

**HISTORY OF BUFFALO AND  
ARCHITECTURE WALKING  
COURSE  
FIELD NOTES**



**BUFFALO TEACHER'S CENTER  
HISTORY OF BUFFALO COURSE**

**PRESENTED BY  
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# DUN BUILDING

110 Pearl Street

Dun Building (1894-1895), 110 Pearl Street, was designed by E. B. Green and William S. Wicks, who applied the Neoclassical style of horizontal buildings to a vertical tower, so the facade is divided into a series of multiple-story bands stacked one on top of the other. The central band shown here features giant four-story window arches, decoratively framed oval windows on the seventh floor, and other architectural details that are more interesting than those on the bands below and above it. Although the building has a supporting steel skeleton, the walls also had to be made load-bearing to give the very narrow structure more bracing against the strong winds off Lake Erie. At 10 stories, it was the first Buffalo highrise.

Site of the first schoolhouse (1808) in Buffalo which was burned by the British in 1813, this flatiron-shaped lot was a great challenge for architects Green and Wicks. The Dun Building, built between 1894-95 and named for its chief tenant R.G. Dun and Company - an internationally-known credit informational service, was Buffalo's first steel-framed "skyscraper." Ornate circular windows and high arches are part of the building's east facade. The arches, which give an open look and enhance the "skyscraper" image, are also prominent features of other Green and Wicks buildings including the Buffalo Savings Bank and the earlier Bank of Buffalo building at Main and Seneca Streets, now gone.

Robert G. Dun had joined the Mercantile Agency of New York City in 1850 and was soon a partner with his brother-in-law and later Dun became sole owner. The Mercantile Agency then was operated as the R.G. Dun Company and has had a presence in Buffalo since 1866. The Buffalo branch made its home in the Dun Building for 40 years. The popularity of Dun's credit rating reports led to the acquisition of a printing plant to produce a weekly report on business conditions and the company maintained branch offices in France and Germany as well. R.G. Dun was a pioneer in the use of the typewriter and every branch office had trained operators at the keyboard. In 1933, The R.G. Dun Company and Dun's Mercantile Agency absorbed the rival firm of The Bradstreet Company which was founded in 1849 by John M. Bradstreet and became known as Dun and Bradstreet.

The Dun Building, along with Louis Sullivan's Guaranty Building, Richard Upjohn's St. Paul's Episcopal Church and Daniel Burnham's Ellicott Square Building, is included in the Joseph Ellicott historic preservation district. Just to the northeast of the Dun Building on a site now occupied by the old M&T Trust Company building was the famous Weed Block, the Erie Street side of which included the apartment and law office of Grover Cleveland. Cleveland's phenomenal rise from mayor of Buffalo in 1882 to his election to the United States presidency in 1884, with a year as governor of New York State tucked in between, remains one of the quintessential political success stories in the annals of this country.

# ST JOSEPH'S CATHEDRAL

AKA St. Joseph's RC Old Cathedral  
50 Franklin St., Buffalo, NY

Architect: Patrick Keeley  
Style: Gothic Revival  
Renovated: 1976- 1977, Trautman Associates  
Status: Buffalo Landmark  
Joseph Ellicott Historic Preservation District

The place of worship designed and built as a Cathedral in the city, St. Joseph's Cathedral was constructed as the seat of the Roman Catholic Diocese. The need for a Cathedral, or seat of the Bishop, resulted from the establishment of the Diocese of Western New York on 23 April, 1847. Prior to that time, the diocese had consisted of the entire state with New York City serving as the seat.

Upon his arrival as the first Bishop in 1847, John Timon set out to find a suitable house of worship to serve as the seat of the diocese. At that time, three permanent Catholic churches stood in the city: St. Louis on Main Street, St. Mary's on Batavia Road and Pine (destroyed) and St. Patrick's on Broadway and Ellicott (destroyed).

Initially, he desired to use St. Louis as the cathedral, it being the largest and best equipped Catholic house of worship in the city. Shortly after his arrival there, German hostility toward him forced his withdrawal and retreat to St. Patrick's.

Timon persisted in his plans for a grand cathedral and purchased the Squire Estate on Washington Street for it. But with the average day's wage of the immigrant worker at only sixty-two and a half cents, he could barely afford to construct such a building.

In the entire diocese, he found only four schools, sixteen priests, and sixteen churches, many of them mere huts or shanties. He began by visiting all parts of the diocese, holding services in barns, halls, homes, or courthouses where necessary.

He established a seminary to train priests and brought the Sisters of Charity to the diocese where they founded the first hospital in Buffalo in 1848. Other religious orders soon followed to establish schools, orphanages, and homes for the elderly.

To raise money to build a cathedral, he went to Europe, where he received a donation of two thousand dollars from Pope Pius IX. Other funds were given by such prominent non-Catholics as President Millard Fillmore, with whom Timon lunched in the White House on several occasions.

When Timon died in 1867, he passed on to his successors Joseph's Cathedral, a fitting bishop's church in a growing diocese now inhabited by tens of thousands of Roman Catholics.

# OLD COUNTY HALL

92 Franklin Street, Buffalo, NY

Erected: 1871-1876  
Architect: Andrew J. Warner  
Sculpture: Giovanni F. Sala, central tower figures  
Exterior building material:  
Clark Island (Maine) granite  
Renovation: 1925, Harold Jewett Cook  
1963-1980, Milstein, Wittek and Davis  
Style: High Victorian Romanesque / Norman Romanesque  
Status: National Register  
Buffalo Landmark

## Original function:

City and County Hall.

In 1931, the present Buffalo City Hall was completed

This building stands on the site of the Franklin Square Cemetery, Buffalo's second burial ground from 1804 to 1836, especially for soldiers of the War of 1812. (The first burial ground was east of Washington Street, above present Exchange.) In October, 1836, a brick wall was built around Franklin Square on the Eagle, Delaware and Church street sides, at a cost of \$2,000, paid for by popular subscription. At that time, all the graves not marked by stones or monuments were leveled and graded even with the general surface. Many a resting-place of early residents, and of soldiers of 1812, was thus lost for identification.

