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THE BROADWAY AND EAST 55TH ST. STORY

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Broadway was originally an Indian trail. The Mahoning path between the Shore Path (Euclid Avenue) and Beaver Creek followed present day Broadway, detoured slightly on Turney Road and returned to Broadway. It ran, as did most of the Indian paths in the Cleveland area, along the crests of the ridges--there were deep ravines on either side of Broadway cutting it off from the land to the east and from the area near present day Fleet Avenue. Shortly after Cleveland was established in 1796, there began to be other traffic over this old Indian trail. A Stage coach line was established between Cleveland and Pittsburgh and from it Broadway took its early name of Pittsburgh Street. Out on the same Pittsburgh road there was another town, Newburg, which put up a long and lusty struggle to become county seat since everyone thought it would be a more important trade center than Cleveland and no doubt this added traffic on the road.

In 1827 the Ohio Canal was finished as far as Akron, running along the valley beside the Cuyahoga river which brought it into the Broadway area. In some places it was quite near the Pittsburgh road--particularly straight down. There was quite a bit of traffic on the canal before the railroads became popular and it brought more people into the area as gate keepers and lock operators. The children of the neighboring farms used it as a swimming hole in summer and for skating in winter.

When Cleveland was first laid out the lots as far out as East 14th Street were quite small but those between East 14th and East 55th from the lake south to the Pittsburgh road were laid out in 10 acre lots (330' x 1350') so that a few of them made a small farm. Beyond East 55th the lots were 100 acres in size. One of these made a farm capable of supporting a family. However, the land near the lake shore was not very good farm land and persons interested in farming usually went into the interior.

In 1834 a horse railroad with wooden rails was built between Cleveland and Newburgh and in 1836 Cleveland was incorporated as a city with a population of 5,000. However, a map of Cleveland and environs in 1835 shows an unnamed street where East 30th now is and only St. Clair, Euclid, Kinsman (present day Woodland) and the Stage Road to Pittsburgh running out beyond it. Beyond 30th there was nothing but farmland.

In 1850 a large group of Czechs came to the United States as a result of persecution by the Austrian government and some of them came to Cleveland. When they first came they settled in the old Commercial Street district but as soon as they could they moved to the edge of the city, to the Croton Avenue district between East 30th and East 37th Streets.

In the fifties there were two events that were destined to affect the future of the whole city but especially of that part of the city above the riverbed of the Cuyahoga. In 1852 the first six barrels of iron ore were brought down the lakes to Cleveland from mines in the Lake Superior district and in 1859 William A. Otis established the first rolling mill in Cleveland.

There does not seem to have been any major change during the sixties, but during the seventies there began to be much more activity along Broadway. The original Standard Oil Company was incorporated in 1870, and by 1874 had two plants; one on the flats in a bend of the Cuyahoga, west of Independence Road and the canal, and the other larger plant north of Broadway where Kingsbury Run empties into the Cuyahoga. In 1871 a weekly Czech newspaper, Pokrok (Progress), was brought to Cleveland from Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and in 1878 this paper was merged with Dennise Novoveku (Star of the New Era).

A ward map of the Broadway area, published in 1874, shows that the neighborhood, while it was quite unlike present day Broadway, was beginning to develop. The horse railroad ran on a double track as far as Petrie Street (now East 49th), The Cleveland, Mahoning Atlantic & Great Western Railroad ran along the present

Erie right-of-way and the Cleveland & Newburgh Dummy Railroad ran along Bessemer to Tod (East 65th), north as far as Frances and cut across the ravine to Kinsman near Ensign. Many of the original ten acre lots were marked off for resale as subdivisions and many of the present streets were laid out--some with their present names. However, most of the land was still held by the original owners, some of whom had names still familiar to Clevelanders--Grassilli, Halle, Schofield, Kinsman, Greif and J. D. Rockefeller. The North and South streets were named instead of numbered: East 34th was Davies Street; East 37th was Forest Street; East 49th was Petrie Street; East 52nd was Wagner Street; East 53rd, Goethe Street; East 54th, Republic Street; East 55th, Wilson Avenue; East 57th, Alexander Avenue; East 59th, Schofield Avenue; East 61st, Grove Street; East 63rd, Evergreen Street; East 65th, Tod Street. Some of the other street names have also been changed; the former Schiller Street is now Hamm, and South Avenue is now Dolloff. The most startling thing on the map is that Wilson Avenue turned abruptly and ran up what is now McBride in order to avoid the fair grounds (part of Caleb Morgans holdings) which ran from Broadway north to the Railroad tracks.

