



Illustration by Courtney Lake  
Franklin High School ©2003



*Self-guided Walking Tour of*  
**Franklin, PA**  
*Historic Liberty & Thirteenth Streets*

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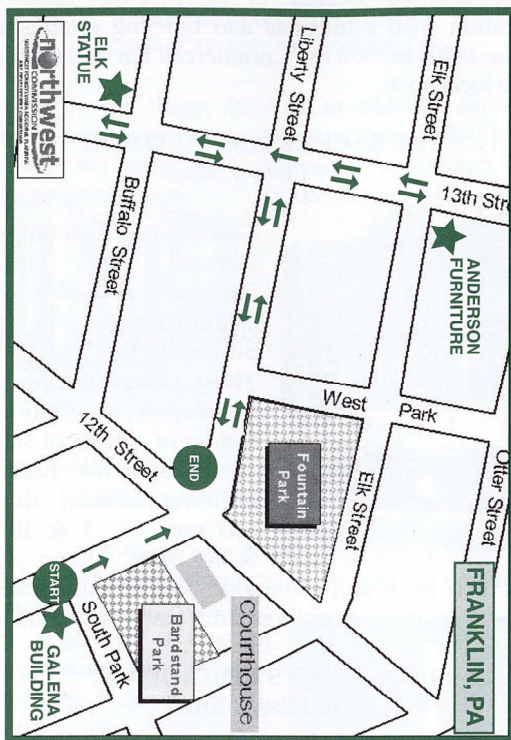


Franklin has developed a complex architectural heritage that is very evident and well documented. This fascinating period of cultural history occurred here in one of the most noted historic settlements in Northwestern Pennsylvania. The City's strategic location was the leading cause for this early activity. The first sixty-four years (1741-1805) was centered upon frontier trade and military enterprise involving French and English colonial interests and subsequent American permanent settlement.

A major portion of Franklin's architecture was erected during the late 19th and early 20th century. The rapid economic sophistication of the town caused a total transformation of its commercial, residential, industrial and institutional buildings. All of the period's architectural styles can be seen in some form in downtown Franklin - Gothic Revival, Victorian, Second Empire, Queen Anne, Tudor Revival, Italianate Stick and Romanesque. Highly varied, many of these buildings are associated with the region's most prominent and sometimes colorful people.

Funding for this project is provided through the Venango Center for Creative Development, the Pennsylvania Humanities Council and private donations.

Contributing expertise in this endeavor are: The Venango County Historical Society; Historic Franklin Preservation Association; Franklin Public Library; Humanities Scholar, Bruce Clayton, Professor of History Emeritus, Sarasota, FL; Architectural Scholar, Thomas Jones, Historic Preservation Planner, Easton, PA; local historians, Dennis Armstrong, Carolee Michener and Sylvia Coast.



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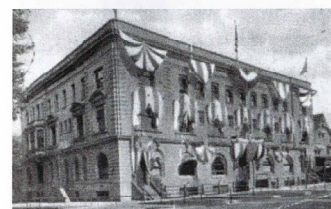
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[www.oilregion.org](http://www.oilregion.org)  
800-483-6264

### GALENA-DOCKERY BUILDING

1140 Liberty Street



The Rural House hotel once occupied this site but was destroyed by fire in 1891.

With the discovery of oil, Charles Miller developed the Galena Oil Works to specialize in a railroad lubricating oil. The present structure was built in 1901 to accommodate the company offices and its officials, including Charles Miller, his brother-in-law Joseph Sibley and other prominent individuals in the oil industry. The building contains 11 walk-in vaults and the exterior walls measure 16-20 inches thick.

The Galena-Signal Oil Company marker, erected by the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission in 1999, is located at the front of this Second Renaissance Revival structure. The hallmarks of this style of architecture are symmetry, proportion and detailing.

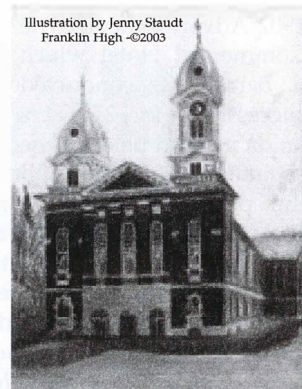
### FRANKLIN CIVIL WAR MONUMENT

South Park

This monument was erected and dedicated by residents of the county in September 1866. Faint inscriptions still remain of the 400 soldiers who lost their lives in the Civil War. Several Civil War reunions were held in Franklin - including the nation's Centennial year, October 12, 1876.