It was on this site on December 10, 1813 that Colonel Cyrenius Chapin surrendered the village of Buffalo to the British. However, the British then rejected his authority and proceeded to burn the village in retaliation for the American forces under General McClure having previously burned the British settlement of Newark (now Niagara-on-the-Lake).

In 1851, the city bought the property of H. E. Howard, 95 by 115 1/2 feet, at the northwest corner of Church and Franklin streets. It was used for Mayor's office and other city offices until shortly before the completion of the present building in 1876.

In 1857, when Seth Grosvenor bequeathed \$40,000 to the city of Buffalo for a library, \$10,000 of which was to be used for a lot and building, old Franklin Square was strongly, but unsuccessfully, advocated for its site.

Designed by perhaps Rochester's greatest architect, Andrew Jackson Warner, it is an outstanding example of High Victorian Romanesque. Warner was the supervising architect for Richardson's Buffalo Psychiatric Center (formerly Buffalo State Hospital).

Rochester's City Hall, also designed by Warner, is quite similar to Old County Hall.

McKinley lay in state here after his assassination at the 1901 Pan American Exposition

# GUARANTY / PRUDENTIAL BUILDING

28 Church Street, Buffalo, New York

The building was intended to be named after Hascal L. Taylor (1830-1894), the Buffalonian who commissioned Dankmar Adler (1844-1900) and Louis Sullivan (1856-1924) to build what he wanted to be "the largest and best office building in the city." Unfortunately, he died in November of 1894 just before construction plans were to be publicly announced.

The Guaranty Construction Company of Chicago, which was to construct the building for Taylor, bought the property and completed the project. Construction began in 1895, and the Guaranty Building was occupied on March 1, 1896. It was renamed the Prudential Building about two years after it was completed at the time of refinancing through the Prudential Insurance Company.

Most architectural historians consider Louis Sullivan's Guaranty Building, along with his Wainwright Building in St. Louis, his greatest architectural achievements in office buildings.

Louis Sullivan called the Prudential Building a "sister" to his prototype skyscraper, the Wainwright Building (1890-1892) in St. Louis, both designed within the decade following William Le Baron Jenney's Home Insurance Building (1884) in Chicago, the first tall, metallic-framed structure. With the Wainwright, Sullivan first expressed the essential nature of the new tall buildings - the power of their verticality.

With these two structures Sullivan established the basic form of the American skyscraper. He seems to have followed the principal divisions of a classical column with a base, a shaft, and a capital.

In the Guaranty, the first two floors, which contain public spaces, constitute the base; the office areas, the shaft (vertical shafts of piers soar uninterrupted past multiple, uniform office floors) and the elaborate cornice and row of round oculus windows on the street sides make up the capital.

Using the narrow piers to give an upward thrust to the building, Sullivan created the archetype of the modern skyscraper, a column holding up or "scraping" the sky. The Prudential, his most mature skyscraper, is a glorious refinement of the Wainwright. Its ruddy terra-cotta facade is embellished with Sullivan's rich foliage and geometric ornament, some of which (most of the exterior cladding except for the cornice) was detailed by George Grant Elmslie, Adler and Sullivan's chief draftsman. (The modeling was done by Christian Schneider)

The Guaranty was one of the first steel-supported, curtain-walled buildings in the world, and its thirteen stories made it, at the time it was built, the tallest building in Buffalo.

Terra cotta: Sullivan's lively reddish brown terra cotta ornament adorns the piers, spandrels, tympani, columns, and arches of the Guaranty Building, giving the structure an exuberance and personality that remind one that Sullivan's father was an Irish dancing master. The designs seem to be derived from American nature forms and perhaps from the Celtic Book of Kells.

The main motif is a kind of oval pod or seed shape, which Sullivan used to suggest man's potential for spiritual and creative growth. The pod is sometimes superimposed on a rectangle and connected to it with stem-like filaments. It recurs profusely in the interior of the building, in the stairway balustrades, the elevator cages, the letter drops, and the Tiffany-like art glass ceiling. The swirling lines and the opalescent glass also reveal Sullivan's interest in Art Nouveau.

**Lightwell:** The Pearl Street lobby features a skylight adjacent to the elevators. In the original U-shaped building design, the elevators and the skylight filled the "cutout" section of the U shape, with offices receiving light from either the outside of the building or the interior lightwell. The lightwell is about 30' wide with a depth of about 68'. The lightwell was infilled in the 1980 restoration, adding an additional 1,400 square feet of office space. The lobby skylight is now artificially backlit (above the skylight).

**Elevators:** The original Sprague Gear Driven electric elevators were so bad that they were replaced in 1903 with water hydraulic ones.

**Lavatories:** Most of the offices from 2-12 had their own "lavatory" a sink with both hot and cold running water. These features were not unique but somewhat uncommon

As American cities and industry grew, so did office buildings, which wanted to be in the thick of things, and that meant an urban setting. Owners of such buildings, therefore, wanted to get the most out of crowded, valuable downtown sites. This, in turn, created a demand for taller buildings.

Historically, there were two limitations that restricted the height of buildings.

One involved vertical transportation, which was solved in the 1860s by the invention of the modern elevator.

The second concerned the structural system, which limited building heights by the number of stones or bricks that could be stacked on top of one another without having impractically thick walls. By 1890, steel was being mass produced, and it permitted a strong, slender skeleton that could support itself, the weight of many floors, and a thin, light curtain wall for weatherproofing.

The remaining challenge was to make the end result aesthetically pleasing. Louis Sullivan was the first with the best solution. His skyscrapers looked tall, proud, and soaring.

# ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CATHEDRAL

128 Pearl Street, Buffalo, NY

COMPLETED: 1851

ARCHITECT: RICHARD UPJOHN

STYLE: GOTHIC REVIVAL

LOCATION: CHURCH, PEARL, & MAIN STS.

STATUS: Buffalo Landmark

U. National Historic Landmark

National Register of Historic Places.

With the consecration of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in 1851, the young city of Buffalo had its first national architectural landmark. Situated a short distance from the terminus of the Erie Canal and designed by the noted Richard Upjohn, it symbolized the progressive spirit of a youthful city enjoying growing prosperity. Upjohn himself is said to have regarded it as his finest church.

Today, St. Paul's is classified as a U. National Historic Landmark. Upjohn had earned a national reputation for his design of New York's Trinity Episcopal Church (1846) - which firmly established the Gothic Revival in American church architecture. (He was also the first president of the American Institute of Architects.) Two years after Trinity opened, the vestry men of St. Paul's in Buffalo formed a building committee to erect a new church. They immediately engaged Upjohn as architect.

In 1849, after some revision, Upjohn's plan met approval. Capitalizing on the triangular sloping site, Upjohn developed an asymmetrical plan. He placed a 270' tower at the southwest corner of the building and erected a two-story chapel, three bays long, adjoining the north aisle. Together with picturesque massing, St. Paul's adhered strictly to the principles of Episcopal ecclesiology, the study of medieval church practice that dictated the architectural requirements for "High Church" ritual.

Construction began in the spring of 1850 and was complete in its essentials when the church was consecrated in October 1851. Spires on the two towers were finished in 1870. Built of Medina sandstone, the church follows the Early English parish church Gothic of the 13th century, which had come to surpass in esteem the later Perpendicular phase (upon which Upjohn had based Trinity Church). The major ecclesiological advance over Trinity is the chancel, which terminates the nave and is the most important liturgical area of the church. As "ecclesiologistic correctness" demanded, its roof line was lower than that of the nave. To churchmen of the 1850s, the back (or Main Street side) of St. Paul's identified it as an up-to-date parish.

May of 1888, a decade after Upjohn's death, his masterpiece was nearly vanquished in a gas explosion and resulting fire. The interior was destroyed, but Upjohn's stone walls remained solid.

Late that summer, Robert W. Gibson took charge of repairing the damaged building. Gibson, an Englishman like Upjohn, was widely admired for his All Saints Cathedral in Albany (a commission he won in 1883). For all of 1889, Gibson supervised the work at St. Paul's, and on January 3, 1890, the church reopened.

# OLD POST OFFICE / ERIE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

121 Ellicott Street at South Division  
Buffalo, New York

Architects: Jeremiah O'Rourke 1894-1897  
William Akin (1897-1901)  
James Knox Taylor (1897-1901)  
Cannon Design (1979-1981)  
Renovation for reuse as Erie Community College city campus

Materials: Foundation: Granite-faced

Exterior: Maine Granite. See information supplied by the Maine Granite Museum. (  
Roofs: covered with Spanish green tile laid in concrete

Interior: brick wainscoting; terra cotta walls; marble; mosaic tile finishes; principal office rooms and court rooms finished in Mexican mahogany; all other rooms finished in quartered, polished oak. The interior framing system is composed of steel beams.

Granite: Pink granite quarried at Spruce Kent and Jonesboro, Maine.  
The walls of granite ashlar masonry have a slightly rusticated treatment on the first floor and elevated basement. All other surfaces are finished with highly dressed granite

Brick supplier: Columbus, Ohio, Buff Brick and terra Cotta Co.

Cost of construction: To December, 1900, \$1,522,000.

Windows: 400. Most of them have one-over-one, double-hung sash

Dedication: March 1901, officially opened with mailing of its first letter to Pres. William McKinley, who would be assassinated in Buffalo at the Pan-Am Exposition several months later.

Status: Listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Porches: The three deeply recessed entrances are contained within projecting porches. Stone stairs extend beyond the enclosure of the porches.

Architectural Feature: By relieving the mass of the block-square building by slightly projecting corner pavilions, the architects have reduced the Gothic revival decorative treatment to a surface exercise.

Notable Features: 244 foot tower  
Sky lit 6-story atrium  
Hand carved gargoyles, pinnacles, finials, animal heads and eagles on each of the facades

Size: 225,000 sq. feet on 6 levels  
400-seat auditorium

Blueprints: Approximately 39 sheets of blueprints of the original plans are on file at the National Archives.



The Old Post Office was the subject of controversy before it was even built. The 1893 Tarnsey Act required architectural competitions for major federal buildings. The Buffalo post office was the first major government building to occur after the act became law. But the Secretary of the Treasury, Henry G. Carlisle, who was responsible for the erection of government facilities, asserted that a design by the federal government's supervising architect, Jeremiad O'Rourke, had already been submitted and approved when the act was passed. The brouhaha must have inspired O'Rourke to extraordinary effort, because he designed a monumental building incorporating Romanesque Revival, Chateausque, and French Gothic features executed in expensive pink Vermont granite. O'Rourke's plan received added design improvements by his successors, William M. Aiken and James Knox Taylor.

With its tall square tower with its many-crocketed spire, fierce gargoyles and glowering eagles, is one of the most visible and familiar sights of downtown Buffalo.

Regarded as having been inspired by H.H. Richardson's great Allegheny County Courthouse in Pittsburgh, this building possesses a similar dominating tower and clearly defined pavilions on the exterior and a central light court surrounded by galleries on the inside.

The Venetian palazzo-like interior space is one of the most impressive in the city. Exterior ornamentation includes an appropriate bison head, as well as an eagle up above the entrance door.

The building is largely credited to architect James Knox Taylor, who designed a sister post office (now bustling with boutiques and ethnic food counters) in Washington, D.C.

The Old Post Office has been magnificently restored and is now thriving as the Downtown Branch of the Erie County Community College.

### Buffalo Post Office History

Buffalo's post office was established in 1804 when Erastus Granger received the appointment as Buffalo's first postmaster from Thomas Jefferson. He set up the first post office at a desk in Crow's Tavern on Exchange Street. The nearest post offices were at Fort Niagara and at Batavia. Mail to Fort Niagara went on horseback via the ferry and up the Canadian side to the Niagara River because the roads were better. In those days the post office moved with the postmaster. It wasn't until 1837 that the first permanent building, a former Baptist church at the corner of Washington and Seneca Streets, was purchased.

