

The
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of the

Lycoming County Historical Society

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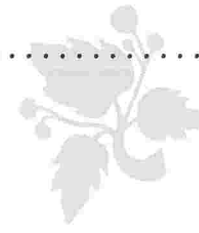
J. Roman Way House
858 West Fourth Street

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Letter from the Editor

This year's *Journal* responds to the frequent requests the Lycoming County Historical Society receives for information about Williamsport's stunning and varied residential architecture. I often tell my friends in less architecture-rich locales that I'm pretty sure there's at least one example of every kind of American architectural style somewhere in Williamsport, or at least in Lycoming County. In a three-block stretch of West Fourth Street alone, there are twelve distinct nineteenth-century styles on display, a remarkable and valuable attribute. In response to requests, the Lycoming County Historical Society, with the help of intern Michele Miller, has been putting together walking tours of Millionaires' Row and the Downtown area. In this year's issue of *The Journal*, we present the Millionaires' Row tour and invite you to stroll along the avenue lined with the homes of Williamsport's formerly rich and famous.

In addition to the tour, this issue also features "The Attack of the Killer Oatmeal," an account based on an oral history. Written by Becky Day, the story of a trip to the Williamsport Growers' Association Market was told by her mother and is part of a collection of family stories about the Baiers of Bastress. Becky, proprietor of the Bastress Mountain Food Company, also collects recipes that often accompany her "tales of Nippenose Valley."

The third feature is a history of the Vallamont Land Company's planned community by Elizabeth Yoder. A development on the former farm of Hezekiah Packer, the Vallamont neighborhood, offering fresh air and elevation above threatening flood water, was originally bounded by Market Street, Rural Avenue and Fifth Avenue just north of the Williamsport city limits in a country setting on the streetcar line.

The articles in this issue are based on historical sources of every kind, including postcards, photographs, maps, newspapers, interviews, and oral histories. I would especially like to thank Vice President Robert Kane, Jr. for his help in identifying styles and features. For further information, you may enjoy reading the following local histories that served as reference materials for these articles. Historical architecture buffs will find the handbook, *Identifying American Architecture* indispensable. Accompanied by that book, amateur historians can roam the city at large to explore the wealth of styles around us. All the books listed below are available in the Lycoming County Historical Society Library and in the James V. Brown Library:

Sources:

Blumenson, John J. G. *Identifying American Architecture: A Pictorial Guide to Styles and Terms, 1600-1945*. Rev. ed. NY: W.W. Norton & Co., 1981.

Samuel J. Dornsife & Eleanor Wolfson, *Lost Williamsport* (Montoursville, PA: Paulhamus Litho, Inc., 1995).

Junior League of Williamsport, *West Fourth Street Story*. (Williamsport, PA: Junior League of Williamsport, 1975).

Robert Larson et al, *Williamsport: From Frontier Village to Regional Center*. (Windsor Pubs, 1996).

John F. Meginness, *History of Lycoming County* (Chicago, IL: Brown, Runk & Company, 1892).

Thomas Taber, III. *Williamsport Lumber Capital* (Muncy, PA, 1995).

An Historical Walking Tour of Millionaires' Row

Planned by Michele Miller for the Lycoming County Historical Society
(Two miles, approximately 1 hour)

Once “the lumber capital of the world,” Williamsport has been the county seat of Lycoming County since 1795 and the political, economic, and cultural center of north central Pennsylvania. During the lumber boom of the 1860s and 1870s, the city was the center of the nation’s lumbering industry, supplying wood for furniture, ships, and the country’s most posh hotels. Prosperity attracted lumber magnates, entrepreneurs, craftspeople, skilled laborers, and others hoping to cash in on the boom days. By the 1870s, Williamsport numbered 18 millionaires among its 19,000 residents, more millionaires per capita than in any other city in the world, and its streets were well accustomed to the steps of the well-heeled. Williamsport’s Downtown area and West Fourth Street, known as “Millionaires’ Row,” offer some of the finest examples of Victorian architecture in Pennsylvania in the homes and public buildings built by the lumber barons and entrepreneurs of Williamsport and the Fourth Street elite.

Vast forests of white pine (used for shipbuilding and houses), hemlock, and other hardwood trees along the Susquehanna River made Williamsport a good location for lumbering. But lumbering thrived because of the Susquehanna Boom, built in 1850 by Major James Perkins. An enclosed area used to store logs in the river before they were taken to the sawmills, the boom consisted of a series of wooden cribs weighted with boulders and connected by a chain of floating logs. At the peak of the lumbering industry, the boom held up to 300,000,000 logs. The boom and the resulting sawmills served as the major impetus for Williamsport’s growth in the late 1800s.