### VENANGO COUNTY COURTHOUSE

1168 Liberty Street



A symbol of Venango County, this our third building to be erected as a courthouse was designed by architects Sloan & Hutton of Philadelphia and constructed (1867 - 1869) by J. W. Brady, a local builder. The small tower was originally furnished with a large bell



and the tall tower housed the clock. The bell is gone but the ropes are still in place reminding us of the days when its ring would signal important communication for the town. In 1912 extensive renovations took place at the courthouse and in the early 1930s a rear addition was added. The Italianate structure is impressive with its pedimented and pilasted central pavilion flanked by square bays with uneven towers. A custom still in use today is that of the call of the Court Crier to open court proceedings.

### THE FOUNTAIN PARK

West Park

This site once served as a pasture and as a training area for the militia. It was reported that men who were arrested for public drunkenness were frequently sentenced to the job of digging stumps. In 1852 a tree planting day was held in an effort to provide shade and improve the park's appearance.

A century of loving care has preserved the Egbert Memorial Fountain, the centerpiece of West Park. The fountain was built in memory of Dr. Albert G. Egbert, a successful leader in the lubricating oil field. He was elected to a term in Congress after which he became involved in the business and civic affairs of our community. In 1882 he was named to the Park Commission taking a particular interest in the improvement and beautification of what is now the Fountain Park and the Civil War Monument Park. Dr. Egbert died in 1896. His beautiful home is located on South Park facing the Civil War Memorial.

Evening News 1896: "The topmost figure on the sculptured iron column is Venus, standing 25 feet above the pavement. From the lilies and cattails spring jets of water falling into the first and smallest of the three basins. The basin rests upon the figures of three cherubs, and from it the water falls into a second basin, which discharges the water from the mouths of 12 lions."

~ Please Cross West Park Street ~

### SNOOK BLOCK / PRINTZ BUILDING

1234-1242 Liberty Street

Prior to 1860 dilapidated stands stood in this area called Rat Hole Row. The discovery of OIL brought with it numerous trade and business centers requiring the substantial buildings that now line Liberty Street.



This Italianate style building was constructed in part in 1883 and a second half in 1888. At that time it was known as the E. W. Snook Block, housing the Snook & Co. Hardware. In 1901 Charles Reisinger purchased the business and renamed it Franklin Hardware which remained in operation under various ownerships until 1999.

The two upper floors, now vacant, surround a center atrium and were formerly used by the Y.M.C.A., Franklin Library, Knights of Columbus, numerous civic clubs, small businesses and oil production offices. For years the building was also known as the Printz Block with the Printz Clothing Company having its corporate office on the second floor.



adjoining building. The modern commercial building before you is nicely appointed with a row of Luxfer glass windows separating the first and second floors.

### PRINTZ BUILDING

1246-1248 Liberty Street

In the early 1900s the Pastime Theatre was one of several motion picture houses in Franklin. This building with its whimsical facade was razed in 1913 to make way for the new Princess Theatre under the ownership of B.H. Printz. Mr. Printz later closed the theatre to enlarge his steadily growing clothing establishment in the

### BOYD N. PARK BUILDING

1252 Liberty Street



Boyd N. Park opened his furniture and undertaking establishment here in the 1880s. Throughout the next 100 years the ownership changed but the name Park Furniture remained a focal point on Liberty Street until its closing in 1980.

Modernization began taking place in 1937 with new storefronts and more recently established the basement areas for small business enterprises. The regular symmetry and proportions of this Italianate style building add to Franklin's architectural heritage.

### EVENING NEWS BUILDING

1254-1256 Liberty Street



James B. Borland, writer and publisher in this area for 61 years, ran the Evening News Printing Company from this location in the early 1900s. Newsboys were dispensed throughout the city to announce the headlines and distribute papers.