# ELLICOTT SQUARE BUILDING

295 Main St., Buffalo, New York

ARCHITECT: D. H. Burnham & Co, Charles Atwood, principal architect

ERECTED: 1896

STYLE: Italian Renaissance Revival

FLOOR MOSAIC: 1930-31, William Winthrop Kent of New York City and James Johnson

GROUND: 240.80 x 200.22

FOUNDATION: Steel and concrete; 19 feet below grade

INTERIOR COURT: 110.83 x 70.25

CEMENT: "Giant" Portland; 6,000 barrels

TIME SPENT IN CONSTRUCTION: One year

ELECTRIC PLANT: Four dynamos, 7,000 lights, 16 candles power

EXTERIOR CONSTRUCTION: Pressed brick and terra-cotta. Painted gray in 1971

ELEVATORS: 15 hydraulic passenger, 1 hydraulic freight, 4 sidewalk lifts all made by Otis Bros. & Co.

CORNICE: Terra-cotta; projecting five feet - REMOVED IN 1971

FRAME: Steel; weight 5,500 tons

FIREPROOFING: Floor, arches, ceilings, partitions, and roof 12,000 tons

BOILERS: 4; steel; water-tube; 250 H.P. each; made by the Gear Water-tube Boiler Co.

FLOORING: Clear maple, imbedded in concrete, 400,000 feet

PUMPS: One high-duty pumping engine, 4 elevator, 1 house pump, 2 boiler-feed pumps; all furnished by the Snow Steam Pump Works.

FLOOR SPACE: 447,000 square feet

DECORATIONS: Italian marble, marble mosaic, ornamental iron

HEIGHT OF BUILDING: 144 feet

HARDWARE FINISH: Quarter-sawed red oak

HEIGHT OF FIRST FLOOR: 15.0; 2nd, 14.0; 3rd and 4th, 10.6, 5th to 10th, 10.0

CUBIC CONTENTS: 6,576,100 feet

STORES: 40

COUNTING ROOMS: 16

OFFICES: 60

In 1803, Joseph Ellicott, agent of the Holland Land Co., laid out the village of New Amsterdam, now the city of Buffalo. He reserved for his residence and private estate the most desirable location in the village, which was on the east side of Main Street, extending from Swan Street to Eagle Street.

Subsequently, for about 100 years, his heirs and their successors retained title to that part of the property between Swan Street and South Division Street, extending from Main Street to Washington Street. This area has therefore been known, and is still known, as "Ellicott Square." See Ellicott Square Block for six photos of the buildings that were located on the block prior to the Ellicott Square Building

In 1895, the Ellicott Company commissioned architect Daniel H. Burnham of Chicago to design what they referred to as an "office block" in downtown Buffalo. The result was a building occupying the entire space between Main, South Division, Washington, and Swan Streets. Its 10 stories, 60 offices, and 40 stores, along with its central court, cost 3.5 million dollars to build

It was on May 30, 1896, only one year following its inception, that the Ellicott Square Building -- the largest, finest, and most complete office building in America -- took its place as a finished structure in the front rank of the notable features of the city of Buffalo.

Like Burnham and Root's Rookery in Chicago, it is constructed around a large interior court. The elaborate terra-cotta exterior, now painted gray, which in its essential lines follows Richardson's Marshall Field Wholesale Store in Chicago, was conceived by Charles B. Atwood (1849 - 1895), the designer-in-chief of the World's Columbian Exposition and master of "all artistic matters" in the Chicago-based firm of D. H. Burnham and Company.

## CASIMER PULASKI MONUMENT

Main and N. Division, Buffalo, NY

Artist: Kazimierz Danilewicz

Bronze Statue on Polished Black Granite Base with Bronze Plaques

This sculpture was reputed to be the largest monolithic bronze casting in the world at the time of its manufacture in 1979.

Buffalo, whose population comprises a great percentage of Polish immigrants and their descendants, honors Pulaski with the Casimir Pulaski Memorial Monument at Main and South Division Streets, and an annual parade on Pulaski Day, the third Sunday of July.

Casimir Pulaski, son of Count Joseph Pulaski, was born in Warsaw, Poland, on March 6, 1745. At the age of fifteen, he joined his father and other members of the Polish nobility in opposing the Russian and Prussian interference in Polish affairs.

Outlawed by Russia for his actions on behalf of Polish liberty, he traveled to Paris where he met Benjamin Franklin, who induced him to support the colonies against England in the American Revolution. Pulaski, impressed with the ideals of a new nation struggling to be free, volunteered his services.

Later in 1778, through Washington's intervention, Congress approved the establishment of the Cavalry and put Pulaski at its head. Pulaski, who became known as the "Father of the American Cavalry."

It was on October 9, 1779, during the Battle of Savannah, that General Pulaski, charging into battle on horseback, fell to the ground mortally wounded by the blast of a cannon. Pulaski's enemies were so impressed with his courage, that they spared him the musket and permitted him to be carried from the battlefield. Pulaski died several days later on October 15, 1779, at age 34. The Pulaski Monument, erected in his honor, is located in Monterey Square, Savannah, Georgia.

# LAFAYETTE HOTEL

391 Washington St. at Lafayette Square, Buffalo NY

The first structure built at the corner of Washington and Clinton Street was used as a school. After that it became a house of worship by Unitarians and Baptists. In 1850, French parishioners resolved a dispute over finances with the St. Louis Catholic church on Main Street by removing themselves and the St. Louis priest to the building, naming it St. Peter's. For fifty years, the parish occupied the building but by the late 1890s, many parishioners had to commute to church from their homes outside what had now become the city's business district. As an incentive to make a decision about their future, a piece of ceiling plaster fell during Sunday Mass. They built a new church at Main and Best and sold the building. Investors who purchased the property were enthused about the prospect of building a hotel in time for the upcoming Pan-American Exposition in 1901. They promptly demolished the building.