In the eighties, there were at least four churches in the Broadway area. St. Vaclav's church had been founded by Rev. Fr. Krasny in 1867 with a building at Arch and Burwell Streets and in 1886 St. Wenceslas (the Latin form of Vaclav) Church followed its congregation to the Broadway neighborhood and erected a building at Broadway and East 37th. This was the first Czech Catholic Church in Cleveland. When the Czechs began to move further out on Broadway, Father Hynek bought land at Hamm and East 54th where Our Lady of Lourdes was established in 1883 with Rev. Stephen Furdek as its pastor. Broadway Methodist Episcopal Church was founded in 1872 in a small frame building at the corner of Broadway and Gallup Avenue. The congregation grew until it could no longer be

housed there and in 1919 a new white limestone building was erected at 5246 Broadway. In 1883 the Congregational Home Missions Society called Dr. Henry Schauffler to Cleveland to organize Christian work among the immigrants, especially the Czechs. He started the Bethlehem Congregational Church and in order to train workers he organized a school in 1886. This school became the four-year degree granting college known as Schauffler College of Religious and Social Work.

In July, 1884, two Sisters of St. Francis arrived in Cleveland and were taken to the corner of Broadway and McBride to start St. Alexis Hospital in a little old house with an unkempt garden. In 1885 a \$5,000 wing was added to the house. In 1895 a series of benefits was given--a bazaar, a picnic, a grand opera, a concert series--and in 1897 the first wing of the permanent building was formally opened and dedicated. The main building was added in 1903.

In 1877 the Cleveland Worsted Mills Company started in a two-story rented building with fifty employees.

During the eighties the Polish began to settle in the area in numbers. There had been some Polish immigration in the seventies but it was in 1882 that the owners of the Newburgh Steel Mills went to Europe and brought back ship loads of Poles to work in the mills. They settled along Broadway in the district between East 55th and the city limits and south towards Fleet Avenue. They built their own homes with lumber they and their wives carried on their backs from the lumber yards across Broadway. They were all single houses, each with a vegetable garden fenced in to protect it from the geese that ran all over the common.

Electricity had made its appearance in Cleveland during the seventies. In 1879 Theodore Dluzynski, then a small boy, had walked from East 49th and Broadway to the Public Square to see Charles F. Brush demonstrate his arc lights. In 1884 the first electric street car ran in Cleveland.

About 1883 young Frank Hruby, Sr., left the good job he had as head of the Music department of the Merkel Bros. Circus of London, England, the largest circus in Europe, to come to Cleveland to play in the orchestra at the old Opera House. He had left his wife, the former Katherine Narovec, in Europe and as soon as he could save the passage money, sent for her to join him. They lived on East 37th Street near Broadway and for twenty-one years he played at the Opera House and taught private pupils at home. Meantime, eight children were born; Frank, Alois, John, Celia, Fred, Charles, Mayme and William, all of whom were also musicians. In 1912 the family orchestra toured Europe. The children all taught music in their own studios until in 1917 Dr. J. V. Kofron put up the building at 5415 Broadway and they consolidated their studios into the Hruby Conservatory of Music which is still operating today as The Broadway School of Music and The Arts.

Between 1884 and 1890 there was a period of tremendous growth around the corners, due in large part to the continuing immigration and to the Czechs moving away from the older neighborhoods and into this more suburban area. Feeling the need of a social center and a place to preserve the language, music, drama, and gymnastics of their native Bohemia, the Czech had a fund raising campaign and by means of personal gifts, bazaars, and the like were able, in 1889, to build the Bohemian National Hall at 4939 Broadway. By 1890 the corner was practically built up solidly. The Canfield Oil Company and the Kaynee Company had both been established and there were streetcars on East 55th. The street was not paved (the first brick paving in Cleveland was done in 1888) and the streetcars were turned around on a turntable right in the middle of the intersection of Broadway and East 55th Street.

Along with the Czechs had come a somewhat smaller group of Slovaks and in 1890 Rev. Fr. Stephan Furdek helped them to organize Jednota, the First Catholic Slovak Union of the United States.

The nineties brought a period of industrial expansion. The Canfield Oil Company branched out into the refining of petroleum and the Cleveland Trust Company, the Erie Railroad, and the American Steel and Wire Company were founded. So was the forerunner of the Vlcek Tool Company which started in a blacksmith shop at 1612 Center Street in 1895. The Maresh Piano Company at 3303 East 55th Street was started in this period.

In January, 1892, on East 65th Street opposite Forman Avenue (later the site of the Warsaw Savings & Loan Association), the first Polish newspaper in Cleveland was started with the name Polonia. This was the ancestor of the Polish Day Monitor later published at 6875 Broadway.

Around the turn of the century the various street car companies were being consolidated and by 1900 the last of them had been brought into the merger forming the Cleveland Electric Railway. In 1905 the streets and houses were numbered systematically and Wilson Avenue became East 55th Street. Mrs. Eleanor E. Ledbetter became Branch Librarian. Mrs. Ledbetter won world-wide renown for her work with the foreign born. She cherishes medals and citations presented to her by the universities and governments of Poland and Czechoslovakia. Miss Mary M. Taylor was Branch Librarian from 1938 to 1945, and Miss Marjorie Ramisch became the librarian in 1945. In addition to providing the neighborhood with a representative collection of children's and adult books in English, Broadway Branch also housed the Cleveland Public Library's principal collection of books in Polish and Bohemian. The corner was further changed in 1907 when the new building of the Broadway Bank was erected.