### FELDMAN JEWELRY

1260 Liberty Street



Thomas Huling's boarding house stood on this site in the very early years of Franklin's settlement. Gradually the simple frame structures of our town gave way to sturdy architecture and well-developed city blocks.

This building was damaged by fire in 1886 and once housed early tenants such as the general store of Myron Park,

Martin & Epley Drug Store and Byrer Hardware. The current circa 1900 structure with its beautifully appointed facade is now the home of Feldman Jewelry.

B.J. Feldman opened his first jewelry store in Franklin in 1871, occupying various sites in the business area. His son, George Feldman, was a well-known civic leader, musician and businessman. George was co-founder of the Fulcrum Oil Company, a local industry engaged in the manufacture of clock and watch oils.

### CENTRE BLOCK

1262-1272 Liberty Street

This 1872 Italianate style structure was severely damaged by fire in 1886. Shown here is a turn of the century view illustrating the Centre Block as the hub of the downtown business area.

Over the years numerous business establishments were located within these storefronts and upper floors. Lawyers, tailors, photographers, news offices, physicians,

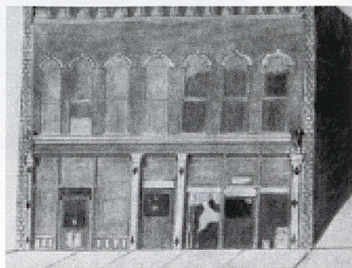


hardware stores, book & stationery, music and general merchandise stores are but a few of the occupants during the early bustling days of Franklin's downtown history. The building to the left was razed and replaced with the present modern structure, Sportsworld, in the early 1970s.

### J.T. CAMPBELL / WHITMER BUILDING

1282-1284 Liberty Street

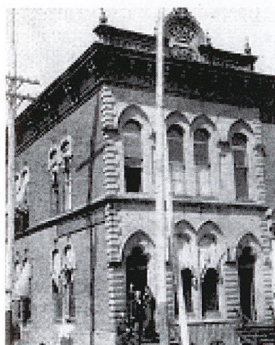
Illustration by  
Josh Carone-©2003  
Rocky Grove High School



This Italianate style building was erected in 1871. Mr. J.T. Campbell began his drygoods business at this location in 1875. The business remained in the Campbell family with Ralph W. Whitmer later becoming a partner and then owner until its closing in 1967. In the early years, horse-drawn wagons delivered carpets from the railroad station to the store where a pulley hoisted the heavy carpet rolls to the second floor entrance.

### OLD FIRST NATIONAL BANK

1286 Liberty Street



A beautiful ornate building once stood at this location and was known as the First National Bank. Established in 1863 it long served the community into the early 1920s.

Numerous tenants occupied this corner over the decades. The present structure was built by and housed the Northwest Savings Bank.

### JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER, SR.

INDUSTRIAL CAPITALISM  
OFTEN SEEN ON STREETS OF FRANKLIN  
OIL INDUSTRY  
STANDARD OIL

~ Please Turn Right on 13th Street ~

### SHEASLEY BUILDING

317-319 Thirteenth Street

An elaborate ornamented frieze and cornice crown this commercial Italianate structure. The block was erected in 1886 by John L. Mitchell, President of the Exchange Bank. In 1918 Jacob Sheasley purchased the building from the Mitchell estate and placed his name on the capstone.



### HANNA-DUFFIELD BLOCK & LAMBERTON BLOCK

301-315 Thirteenth Street



In 1866 John L. Hanna built the first three-story building in Venango County. Over the years it housed the Odd Fellows' Hall, Wilt Brothers photography studio,

Spectator (newspaper), an opera hall and the band room for the Silver Cornet Band.

In 1886 a devastating fire consumed a good portion of this building along with priceless historical photographs, news archives and band equipment. The walls along Elk Street were undamaged and that section was rebuilt to its original three stories. The right hand portion of this Italianate block was reduced to two stories. During the last phase of construction R. G. Lamberton, a lawyer and banker, purchased the building and added the capstone bearing his name. Enhancing this facade are the alternating wings flanking the arched, oval and bay windows.