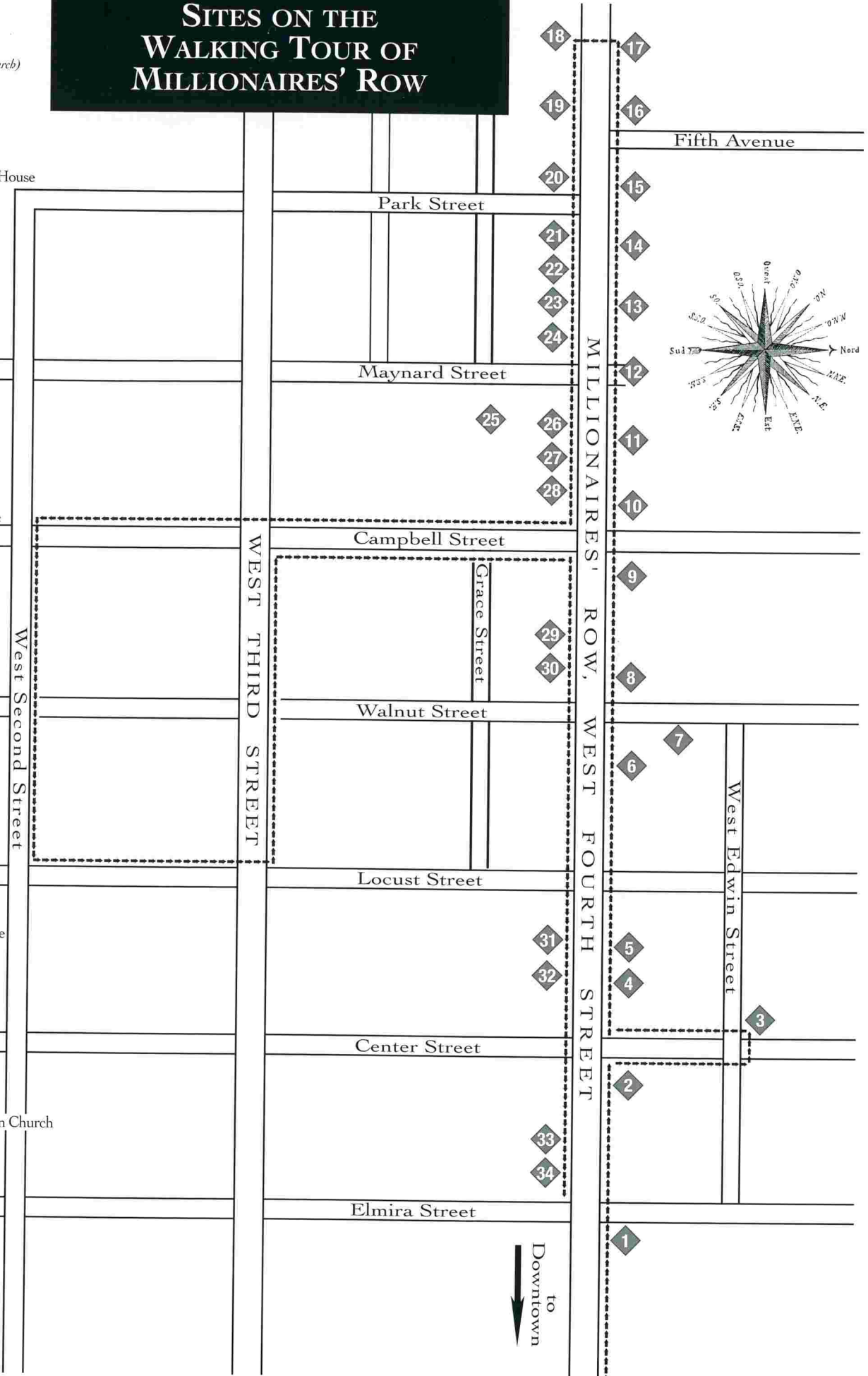
As the Susquehanna Boom improved and expanded

the lumber industry, Williamsport expanded as well. By 1850 the population had jumped from 244 residents in 1810 to 1,625. With the outbreak of the Civil War, the lumber industry took an even greater leap as it entered the industrial age. Because of lumbering, the population reached 16,030 by 1870. Not only did the lumber industry bring wealth and prosperity to the area, but it also served as a magnet for other industries. The city grew in reputation and, in 1870, it was one of six cities under consideration as the state capital. At one point, in 1890, the city’s population reached 27,132. However, in the late nineteenth century, the lumber industry declined as mountains were stripped of their forests and a series of floods and fires repeatedly destroyed the boom and devastated the countryside.