In March, 1900, the Buffalo Express said, "The Pan-American Exposition is responsible for many of the hotel schemes." Investors declared in April that a 315-room hotel to be called the Hotel Lafayette would be constructed from plans drawn up by Henry Ives Cobb of Washington, DC. They declared that it would open April 1, 1901. Local hotel men said the location was perfect for a hotel.

A hole was excavated and two foundation walls put up. And then the plans began to unravel. With so many hotels or apartment buildings being constructed, local funds were hard to find and the project languished. By 1901, the stalled project had become a local joke, finding its way into lyrics of a song performed at the Star Theater: "A hole in the ground is the Lafayette." By July, 1901, the design had been downsized to seven stories and the name rearranged to be the Lafayette Hotel.

By July, 1900, new architects were hired, Bethune, Bethune and Fuchs, to draw up new plans. Louise Bethune was the first woman in the United States to be recognized as a professional architect by the American Institute of Architects. The Lafayette Hotel in Buffalo is her masterpiece. In a prime downtown location, at the intersection of Clinton and Washington Streets on Lafayette Square, this is a gloriously beautiful building both inside and out. Yet an extremely non-scientific poll recently taken of long-time Buffalonians demonstrates that not one can remember the Lafayette's condition being anything better than seedy since the fifties and sixties. Over the course of a century, it's slid from being one of the finest hotels in the city to effectively acting as a boarding house for a social services population. The restoration that is now underway is enormously overdue, colossally important, and extremely exciting.

# LAFAYETTE SQUARE

Main St, Court St & Washington St.

# BRISBANE BUILDING

403 Main Street at Lafayette Square Buffalo, NY

Constructed: 1894-96

Architect: Milton E. Beebe and Son

This is the premier production of the father and son firm of local architects, Milton E. Beebe and Son, who were in demand to design churches and commercial and residential buildings in the city in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Milton E. Beebe (1840-1922) who was a grandson of one of the first settlers in Buffalo, worked as a carpenter before setting himself up as an architect after the Civil War. His son, Henry, joined him in the 1880s.

Style: Beaux Arts Classical Revival

Preceding building:

The Arcade Building: Albert and George Brisbane family had first built an "Arcade" on this site in the early 1850's following a disastrous fire, which leveled the block. Architects were the Rose brothers. The Arcade, which was the largest office building in the city, housed Shea's Music Hall, Robinson's Musée Theatre, T.C. Tanke Jewelers and other businesses, also succumbed to a fire on December 14, 1893.

Original Owners:

Mooneys: Originally known as the Mooney and Brisbane Building, since it was built for James Mooney of Buffalo and James Brisbane of New York City.

(According to his great grandson, Mooney funded the Fenian Raid into Canada. Afterwards, he could never visit the family's summer home in Canada, since there was a price on his head.)

In 1906 James Brisbane assumed complete ownership.

Building: Covers half a city block, with 180 feet of frontage on Main Street, 200 feet on Clinton Street overlooking Lafayette Square, and 180 feet on Washington Street.

Materials included over 2,000 tons of iron and steel, about 3,000,000 bricks, and over 40,000 square feet of glass, terra cotta and marble. The interior floor-arching and partitions were fireproof. The heating and power was furnished by 4 one hundred and twenty-five horsepower boilers.

At the time it was built, the Brisbane Building was the largest mercantile and office building in the city. It was designed to accommodate a single retail establishment on the first floor and offices on floors 3 through 7. The second floor was set up as a "Bon Marché," with two immense skylights over a central court that served 16 small stores.

In 1908, the ground floor of the building was occupied by the three largest stores of their line in the city: The Kleinhans Men's Clothing Store, which came to occupy the basement, half of the first floor and the entire second floor. Faxon, Williams, & Faxon, the most prominent grocers in Western New York S. H. Knox's five and ten cent store. The second floor included a 50-foot wide court covered by a colored glass dome.

# LIBERTY BANK BUILDING / LIBERTY BUILDING

424 Main Street, Buffalo, NY

Original name: German-American Bank

Erected: 1925 (Addition 1961)

Addition: Duane Lyman Associates

The large addition to the south side which included an extension to the banking room on the first floor

Architect: Alfred Bossom (1881-1965)

Sculptor: Leo Lentelli

Style: Beaux-Arts / Second Renaissance Revival skyscraper

Because they were cautious savers many Germans lost their money in the bank failures of 1857. But the community rebounded. One gauge of the success of the German population was the founding of the German-American Bank in 1882. The structure at Main and Court was one of five banks capitalized with German investment.

The German-American bank casts light on a later phase of social history - the impact of World War I in hastening the decline of ethnic identification with the old country.

In 1918 amidst the sharp reaction to anything German, hamburger became Salisbury steak, daschunds became "liberty hounds," and the German-American Bank took the name we know it by today, Liberty Bank.

Architect Alfred Bossom (1881-1965) spent the years 1903-1926 in New York City, where he became a designer of skyscrapers. After that period he returned to his native England to a second career as a respected member of the House of Commons. Bossom had great faith in the skyscraper as the building of the modern age, and before he left America he wrote a book on the subject entitled Building to the Skies. Always a man with expansive sensibilities-Lord Bossom was renowned in London for his lavish eve-of-season parties - he generally decked out his tall buildings with romantic paraphernalia.

The Liberty Bank is crowned with two reduced in-scale replicas of Bartholdi's Statue of Liberty. High and dry above Main Street, the twin matrons from a distinctive, if slightly fantastic, feature of the Buffalo skyline. Facing east and west, they are prime symbols in the iconography of Buffalo as a city with a strategic national position. Indeed, Bossom may have remembered that Bartholdi originally envisioned his colossus at the mouth of the Suez Canal, where it was to have marked and international coming together of far-flung civilizations.

# THE SOLDIERS & SAILORS MONUMENT

Lafayette Square: Buffalo, NY

Built: 1882-1883

Architect: George Kellar of Hartford CT

Construction: Mount Waldo Granite Company of Bangor, Maine

Sculptor: Caspar Buberl

Fun Fact: There were public rest rooms and showers underground behind the monument.