~ Look across the street to  
Anderson's Furniture Store ~

**THE McCLURE HOTEL /  
ANDERSON'S FURNITURE**  
225 Thirteenth Street



McClure Hotel 1902  
Illustration by Daniel Augehenbaugh  
Rocky Grove High - ©2003

The Hotel Seenor was located on this corner in the latter 1800s. In 1897 B.D. McClure purchased the building spending the immense sum of \$25,000 in renovations. The two-year remodeling project included a 34-foot bar of solid mahogany. In March 1900 the McClure Hotel opened boasting, "Not the biggest but the best".

Around 1915 the building was purchased by Robert Anderson to house his furniture store. Extensive renovation in 1999 preserved much of the 3rd floor hotel layout, resulting in awards from the Oil Heritage Region and the Franklin Historic Preservation Association. This well-preserved structure has handsome Italianate and Classical detailing. Note the interesting roof detail.

~ Please Cross 13th Street to  
Salvation Army Corner ~

**SALVATION ARMY BUILDING**  
302 Thirteenth Street



Illustrated by  
Megan Shanahan  
Franklin High School - ©2003

This is one of the very few Art-Deco buildings in Franklin. The Salvation Army building has been in use by this organization since the mid 1940s. Interesting details include a recessed entrance with a stylized fan design and shield over the door. In early years the building was occupied by a grocery store.

**WOODBURN. CONE & COMPANY /  
FOURSQUARE CHURCH**  
318 Thirteenth Street

This building was erected after a destructive fire in 1866 swept through Thirteenth Street. It is one of the oldest commercial sites in the business district. The first tenants were J. & R.H. Woodburn. Their store



Building ca. 1902  
Illustrated by Missy Carbaugh  
Franklin High School - ©2003

carried dry goods, notions, carpets and millinery. Over the years numerous establishments have occupied this well-built structure including a grocery and furniture store.

**OLD BUTLER WICK BUILDING**  
322-324 Thirteenth Street



Adjoining the Four Square Church is the property recently known as the Old Butler Wick building. Erected in 1873 this commercial structure was damaged by fire in March of 1985. Earlier tenants of this building were an American Express office, C. Harris Boot and Shoe Store, Jordan Jewelry and H. Cohen Sons Clothing.

**OLD LAMBERTON BANK SITE**  
Corner of Liberty and Thirteenth Street

In 1866 a fire destroyed early structures located at this location. In 1871 Rallya & Griffin opened a large stationer and bookstore on this corner.

In the not too distant memory of area citizens is the stately Lamberton Bank building, pictured here. The Lamberton Bank was replaced with the present day structure in the early 1970s.



~ Please cross Liberty Street to  
Northwest Savings Bank ~

**OLD EXCHANGE HOTEL**  
Corner Liberty and Thirteenth



Very early in Franklin's development, this corner was of great importance to residents and travelers. In the 1820s John Lupher had a blacksmith shop here and William Bennett was the proprietor of a rooming establishment. The first hotel was a four-story frame building that opened in 1866 and destroyed by fire in 1870. May of 1871 saw the opening of a new brick Exchange Hotel – just in time for the September visit of **President Ulysses S. Grant** and family as they toured the Venango County oil regions. The train that brought them here was colorfully decorated and hundreds of people gathered to greet the President. Carriages brought the family to the Exchange where they stayed overnight before leaving the next day on a special train for Pittsburgh. This hotel was closed on May 15, 1964 making way for the existing bank building.

~ Please Continue on 13th Street to City Hall ~

**OLD CITY HALL AND OPERA HOUSE**  
Corner of Thirteenth and Buffalo Streets

The cornerstone for this municipal building was laid on May 30, 1883. Within this structure were the city offices, police station, fire department and jail. This historic building was demolished

during the "urban renewal era" of the 1960s. The new building that you see was constructed on this same site.





Adjoining old City Hall, the Opera House opened in 1866 and provided local citizens with fine theater presentations and talented speakers such as **Samuel Clemens** and **Susan B. Anthony**.



~ Look across the street where the Elk is standing ~

**MRS. WEBBER'S BOARDING HOUSE**  
Buffalo Street – Corner of Thirteenth Street



Adam Webber built this home in the 1840s. He was Franklin postmaster until his death in 1860. His widow, Sarah Smith Webber succeeded him as postmaster and turned the family home into a rooming house during the oil boom.