Though the face of Williamsport has changed over time, its features still include the mansions and monuments built during the city’s periods of great prosperity, fine examples of numerous American architectural styles. Many of the homes were designed by the architect Eber Culver, who, along with the ambitious Peter Herdic, made “Millionaires’ Row” the fashionable address for Victorian Williamsport’s hoity-toity. The following walking tour offers a fascinating range and diversity of architecture that reflects the tastes and sensibilities of the millionaires of nineteenth-century Williamsport. As you walk, take time to note the variety of steeples, cupolas, turrets, and towers adapting medieval English, French, Italian, and perhaps even Middle Eastern styles that punctuate the valley. A very useful resource to accompany the walking tour is the compact handbook by John J.G. Blumenson, *Identifying American Architecture*.

SITES ON THE WALKING TOUR OF MILLIONAIRES' ROW

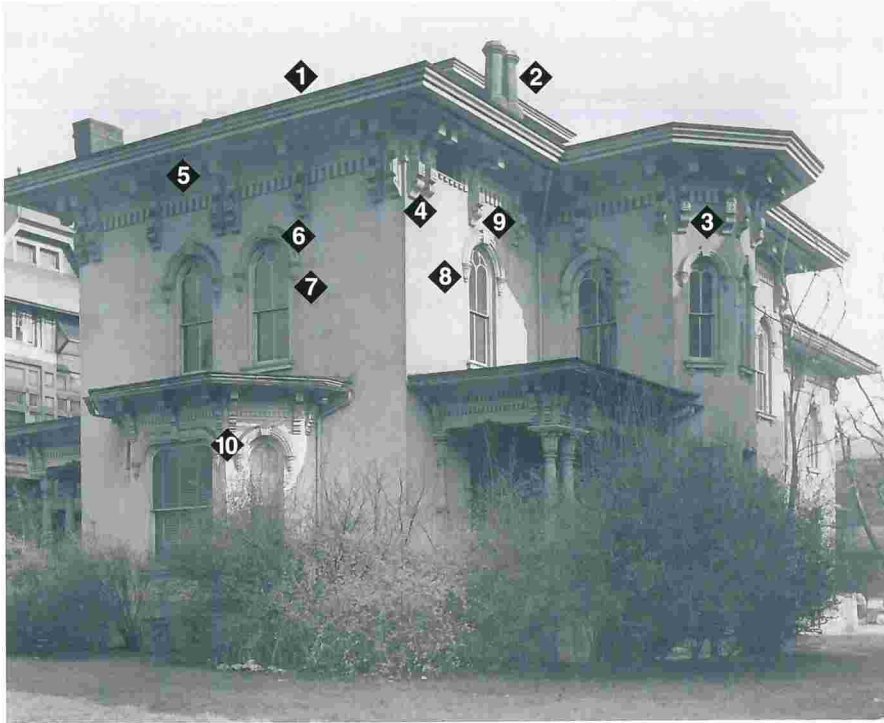
1. First Baptist Church
420 W. Fourth St.
2. Christ Temple Church
(Formerly St. Paul's Lutheran Church)
436 W. Fourth St.
3. Beth Ha-Shalom
425 Center St.
4. Hiram Rhoads Residence
522 W. Fourth St.
5. McMinn-Bowman-Mosser House
528 W. Fourth St.
6. Smith-Ulman Residence
634 W. Fourth St.
7. The Woman's Club
414 Walnut St.
8. Church of the Annunciation
700 W. Fourth St.
9. The Weightman Block
754-770 W. Fourth St.
10. Park Hotel
800 W. Fourth St.
11. Trinity Episcopal Church
850 W. Fourth St.
12. Thomas T. Taber Museum
of the Lycoming County
Historical Society
858 W. Fourth St.
13. Howard C. Taylor Residence
904 W. Fourth St.
14. Foresman-Hart-Baier-
Clinger Residence
912 W. Fourth St.
15. Herdic Double
942-944 W. Fourth St.
16. Metzger Residence
1006 W. Fourth St.
17. Sipe Residence
1028 W. Fourth St.
18. Peck Residence
1075 W. Fourth St.
19. John G. Reading Residence
1025 W. Fourth St.
20. Goodrich-Weightman-
Walker-Cochran Residence
1005 W. Fourth St.
21. Robert Foresman Residence
951 W. Fourth St.
22. Lyon Residence
921 W. Fourth St.
23. Eutermarks-Harrar Residence
915 W. Fourth St.
24. Henry Johnson Residence
901 W. Fourth St.
25. Ways Garden
847 W. Fourth St.
26. William Emery Residence
835 W. Fourth St.
27. YWCA
815 W. Fourth St.
28. Covenant Central Presbyterian Church
807 W. Fourth St.
29. Deemer-Maneval House
711 W. Fourth St.
30. Rowley-Rishel Residence
707 W. Fourth St.
31. William V. Emery House
555 W. Fourth St.
32. Embick Cottage
531 W. Fourth St.
33. Peter Herdic Residence
407 W. Fourth St.
34. Albert Hermance Residence
405 W. Fourth St.