In the decade between 1910 and 1919, the neighborhood branched out and we heard of more varied occupations and businesses. John A. Jarmuzeski had a pharmacy on Broadway, Max Zielkowski had a coal and feed store at 6431 Broadway; Dr. P. S. Smigel, an outstanding physician, had offices at

Broadway and East 72nd; and Anthony F. Wasielewski, the prominent Polish architect and contractor was at 3259 East 55th Street. A specialist in architecture, he built churches all through the United States including a cathedral in Oklahoma and a pro-cathedral in Minnesota. In 1911 a four-room addition was built at the Bohemian National Hall to provide classrooms for the teaching of the Bohemian language to children and adults. In 1913 the Association of Polish Women of the United States was organized with 146 charter members; in 1927 they bought their own home at 7526 Broadway. Open streetcars were still running on Broadway and two new buildings were outstanding--the new Barkwill School and the Olympia Theatre building--both built about 1911.

The naturally thrifty habits of the neighborhood people could easily be proven by a trip down the street for in addition to the Broadway Bank, there were the following: Broadway Savings and Trust Company and Columbia Savings and Loan, at 5733 Broadway with a new building going up at Broadway and Portage; Atlas at 5454 Broadway; Progress Building, Savings, and Loan Company at 4963 Broadway; and Owl (the hive) Building and Loan Association, at 5638 Broadway.

In 1923 the Broadway Bank was remodeled and an addition built which eliminated the empty land between it and the library. In 1922 a school census revealed that the predominantly Czech areas were those around Barkwill and Warren Schools, and that the predominantly Polish schools were Mound and Broadway. In 1927 St. John's Evangelical and Reformed Church built their new church at 3240 East 55th Street.

Change has continued over the years so rapidly as to almost defy the recording. However, there are certain changes which seem to stand out.

A map of the Broadway, East 55th corner in 1884 shows that while there had been considerable change in the neighborhood it was still primarily a residential community with plenty of open country and woods. The fair grounds were gone and Wilson Avenue had been cut through to Broadway but Hamm Avenue was no wider than Hamlet.

Our Lady of Lourdes Church was opposite the old Klipec Grocery on one corner of Dolloff, and the Hurt Saloon on the other corner. Farther up the street, just beyond Barkwill Avenue, was Barkwill School. The entire south side of Broadway was residential or vacant lots except for a frame building on the south-west corner of Hamm and Broadway which housed Zoul's Dry Goods store, Hecklers' Drug Store, and McGeen's Shoe Store.

On the north-west corner of Broadway and East 55th Street stood the Broadway Bank Office of The Union Trust Company, which had opened the year before in a two story brick building. Just back of the bank, running through between the two streets, was the Vlasak Furniture Store. The rest of the block up as far as Drake Avenue (present Mumford Avenue) was vacant except for Caleb Morgan's house, barn and corncrib and Rube Morgan's home.

Across East 55th Street at the corner of Hamlet stood the Canfield Block, a frame building housing Zverina's Grocery Store, Amos' Hardware, Mrs. Janousek's Millinery, and Jake Eyerdam's Barber Shop. Reading north on East 55th were Gus Kumler's Blacksmith and Carriage Shop, a livery stable run by a one-armed man named Peter Yost, and the Police Station, a lane leading to Caleb Morgan's pasture and Morgan's apple orchard. The territory along the ravine was still woodland except for the No. 2 plant of the Standard Oil Company.

The Union Trust Bank was closed in the thirties and with it its branch, the Broadway Bank. The building was empty for several years except while it was used by Woolworth's during the erection of their own building. Then the building was completely modernized and in October 1946 it was occupied by William Caine's Store.

The street was widened at Hamm and Broadway, completely removing a couple of buildings and the Post Office moved into one of the buildings on the newly widened street.

The new Jednota building, at 3289 East 55th Street, was erected during the thirties.

The neighborhood still seems bank conscious--although the Standard Bank failed when the Union Trust did, it was replaced by the Ohio Loan and Discount Company (in the same quarters at the corner of East 55th Street and Hamlet) and the Central National came to its building at East 55th Street and Broadway. The First Federal Savings and Loan Association of Cleveland moved into the store space of a former drug store at 5400 Broadway.

A new dormitory was built at Schauffler College and an addition was made to St. Alexis Hospital. In 1940, when Msgr. Zlamal celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of his pastorate at Our Lady of Lourdes Church, he was given a purse which was used for redecorating the interior of the church.