Arriving in Franklin in the spring of 1864, **John Wilkes Booth** took up part-time residence in this house. He invested in land and oil wells located on a 60-acre tract in Cranberry Township. Well liked by area citizens, he often entertained them with readings and his acting ability. In September 1864 he left the boarding house. Franklin did not

hear of him until the following spring when wires flashed the news of the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. The house was demolished in 1951 after the Elks Club acquired the parcel.

~ Please turn left and cross 13th Street ~

**A. LEACH / BOSTON SHOE STORE**  
425 Thirteenth Street

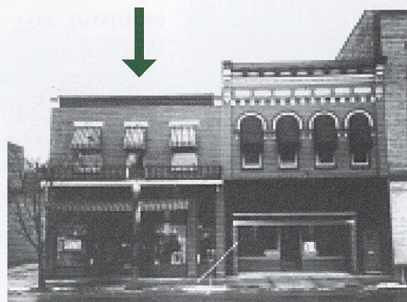


Leach Grocery circa 1900  
Illustration by Barbara Grove  
Franklin High – ©2003

For many years this structure was known as the A. Leach & Co. Grocery. Mr. Leach and his son continued with their business until the early 1930s when Boyd Stanley took ownership. The Boston Shoe Store was also a long-term merchant at this location. This commercial Italianate facade features window hoodmolds and is crowned with a heavily ornamented bracketed cornice.

**R.H. CALLAN BUILDING**  
421 Thirteenth Street

Bearing his name on the capstone, Richard Callan erected this urban-vernacular building in the early 1900s. The family took up residence in the upper floor and the storefront below offered pharmaceuticals and a selection of liquors.



**McMULLEN BLOCK**  
409-415 Thirteenth Street

This structure was once a part of the Exchange Bank that was erected on the corner in 1872. The existing building survived the 1917 demolition of the front section of the old Exchange Bank.



In 1982 Bob and Donna McMullen carefully restored the facade to its original beauty. During the era when this building was part of the bank the storefronts housed various business including the Rose Brothers Ice Cream Shop.

~ Please Turn Right on Liberty Street ~

**OLD EXCHANGE BANK**  
Corner of Liberty and Thirteenth



This is one of the finest examples of the Beaux Arts style in the Oil Heritage Region. The first Exchange Bank, pictured here, was erected in 1872. In 1917 and in 1924 major reconstruction resulted in the substantial and impressive structure now known as the Venango County Exchange Building.



### OLD ORPHEUM THEATER

1277 Liberty Street



The Orpheum Theater, a 'magnificent picture house' provided county residents with the latest in entertainment including vaudeville, short plays, musicals, silent and talking films. Built in 1916 this Neo-Colonial style building showcased the latest in entertainment technology. It featured an electric ticket seller; change making machine and sparkling marquee. The Orpheum Theater closed its doors in 1956.

Located in the little building to the right, the Riddle Brothers operated a family restaurant for 34 years. In 1946 the business was sold to George Nestos and Peter Sherman and became known as the Central Restaurant.

### COMMERCIAL HOTEL BUILDING

1273 Liberty Street

Commercial Hotel - 1902  
Illustration by Erica Reib  
Franklin High - ©2003



1902 Advertisement: "The Commercial Hotel which S. Barrett has conducted successfully for 25 years holds its high place in the estimation of guests and the public generally. Forty-five desirable rooms accommodate lodgers, the menu is unsurpassed and the bar supplies the choicest brands in the market. The Commercial merits all the good things said of it everywhere by all who know its excellent quality." Earlier proprietors advertised as: The Grand Central, Goss Inn and the Grand Hotel. In the 1930s the first

floor became the location of the Franklin Amusement Corporation with a billiards and bowling establishment. From the 1940s to 1970 the Commercial Bar and Grill was a favorite local spot.

### THE BACHARACH BUILDING

1269 Liberty Street



German immigrants, Edward and Gertrude Bacharach opened a tobacco establishment on Liberty Street in the early 1860s. Thirty years later the family developed this site as a residence and retail store. In later years the Bacharach building housed the J.G. McCrory Co. 5 & 10 Cent Store. The Hixon family moved their book and stationery store to this location in 1967 and remained in business until just a few years ago.