Popular 19th-Century Styles on Millionaires' Row

and Common Architectural Features

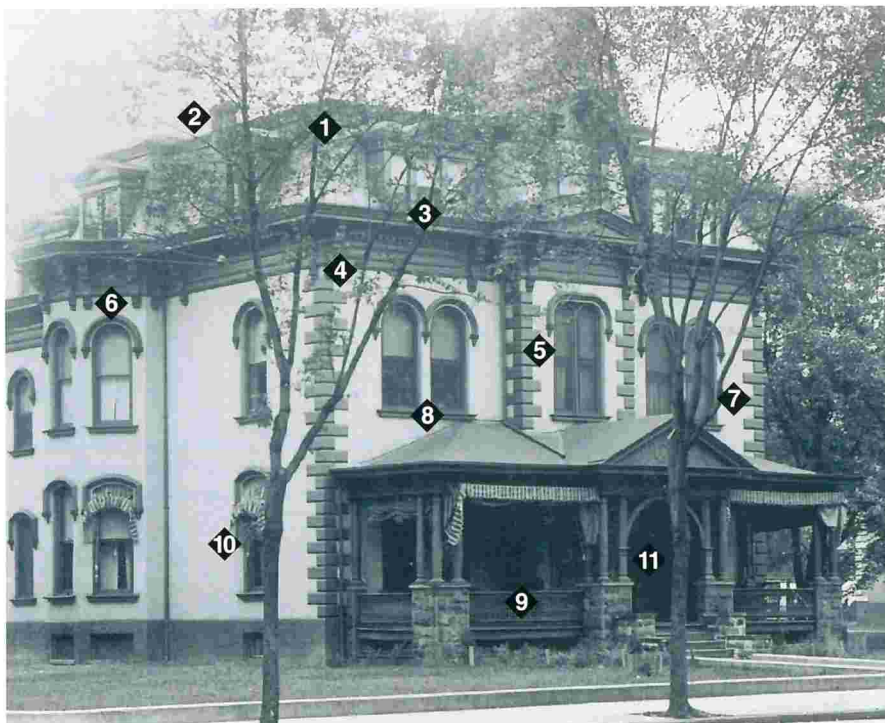
Italianate, 1840-1880



The symmetrical, two- or three-story Italianate building, with its low-pitched roof, wide eaves, and stucco finish was popular for public buildings as well as for private residences. Typical elements include paired brackets supporting the cornices, tall first-floor windows and quoins (brick or stone accents at the corners). The Peter Herdic House, like other West Fourth Street mansions, once boasted a tall square tower more characteristic of the Italian Villa style (1830-1880) in place of the Italianate low, square cupola. The tower often arose from a central pediment characteristic of the Second Empire style. Later, the towers were removed. Other Italian Villa features incorporated in the local Italianate style include addition of a square bay and a porch tucked between the tower and corner of the house.

1. Low Pitch Hip Roof
2. Short Square Cupola
3. Large Multiple Scrolled Brackets
4. Paired Brackets
5. Wide Eaves
6. Segmental Window Heads
7. Enriched Consoles (*Decorative Brackets*)
8. Round Arches
9. Dentils (*Small Protruding Rectangular Blocks*)
10. Tall First-Floor Windows