Deftly summarizing their function, a poet once described monuments as "the hooks that hold generations together." To be sure, Civil War veterans who comprised the Grand Army of the Republic had some less-than-grand reasons for erecting bronze and stone memorials of the far-off war times -- they were afraid of being left on the roadside, forgotten and impotent, as postwar America surged toward its future and showed little concern for the past. But monuments were also built to inform the public about the war when none of its survivors were left alive to think and talk about it. There was also an intent to honor all of the country's military, in keeping with those "mystic chords of memory" visualized by Abraham Lincoln as stretching from battlefields to every American heart, and being strummed "by the better angels of our nature."

The Civil War monument in Buffalo's Lafayette Square has its own interesting stories -- about Erie County's link to the war as well as the changes in the city's face over the past 115 years. To flip through twelve decades of photographs depicting the Lafayette Square monument is to see structures rise and fall along with hemlines of passers-by, to see the ground around the monument shrink to an island and then expand, to see the surrounding businesses skyrocket into prosperity and then fizzle. At the end, you are absolutely lost as to whether you've witnessed progression or regression.

The first public meeting to discuss a Civil War monument for Lafayette Square was held on April 14, 1866, but nothing much got accomplished until the Ladies Union Monument Association was organized on July 2, 1874, headed by the wife of former governor Horatio Seymour. Pressing resolutely on, the women soon raised \$12,000 in subscriptions and approved the design submitted by architect George Kellar of Hartford CT. Compelled to take action during 1881 in view of the progress made by Mrs. Seymour's ladies, the city government appropriated \$45,000 for the project and awarded a construction contract to the Mount Waldo Granite Company of Bangor, Maine. Proposals for bronze sculptures (and the stone lady who topped the column) by Caspar Buberl were eventually approved.

The corner stone was laid July 2, 1882, with a good deal of military pomp and Masonic ritual. Brevet Brigadier General Stewart L Woodford made some remarks. A powerful figure in New York State politics, Woodford's wartime career started as lieutenant colonel of the 127th NYV, progressed through the judge advocate's office and colonelcy of the 103rd Regiment of US Colored Troops, and ended with a place on Major General Quincy A Gilmore's staff. After the war, he had become lieutenant governor and congressman. Buffalo Mayor Grover Cleveland was also on hand.

# NIAGARA SQUARE

## Niagara Square

Niagara Square is not a square, but a circle, and is at the intersection of Delaware, Niagara, Genesee and Court Streets. It was laid out by Joseph Ellicott, surveyor and land agent for the Holland Land Co. in 1807. At that time, the Square actually is square, and its intersecting avenues (Court, Genesee, and Niagara) converged around a much smaller inner circle

The conclusion of the French and Indian War in 1763 ended French domination of the Niagara Frontier and marked the advent of permanent settlement of the area. This trend increased after the Revolution, and in 1804 Joseph Ellicott (1760-1826) mapped a town on the banks of Lake Erie at the mouth of the Buffalo Creek. The site of the city was part of the vast land holdings of the Holland Land Company, a Dutch firm that had purchased most of western New York. Ellicott, who was the local Holland Land Company agent, had earlier in his career helped his brother Andrew survey Pierre L'Enfant's plan for the new capital at Washington.

The influence of L'Enfant's Washington is readily apparent in Ellicott's design for Buffalo (first named New Amsterdam). Niagara Square, located near the lakefront, became the center from which eight streets radiated in several directions. Among the streets passing through Niagara Square was Delaware Street (after 1879 called Delaware Avenue), which Ellicott is said to have named for one of the Indian groups that frequented the portage road around nearby Niagara Falls. Apparently in Ellicott's mind the street was destined to become a magnificent residential district.

Despite Ellicott's lofty vision for the new city -- he said that the site was "developed by nature for the grand emporium of the Western world" -- Buffalo remained for the first quarter of the nineteenth century an inconsequential village.

The original concept of streets radiating from the square has been severely blocked by recent building. City Hall blocks the extension of Court Street west of Niagara Square; Main Place Mall stands astride Niagara Street; the Convention Center terminates the vista to the northeast along Genesee Street; and the Charles R. Turner Parking Ramp is built over West Genesee Street.

For many years Niagara Square was a poorly defined space. In 1874 Frederick Law Olmsted presented a plan for it that created a series of planted angles between incoming streets and envisioned a Civil War memorial arch (never erected) after a design by Richardson, H. H. to stand where Delaware Ave. enters the square from the north.



# MCKINLEY MONUMENT

Niagara Square, Buffalo, NY

Erected: 1907

Architects: Carrere and Hastings

Animal Sculptor: A. Phimister (pronounced FIM is ter) Proctor

In the center of Niagara Square, for which Olmsted had proposed a large basin, stands the city's memorial to President William McKinley, who was assassinated while attending the Pan-American Exposition in 1901. Burnham, D. H., who was called in to consult on the project, suggested the appropriateness of an obelisk, with fountains at the base and decided where it should be placed.

Carrere and Hastings, the actual designers of the monument, were the architects in charge of the Exposition and had also worked with Burnham at the 1893 Chicago fair, where similar obelisks had been erected. A. Phimister Proctor, a well-known animal sculptor who executed several pieces for the Pan-American Exposition, carved the sleeping lions, symbols of strength, and the turtles, emblematic of eternal life. Made of Vermont marble, 96' tall, the monument was dedicated in 1907 exactly six years after he was mortally shot on September 6 at the Temple of Music at the Exposition grounds.

Carl Sandburg wrote a poem about the monument:

Slants at Buffalo, New York

A forefinger of stone, dreamed by a sculptor, points to the sky.

It says: This way! this way!

Four lions snore in stone at the corner of the shaft.

They too are the dream of a sculptor.

They too say: This way! this way!

The street cars swing at a curve.

The middle-class passengers witness low life.

The car windows frame low life all day in pictures.

Two Italian cellar delicatessens

sell red and green peppers.

The Florida bananas furnish a burst of yellow.

