

BROOKLYN NEWS

A few days ago the work of destroying a landmark of the Eastern District began. This building, at Bedford avenue and South 3d street, was originally the home of the First Universalist Church. The pastor of the church was the late Rev. Bernard Peters, founder of "The Brooklyn Times." The church moved later to South 9th street, and assumed the name of All Souls' Universalist Church. It now has its home far away from the place of its origin in the Flatbush section.

After the Universalists left the building it was purchased by the Primitive Methodists, and the Rev. J. J. White became the pastor. He shortly acquired the nickname of "Pop" White. It did not take him long to establish a record for performing marriages. The church became known as "Brooklyn's Gretna Green." It is said that more couples were married by "Pop" White than by any other minister in the country.

The parson was tall, and wore his hair after the manner of Henry Ward Beecher. He had two daughters who were always present at the marriages which he performed, and who acted as the witnesses. An eloping couple always found a friend in Mr. White. It made no apparent difference to him whether there was a fee awaiting him at the end of the ceremony or not.

After the Primitive Methodists gave up the building it was occupied for several years by the Bedford Avenue Pentecostal Temple. For the last four or five years the building has been vacant. It suffered from neglect and became anything but an ornament to the section. A six-story flathouse will occupy its site.

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Transcribed on 13 Aug 2009 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY