in this area, it was replaced by a commercial building.



The Dold Residence

Jacob C. Dold, Sr. came to Buffalo as a young boy from Württemberg, Germany. He founded a small butcher shop in South Buffalo in 1860 and, two years later, opened a meat packing plant at the Elk Street Market. Eventually, the Jacob Dold Packing Company expanded to include plants in Boston, New York, Providence and Liverpool, England among more than 30 branches. Dold lived at **645 Main Street** from around 1888 until 1891. The property, nicknamed "The White House" because it was leased to the Buffalo Republican League, was eventually demolished and is now the site of the two-story commercial Dold Building constructed in 1900.



THE OLD SHERWOOD HOUSE. Main St. near Tupper.
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The Sherwood House

The area's grandest dwelling was built at **652 Main Street** by businessman Merrill Bennett Sherwood. He established a brokerage firm by 1836 and became involved with Benjamin Rathbun, the most prolific and notorious builder of the 1830s. When the Rathbun bubble burst in 1836, default on massive debts helped spur the Panic of 1837 that rocked the nation. As Rathbun's agent, Sherwood had sought to pass Rathbun's forged notes to struggling banks throughout the US and Canada. Originally, Sherwood lived in a humble cottage on Main Street north of Chippewa Street, but in 1854 he replaced it with a three-story Italianate house regarded as the city's most lavish. Facing financial reverses, he sold the property in 1870 and it became "The Sherwood," an upscale boarding house, until its demolition in 1902. Shea's Buffalo Theater was built on the land it once occupied.



The Kip House

Henry Kip worked for the American Express Company, founded in Buffalo as an express mail service by Henry Wells, William G. Fargo, and John Warren Butterfield in 1850. When competitor United States Express Company was created in 1854, Kip was hired as General Superintendent. He moved his family into a new home at **640 Main Street** in 1865. After his death in 1883, the house continued as a family residence, but later became "The Holland," an upscale boarding house most notably home to Marian de Forest, theater critic, playwright, promoter of classical music and founder of the Zonta Club, an international women's service organization. The building was supplanted by the five-story Otto Building in 1896.