Second Empire, 1860-1890



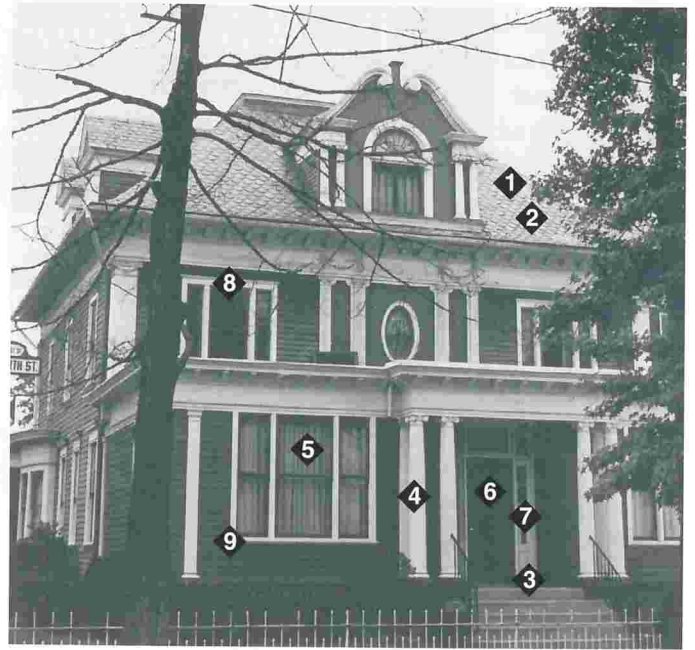
The elegant Second Empire style, popular for residential, commercial, and institutional structures, is distinguished by its mansard roof—flat-topped with straight sides—adapted from the French Second Empire style. Below the roof, the two- to three-story residences look much like Italianate mansions, featuring in common wide, bracketed eaves, tall first-floor windows, and stone quoins. Verandas and a central pavilion sometimes rising above the roof are also characteristic elements. The style is at once graceful and imposing.

1. Mansard Roof
2. Tall Chimney with Decorated Caps
3. Bracketed Cornice
4. Paired Brackets Supporting Eaves
5. Projecting Central Pavillion
6. Eyebrow-like Window Heads
7. Quoins (*Brick or Stone Accents at the Corners*)
8. Paired Windows
9. Veranda-like Porch
10. Tall First-Floor Windows
11. Arched Double Doors with Glass Panels

Colonial Revival, 1870-1920

Combining traditional Colonial elements with contemporary features, the Colonial Revival style communicates balance and stability. A large gambrel or barn-style roof, often with dormers, and a central portico are characteristic. The style incorporates columns and pilasters adapted from classical architecture, with decorative elements such as swans'-neck pediments, dentils (small rectangular blocks under the cornice), and stained glass windows.

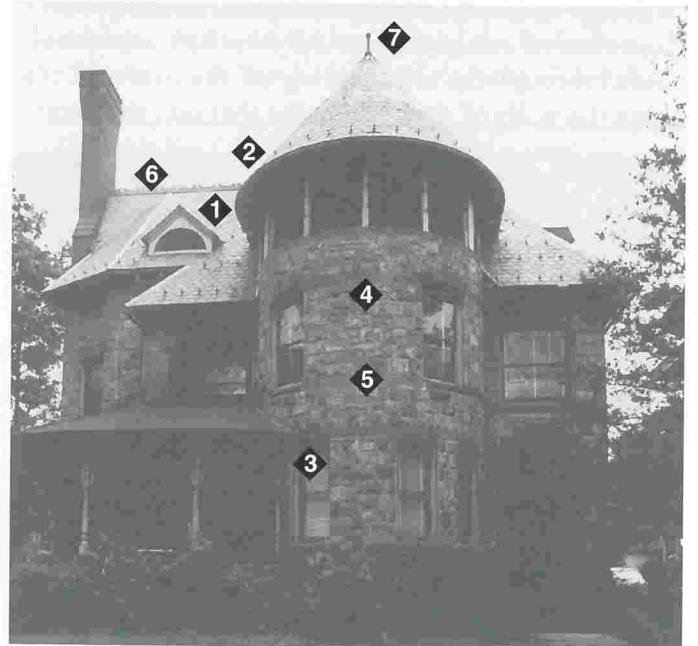
1. Shingle Roof
2. Gambrel Roof
3. Large Entry Portico
4. Classical Columns
5. Large Three-Part Windows
6. Glass-Paneled Doors
7. Over-Sized Side Lights
8. Straight Window Heads
9. Single Light Sash



Richardsonian-Romanesque, 1870-1900

Stone and mass lend grandeur to the imposing Richardsonian-Romanesque style developed by H.H. Richardson (1836-1886) in vogue for residential and institutional buildings across the country. Rounded arches and towers are reminiscent of medieval architecture, while the broad roof, recessed windows and porches, squat columns and chimneys contribute to the overall effect of volume and mass. The Richardsonian-Romanesque structures are counterweights to the fly-away Queen Annes that line Millionaires' Row.