The lettuce and the cabbage give a green.

Boys play marbles in the cinders.

The boys' hands need washing.

The boys are glad; they fight among each other.

A plank bridge leaps the Lehigh Valley railroad.

Then acres of steel rails, freight cars, smoke,

And then ... the blue lake shore

...Erie with Norse blue eyes ... and the white sun.

# BUFFALO CITY HALL

65 Niagara Square, Buffalo, NY  
A Local, State and National Landmark

COMPLETED: 1931  
ARCHITECTS: DIETEL & WADE  
STYLE: ART DECO

The people of Buffalo have come to adopt two unofficial symbols. One is an animal (the bison, of course), the other is a building: City Hall. Soaring, colorful, and tough, it has become part of the city's psyche.

In the centennial year of the United States, 1876, Buffalo dedicated a new City Hall. Between that time and the dedication of the present City Hall in 1932, the centennial year of the City of Buffalo, the population of the city had quadrupled. The need for a new building was recognized in 1920, when a citywide referendum authorized the Buffalo Common Council to select a site and develop a new "city center."

The site chosen was Niagara Square, the most important of the several squares of the Joseph Ellicott Plan of 1804. Niagara Square is considered the center and cultural heart of Buffalo as well as its official location. The City hall tower overlooks the renowned waterways of Lake Erie and the friendly shores of Canada.

Groundbreaking for City Hall was held on September 16, 1929. The building was completed November 10, 1931. The building was dedicated July 1, 1932, to commemorate the City Centennial. The 32-story-high structure was built on two triangular lots on the west side of Niagara Square, spanning Court Street. The construction of City Hall in 1929 closed off Court Street from the square. This was the first interruption of Ellicott's street plan. The completion of the similarly-styled Art Deco State and Federal Buildings in 1935 on the east side of Niagara Square realized the concept of a city center group of governmental buildings, first suggested in 1920.

The City Hall Building serves as a reminder of Buffalo's past. Its decorative art illustrates significant elements in the area history. This, among, other things, the following are shown

- themes of the Iroquois Indian nation
- the development of the Erie Canal
- the United States's relation to Canada, and
- the pioneering and industrial spirit of Buffalo's citizens, past and present

Included, too, are are statues of Buffalonians who were Presidents of the United States: Millard Fillmore and Grover Cleveland.

Walls are faced with tawny Ohio sandstone and gray Minnesota limestone, above a base of gray granite.

# STATLER TOWERS

107 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, NY

Completed in 1923 to designs by George B. Post & Sons, the Hotel Statler was the successor to Ellsworth Statler's first hotel, which opened in Buffalo in 1908. The new hotel's interiors exemplified the elegant "Statler style" that blended Italian and English Renaissance influences. It also featured the modern innovations, notably a bath in every room, that made Statler hotels the new standard of lodging in America. Located in the heart of downtown overlooking historic Niagara Square, the grand hotel was a jewel of the national Statler chain. It also served as a social center for generations of Buffalonians.

The Hotel Statler is an outstanding example of the early 20th century hotel by one of the foremost hotel innovators in American history. Completed in 1923, it was a gift from "America's Extraordinary Hotelman" to his adopted city of Buffalo, NY. Ellsworth M. Statler came from humble beginnings in Ohio and West Virginia, and through hard work, shrewd business decisions, creative use of advertising, and adherence to high standards for his employees and their treatment of his customers, built one of the most successful hotel chains in the United States.

The company he founded built ten hotels and managed the colossal Hotel Pennsylvania in New York City; five of these properties are still functioning hotels, one is an apartment complex, three have been demolished, and one was on the National Trust for Historic Preservation's 2008 list of 11 Most Endangered (Dallas Statler).

E.M. Statler's innovations in the hotel industry - providing extraordinary conveniences for middle-class travelers in buildings designed by top American architects - earned him the title of "Hotel Man of the Half Century" in the 1950s, a quarter century after his death in 1928.

The 1923 Statler Hotel was the second hotel E.M. Statler built in Buffalo. In 1907, he built the first Hotel Statler, which revolutionized hotel design and set the standard for major hotels for decades to come. Devising the "Statler Plumbing Shaft," he was the first to provide a bath for every guest room while maintaining reasonable rental rates. Each room was also provided with piped ice water, a closet with a light, a towel hook next to each sink, free stationery, newspaper, and later, telephones and radios. Staff were thoroughly trained to provide excellent service.

The success of this hotel prompted business leaders in other major American cities to entice Statler to build one of his hotels in their towns; by 1919, Statler had built hotels in Cleveland, Detroit, and St. Louis, and was operating the Pennsylvania Hotel in New York City.

Despite requests from Boston and Chicago, Statler decided to build his biggest hotel to date in his adopted city. The location of the Hotel Statler in Buffalo is a key aspect of its significance. By 1920, Buffalo was booming and Statler thought that the civic and political heart of the city would shift from Main Street to Niagara Square. Anticipating this, he bought an entire block on the square and began construction on his \$8-million, 1,100-room hotel in 1921. To ensure its success, he bought and closed his main rival, the Iroquois Hotel, thus guaranteeing that the elite of Buffalo would frequent his establishment and make it the social center for the city. His building anticipated Buffalo's magnificent [1931] City Hall by just a few years, and today is a major part of the streetscape that surrounds Niagara Square.

# ROBERT H. JACKSON UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE

2 Niagara Square

Completion date: Fall 2011  
Architect: Kohn Pedersen Fox Associates (KPF), New York, NY  
(The firm also designed the Buffalo Niagara International Airport terminal.)  
General Contractor: Mascaro Construction Company LLP, Pittsburgh, PA  
Construction Manager Adviser to GSA: Cannon Design, Grand Island, NY  
Cost: \$137 m.  
Style: Postmodern

The 10-story Robert H. Jackson United States Courthouse is a striking enhancement to the local skyline, gracing downtown Buffalo with its prominence and unique profile. The design of Buffalo's new federal courthouse expresses the dignity and the transparency of the federal judicial system while accommodating courtroom and office space to meet the needs of the U.S. District Court and court-related agencies in Buffalo.

