

APPENDIX A: HISTORY OF THE BROADWAY MARKET

The Broadway Market is one of the oldest Public Markets in Buffalo. Started by a group of citizens on a city-donated parcel at 999 Broadway in 1888, the Broadway Market quickly became a community meeting place—a place ideal for combining business with socializing and sharing the latest in gossip and news from the old world.

As immigrants flocked to the east side of Buffalo in the late 1800s, they looked to continue old-world customs in their new and unfamiliar environment. While they wanted to enter the mainstream of city life, they also sought to preserve their Eastern European traditions and heritage. The Broadway Market served these needs. As the Market expanded to cover an entire block, bordered by Broadway, Lombard, S. Market, and Gibson Streets, the Market became the center of Buffalo's largest retail district. People fondly remember the hundreds of thousands of citizens, parading in front of the Market, down Broadway, to celebrate Thanksgiving and Labor Day.

Although continuously operating on the same site, there have been three separate physical structures. The first building, built-in 1879, was modeled after a Market in Krakow, Poland. At the beginning of the 20th century, following a fire, the Market was replaced with an unheated building twice the size. In 1956, this building was replaced with the current structure, including 1,100 parking spaces and roughly 100,000 square feet of potential retail space.

The Broadway Market has long been an international Market that reflected the diverse communities in Buffalo. Historically, the Market sold such exotic delicacies as dates from Africa,

black olives from Spain, cheeses from Italy, smoked salmon, jellied eels, rare wines, and Kosher concoctions, among other unusual and fine products. The Broadway Market has long served as an old-world meeting place for socializing and shopping and an incubator for family-owned and operated immigrant-focused businesses. Here one can find Al Cohen's Rye Bread, Charlie the Butcher's meats, and Weber's mustard. Over the last few decades, the Market focused on the Polish and German populations that constituted the majority of Broadway Fillmore neighborhood residents. During the latter part of the 20th century, the German and Polish residents mostly moved out of the neighborhood. However, the Market did not significantly adapt to the new varied community of primarily African American, Bangladeshi, Korean, Vietnamese, Arabic, Somali, African, and Laotian immigrants. Today, the Broadway Market struggles for customers and merchants except during the Easter season when hundreds of thousands of prior and current area residents return to buy Polish specialties.

In 2021, officials took the first step in the process by developing a business plan to guide the Market's future redevelopment. The resulting document—*Buffalo's International Broadway Public Market Business Plan*—articulates a vision for transforming the Market into a unique center for regional, fresh and international



The Broadway Market At The Turn Of The Century