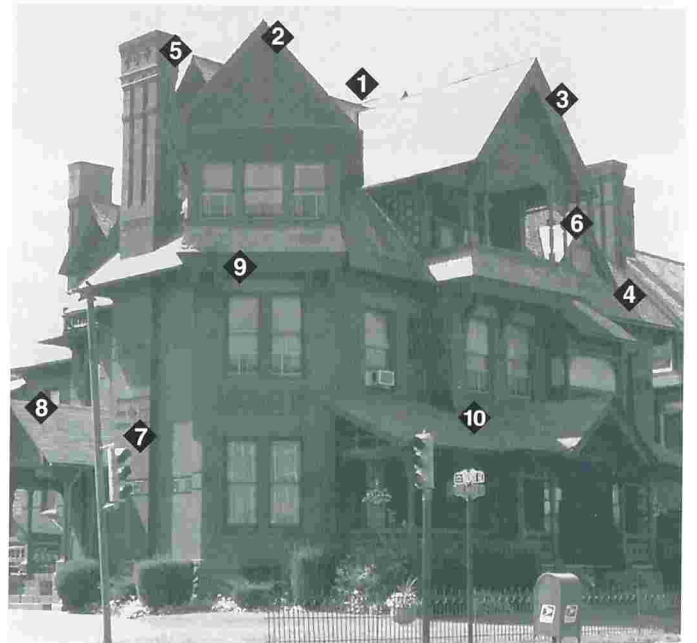
1. Broad Hip Roof
2. Short Tower
3. Deep-Set Windows
4. Rock-Faced Exterior
5. Belt Course
6. Decorative Flashing Ridge
7. Finial



Queen Anne, 1880-1900

Structurally varied, complicated, and individualistic, the Queen Anne style gave Williamsport's busiest architect, Eber Culver, his chance to shine. Multiplaned roofs with projecting dormers, gables, pavilions, and porches, tall chimneys, and encircling porches combine in exciting asymmetrical compositions. Decorative elements such as roof cresting, turned wooden posts and spindles, terracotta panels, multicolored stone and paint are used with *elan*, and contrasting textures and patterns in lattices, pediments, and shingles are juxtaposed for visual excitement. As if Queen Annes aren't interesting enough, many of the West Fourth Street Queen Annes have undergone additions or subtractions of elements to keep up with fashion—one was once a Second Empire mansion until the addition of a third floor.

- | | |
|--|-----------------------|
| 1. Multiplaned Roof | 4. Fishscale Shingles |
| 2. Pedimented Projecting
Dormer
(Triangular Pediment) | 5. Tall Chimneys |
| 3. Pedimented Projecting Attic
Gable with Recessed Porch
(Triangular Pediment) | 6. Turned Wood Posts |
| | 7. Terracotta Panels |
| | 8. Roof Cresting |
| | 9. Dentils |
| | 10. Encircling Porch |



Walking Tour of Millionaires' Row

The West Fourth Street Tour (approximately one hour) begins on the north side of West Fourth Street at the corner of Elmira. Continue west along the north side of West Fourth Street.

1 First Baptist Church, at Fourth and Elmira Streets, 420 Elmira Street

Entrepreneur Peter Herdic offered to donate the land for this church attended by his first wife, Amanda, but the congregation of the First Baptist Church considered this westside location, bordered by a swampy farm and worn-out nursery, too far out in the country and initially refused the offer. Once Herdic persuaded them to accept the land, he stipulated that they must build a first-rate house of worship. And so they did, contracting Eber Culver, an active member, to design and build the church. Unfortunately, two days after its completion on July 1, 1859, a hurricane roared through the area, tearing off the roof and damaging the walls of the church. By that fall, the commu-



nity had joined together to raise the church spire. However, before it could be secured, a violent windstorm tore through town, and the spire was dropped and destroyed. Once more the community showed its support, donating enough money to build a new steeple. Between 1859 and 1898, Eber Culver designed three different structures for this location. The last designs proved too expensive for the congregation, and Mr. Denison, of Denison and Hiron, was engaged to design the present building, dedicated in 1914. This Romanesque-style church is built of native stone with leaded glass windows by Young and Bonawitz. The interior reflects the Arts and Crafts style in its display of individual handiwork.

2 Christ Temple Church, 436 W. Fourth Street (Formerly St. Paul's Lutheran Church)

With its unusual hexagonal nave and a dome that opens mechanically for natural light and air conditioning, this Church built in 1898, contains notable original woodwork crafted locally, and the largest expanse of Tiffany stained glass in north central Pennsylvania. One window depicts the opening chapters of the Book of Revelation showing Jesus among the heavenly hosts. Another illustration is based on a popular Victorian hymn by Isaac Watts and another commemorates the deaths of two young people who were part of the congregation. A 12-foot, free-standing Tiffany glass panel called "Christ in the Lilies" came from the old St. Paul's Lutheran Church on William Street and was donated to the Lycoming County Historical Society in 1998 by St. Paul's congregation. One wall of the nave is a stretch of stained glass doors that open dramatically by being dropped to the basement floor on pulleys. The pipe organ has attracted many of the nation's finest organists eager for the opportunity to play this magnificent and rare instrument. This church is a pleasing mixture of 19th-century English architecture.