The Robert H. Jackson United States Courthouse is dramatically situated on a 1 3/4 acre site in the northwest corner of Niagara Square in the downtown civic center of the city and helps complete Niagara Square. The curved south wall, oriented towards the Square, encloses the public lobbies while its transparency reveals the activity within. A veil of glass panels suspended in front of the pre-cast skin of the ellipse reinforces the inherent grace of the shape with an expression of lightness, while the 255 foot elevator tower topped with a glowing lantern firmly anchors the structure to the site and marks the urban context at both ground and sky. A glass pavilion creates a courtyard interlocked with the tower form. All 4,536 words of the United States Constitution are etched on the glass facade of the pavilion, casting a silhouette upon all who enter into the building.

The 284,000 gross square foot facility includes five District and four Magistrate courtrooms. There are also ten judges' chambers, a Court of Appeals chamber and a satellite library, along with necessary supporting space for the U.S. Marshals Service, U.S. Attorney, Probation and Pretrial Services, the Federal Public Defender and the U.S. General Services Administration. The building provides secure indoor parking for 54 vehicles.

The building has received LEED-NC Gold certification through the U.S. Green Building Council. It extensively uses local, recycled materials and low-VOC materials to ensure excellent air quality. The building was designed using iterative energy modeling, and the subsequent installation of energy systems have been independently commissioned to optimize energy use. A high performance building envelope features low "e" glazing to help reduce energy needs. The building is also fitted with occupancy sensor controls and low flow water fixtures.

# CITY COURT BUILDING

50 Delaware Avenue at Niagara Square, Buffalo, NY

Completed: 1974  
Architects: Pfohl, Roberts and Biggie  
Style: Brutalism  
Status: Ellicott Historic District

On this site stood the first home of the University at Buffalo's College of Art and Sciences. Originally built by the Women's Educational and Industrial Union in 1894 the building was given to the University in 1915 and named Townsend Hall in honor of Harriet Townsend, the first president of the Women's Union

The windowless walls, which present an impenetrable facade to Niagara square, were designed to protect the courtrooms and judges' chambers from outside distraction, as well as to accommodate sculpture and define space. Features thin vertical windows edging large concrete panels. 10 stories tall.

# FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH / TITLE GUARANTEE BUILDING

Also known as the Austin Building or Ticor Building  
110 Franklin St. at Eagle, Buffalo, NY

Erected: 1833  
Builder: Benjamin Rathbun  
Conversion: 1880, F. W. Caulkins  
Style: Original 1833 building: Greek Revival  
Location: Joseph Ellicott Historic District

The oldest religious building remaining in the downtown core, the First Unitarian Church is the second oldest house of worship existing within the city [oldest is the Breckenridge Street Church]

History: In November, 1831 Noah Sprague invited a Rev. Sullivan of Keene, New Hampshire to the city to preach to the men and women of the city native to New England. After the last of three services conducted during that month, Sprague held a meeting to determine if interest existed amongst the attendees regarding establishing a Unitarian church in the city. Due to inclement weather, only three people attended the initial meeting. He held a second meeting on 2 December and at that time the six attendees agreed to establish a Unitarian Society in the city.

The idea of the Unitarian Society lay fallow for the following eight months. In the Fall of 1832, the group secured the services of Rev. William Steill Brown and began holding regular meetings in a number of downtown locations including the courthouse on Lafayette Square, a schoolhouse on Pearl Street (later the home of Temple Beth El), and the attic of T. Stephenson's jewelry store on Main Street.

110 Franklin St.: The following year they purchased the lot on the corner of Franklin and Eagle for \$2,000 and contracted the prolific local builder Benjamin Rathbun to construct their \$6,000 house of worship. With twelve members at the time, it was a brave undertaking. Within three years, through wise investing primarily in real estate, they were able to retire the debt on the building.

Immediately the congregation wished to make an impact upon the city through its benevolence. In 1836, under the direction of the pastor, Rev. George Washington Hosmer, they raised a fund to establish a school in the basement of the church. Known as a free school and open to all children of the poor of the city, it became the first such institution in the city.

During his tenure, Rev. Hosmer twice enlarged the building between 1833 and 1859. The congregation remained active in the building through 1880 except for a short period in 1859 when fire damaged it. While repairs were being made, they met in the Niagara Street Methodist Church (destroyed) across the street from their building.

Throughout the early years of the church, many notable politicians worshipped there, primarily as guests of Millard Fillmore. Three presidents have worshipped in this building.

- Millard Fillmore was a charter member of the Church.
- John Quincy Adams' diary for October 29, 1843 noted that he attended church with Fillmore, hearing a sermon by Rev. Hosmer.
- One of the children of Rev. Hosmer recalled, "In 1861, a noteworthy scene was held in the church at Buffalo. Mr. Fillmore stood in his usual place ... By his side stood a man, gaunt, sallow, who, with melancholy face, bent reverently at the sound of prayer. The minister spoke with solemn words; then coming from his pulpit, looked for a moment into the serious eyes of the visitor, while he pressed his hand. It was Abraham Lincoln passing on to the fulfillment of his stormy destiny."

First Unitarian Church moves to Delaware Avenue: As the area surrounding the church became increasingly commercial, the members decided to relocate to a more suitable location. In 1879 they broke ground for their second house of worship on Delaware between Mohawk and Huron (destroyed). Upon moving there in 1880 they became known as the Church of Our Father.

The congregation remained at the Delaware Avenue location until initiating plans for their building on West Ferry and Elmwood in 1904.

110 Franklin St. sold and enlarged: With their departure from 110 Franklin, the Unitarians sold the building to Stephen G. Austin in 1880. He employed F. W. Caulkins to convert the building to offices by adding a third floor and lengthening the Eagle Street facade of the building.

The Buffalo Fine Arts Academy was located in this building from 1881 to 1886.

For a number of years, Green and Wicks, Buffalo's most prolific architectural firm, had its office here.