### LEONARDO'S RESTAURANT

1267 Liberty Street

This storefront is Franklin's finest Moderne style commercial facade; notice the paired bay windows capped by an ornamented cornice. Food hallmarks the longtime history of this building. George P. Kostolambros (Lambros) and Marcus G. Conomikes were early tenants specializing in confectionary. Later the L&C Restaurant became a favorite place for locals and travelers alike.



### DeBENCE BUILDING

1261 Liberty Street



Charles W. Gearing erected this Neo-Colonial style building in 1906. Handsome stone string courses, corbel table with recessed panels on the cornice and the prominent keystones over the windows make this an attractive structure.

Around 1910, Robert T. Anderson and George W. Feldman opened a furniture store at this location. Harry J. Bryer's hardware served the area until the mid 1930s followed by the G.C. Murphy Five and Ten Cent Store. Step inside and experience DeBence Music World, filled with wonderful nostalgic items from the collection of Jacob and Elizabeth Tipton DeBence.

### THOMAS MOORE HARNESS SHOP / FRANKLIN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

1259 Liberty Street

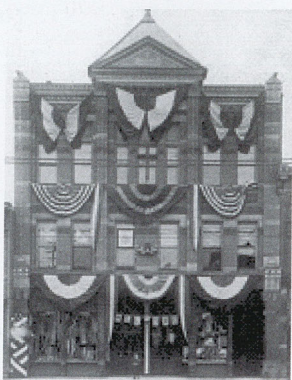
Long before the arrival of the automobile, Thomas Moore and Son satisfied the needs of those on horseback. Mr. Moore's saddlery hardware business began in Franklin in 1841 and included an inventory of saddles, yokes, beef hides, sheep pelts, tallow and furs. This Italianate style building was erected about 1883 and at that time father and son advertised fine blankets, robes and good quality trunks and bags.





### MASONIC BUILDING

1257 Liberty Street



The Myrtle Lodge, oldest of the Masonic groups, was founded on February 21, 1858. Around the turn of the century the Lodge purchased this structure using the second and third floors for their many activities.

Street level storefronts housed various businesses over the years: Bensinger, Smith & Co. (books and stationery); C. H. Harris Shoe

Store; F. W. Woolworth Five and Ten and Thrift Drug. Eclectic in design, this is one of Franklin's finest Victorian era commercial buildings.

### RAYMOND BUILDINGS

1251-1253 Liberty Street



Revitalization projects in the 1980s tried to rejuvenate some of the old-fashioned storefronts. Behind these modern facades are the possible remains of one of the oldest sites in the downtown area. It was here in the very early 1800s that William Raymond built his family residence and mercantile shop. In recent times various businesses occupied these ancient walls such as confectionaries, cafes, the National Market, Wayne's Market and Chuck's Boot Shop.

### DODD-OSMER BUILDING

1249 Liberty Street



This turn of the century building was erected in the 1880s for Samuel C.T. Dodd, a prominent Franklin attorney who drafted the Standard Oil Trust. James H. Osmer and sons later used the building for their law offices. For almost 60 years Jerome Silverman's clothing store, *The Fashion*, provided generations with the latest in lady's apparel.

### FRANKLIN TRUST BUILDING GREEN BLDG. / BIERY BLDG. / LIBERTY BLDG.

1241-1247 Liberty Street



Comprised of many Classic Revival details, this 1907 building was the location of the Franklin Trust Co. and the Franklin Post Office.

News-Herald – Sept. 20, 1924 – “A new fire escape has been added to the building of the Franklin Trust Co., leading down into Pennsylvania Ave., or the Post Office alley. The device will give still further security to other occupants of a structure whose steel frame, tiled halls and other details of fireproof construction are of the most modern type of business architecture.”