Continue west one block to Center Street, then walk north one block.

3 Beth Ha-Shalom, 425 Center Street

The community's original Jewish temple, built about 1871-72, was located at the corner of Mulberry and Front Streets. Following the flood of 1889, however, the building structure was extremely weakened, making the temple unsafe. Therefore, a second temple was constructed at this site in 1904.

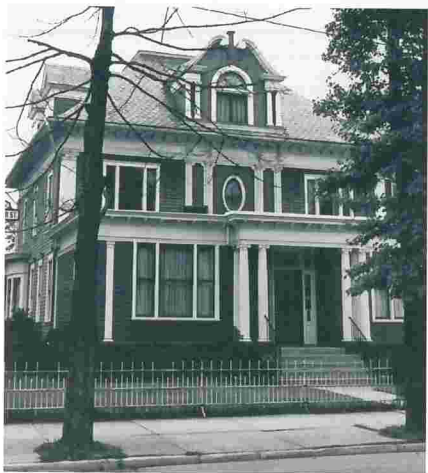
Return to West Fourth Street and continue west.

4 Hiram Rhoads Residence, 522 W. Fourth Street

Among the many people drawn to the area to tap the wealth generated by the lumber boom of the late 1800s was Hiram Rhoads. From Philadelphia originally, Rhoads became one of the city's most successful businessmen. In 1879, eager to introduce the telephone to the area, he was the first to have one installed in his residence and entertained guests with demonstrations of the gadget. He also organized the Central Pennsylvania Telephone and Supply

Company and served as the company's first president. Inside, the house features handcarved mahogany wainscoting, a solid pecan floor in the living room, and the most magnificent chandeliers in Williamsport, as befit the electric company magnate. With steeply pitched, multi-gabled roof and projecting dormer and porch, the Rhoads house is an example of the Queen Anne style.

5 **McMinn-Bowman-Mosser House,**
528 W. Fourth Street



Originally built as a simple frame house, this residence was home to Mr. and Mrs. John M. McMinn and their seven children. In 1853 McMinn came to the area where he worked as an assistant to Robert Faries, the chief engineer for the construction of the Sunbury and Erie Railroad. He later

served as city engineer and made the first lithograph map of Williamsport, published in 1857. In 1860 he and the Rev. Cyrus Jeffries published the first edition of *The West Branch Bulletin*. When the family moved to Norfolk, Virginia in 1869, the residence was purchased by the Benjamin C. Bowman family. Among the first to float logs down the Susquehanna River from Centre County to Williamsport, Bowman achieved great renown as a lumber operator and at one time served as president of the Susquehanna Boom Company, president of Lycoming Rubber Company, and vice-president of Lumberman's National Bank. After damage in the 1889 flood, the house was extensively remodeled in the then fashionable Colonial Revival style by Benjamin's son, Francis Carlton Bowman. In 1917, Henry S. Mosser purchased the house and lived here until 1955, when a group of physicians bought the building and converted it into offices. Upon printing of the Journal, this house was damaged by fire. Its future is yet unknown.

6 **Smith-Ulman Residence,**
634 W. Fourth Street



The home of Henry B. Smith, a lumber dealer, and his family until 1874, this residence was probably built in 1870 by Isaac Hobbs. In 1880 Moses Ulman bought the house, residing in it until 1920. The

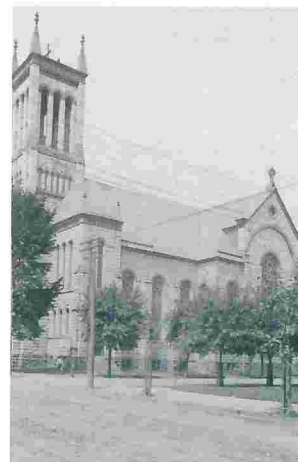
7 **The Woman's Club,**
414 Walnut Street

This large two-story brick building was the carriage house for the Smith-Ulman residence. The Woman's Club opened on September 2, 1925 and over the years has hosted various civic, cultural, and social functions. Now the club is often used for meetings, wedding receptions, lectures, luncheons, and teas. An example of the Italianate style, the former stable has become an elegant private club.