### BLEAKLEY BLOCK

1233-1239 Liberty Street

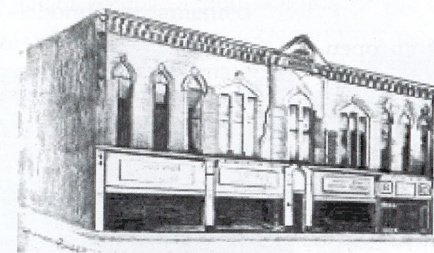


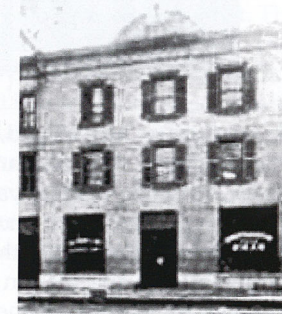
Illustration by Ashley Semenak  
Franklin High - ©2003

Built in 1878 for James Bleakley whose earliest years were devoted to the establishment of a local newspaper called the Democratic Arch. In 1864 he was instrumental in the development of the First National Bank and later the International Bank. Since that time this ornate building has seen many changes. In 1906 Limber Brothers Bakery occupied the storefront on the right. Excited residents welcomed the J.C. Penney Co. department store in 1923 and continued to serve the residents of Franklin until its move to the mall in Cranberry Township. Another pleasant memory of days gone by is the Isaly's Dairy and skyscraper ice cream cones.

### THE INTERNATIONAL BANK / HILEMAN-DAFFINS

1231 Liberty Street

The 1879 History of Venango County records that on this site Jacob Dubbs built a log structure where he lived and kept a store. Jacob's daughter, Elizabeth, was born in that cabin in 1823 and later married James Bleakley. In 1868 Bleakley established the International Bank and at that time this building had three floors with a capstone dated 1846.



~ Please turn to back page ~

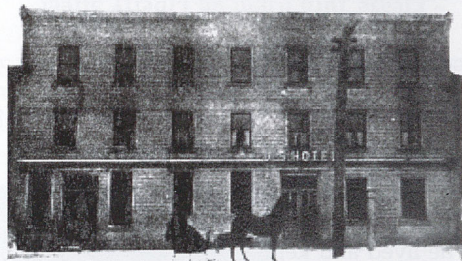


**BARROW-CIVIC THEATRE  
AND LITTLE THEATRE**  
1223-1225 Liberty Street

In 1913-14 an open-air structure named the Park Theatre was located on this site. A roof was added later but in 1944 fire destroyed the building. The Kayton Entertainment Co. owned the site and by 1946 had rebuilt the movie theatre. By 1973 the theatre was sold and became the Re-Arm Sports Center. The Franklin Civic Operetta purchased this Moderne style building in 1989. Hard work and community support contributed to Franklin having one of the finest art and entertainment centers in the area. The Little Theatre was once a favorite drug store and soda fountain operated by the McGuire Brothers.



**UNITED STATES HOTEL BUILDING**  
1213-1221 Liberty Street



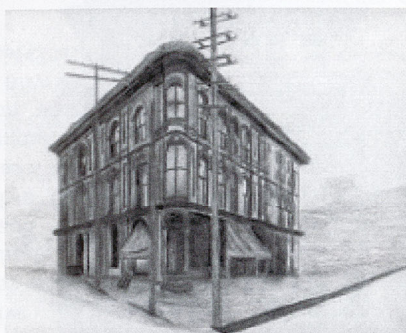
Major George McClelland, a noted military soldier who fought in the Mexican and Civil War was born here in 1819. By 1830 Edward Pearce was landlord of the 'Rising Sun'. Last known as the United States Hotel, **John Wilkes Booth** roomed and dined here during his oil speculation days. This site has been occupied by various business enterprises from a very early period. Last renovation as a hotel probably occurred in the early 1860s, but it is said that under the siding there is a cornerstone marked 1806.

**SITE OF THE PLUMER-HANCOCK BLOCK**  
Corner Liberty and Twelfth Street



Oskies Restaurant and Pub occupies a portion of the site once known as Plumer - Hancock Block. Arnold Plumer acquired this property in 1833 and in November of 1868 he opened this three-story "flat iron" building. Banks, grocery stores, restaurants, drug stores, music stores and Western Union Telegraph offices once occupied the storefronts. Attorneys and insurance agencies leased office space in the upper two floors. A fire in 1981 destroyed the building.

Hancock Building  
Illustration by Ashley Semenak  
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*The End*

*Special thanks to the gifted art students of  
Franklin and Rocky Grove High Schools.*