Return to West Fourth Street and continue west.

8 **Church of the Annunciation,**
700 W. Fourth Street

This church was established on land donated by Episcopalian Peter Herdic so that the English-speaking Catholics who were worshipping in Doebler's Hall would have a more suitable place for worship, while the German-speaking Catholics retained the church on Washington Boulevard. Built of conglomerate rock and sandstone quarried in Ralston, Amos Wagner's Romanesque Revival design took three years to complete. Originally, the church was to have a steeple, but after four stone masons were killed when the scaffolding collapsed, the tower was built up only a little higher before being capped. The largest church in the area built without center columns, it has an elaborate interior that accommodates 1,000 worshippers and 43 intricately-designed windows that allow abundant light.



9 **The Weightman Block,**
754-770 W. Fourth Street

Originally called "the Herdic Block" or the "Opera Block," this three-and-a-half-story building complex shaped like the letter "U" was the first stage of a project undertaken by Peter Herdic in 1870. Herdic hoped that one day this

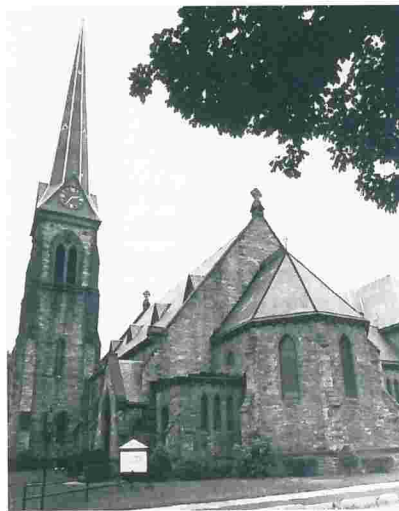
block would hold the post office and courtroom with an opera house to be added later. Designed by Eber Culver, the building was not completed under the direction of Herdic, who went bankrupt and was forced to sell the block at auction. Its buyer, William Weightman, the "Quinine King," renamed the block the Weightman Block. Weightman, a partner in the Philadelphia firm of Powers and Weightman, the first to manufacture sulphate of quinine, kept Culver on as architect, and finally in 1888, the block was regarded as complete although whole sections were still unfinished. This Second Empire structure, with its mansard roof, multiple textures and colors, tall first-floor windows, and "eyebrow-like" window heads has sixteen-inch thick plaster walls and concrete floors and was built without steel beams or elevators.

10 ***Park Hotel,
800 W. Fourth Street***

Always a hotel during the nineteenth century, the Park Hotel opened in 1865 as the Herdic House Hotel designed by Eber Culver for Peter Herdic. To persuade the railroad company to relocate near his property from its downtown location, Herdic, a man involved in many industries in Williamsport, donated the land to the railroad company. According to an agreement with the railroad, Herdic built the hotel to provide lodging and food for railroad travelers. His plan was to make the Herdic House Hotel and the Weightman Block the hub of downtown Williamsport. Herdic also built a gas works across the street from the hotel behind the Weightman Block to provide fuel for his hotel because the downtown gas works did not have enough power for this West Fourth Street building. On the day the hotel opened, September 25, 1865, Herdic planned to make the event dramatic by lighting all the specially installed modern gas lights supplied by the new gas works. The night was dramatic, all right, but not exactly in the way that Herdic had hoped. On opening day, the entire gas works facility burned to the ground. In order to ensure that his guests would still have a memorable evening and be able to see the extravagant interior designs, Herdic sent employees throughout town searching for oil lamps, lanterns and candles. By the time Herdic's guests arrived, the hotel was ablaze with lights. The front lawn was fenced in to create a deer park where no fewer than three deer were kept. Train schedules were coordinated with mealtimes so that passengers could use the hotel as a station restaurant. As they descended from the train, they were met by the Herdic House chef inviting them to dinner. The specialty was planked shad, a lumber camp staple. The enterprising Herdic was also responsible for establishing a trolley line in Williamsport and extending it beyond the downtown area to reach his hotel. Ensnorced between the railroad station and the trolley line, the Herdic Hotel was a lively social center. About 1908, the hotel, purchased by Budd Stuart, became known as the Park Hotel. This hotel last-

ed until October 1, 1939, when it was shortened by two floors to meet fire regulations for a personal care boarding home for elderly women. Oddly, the Park Home lights failed on its opening day seventy-five years after the Herdic House Hotel opened. This structure exemplifies the Italianate style that was popular in the area.

11 ***Trinity Episcopal Church,
850 W. Fourth Street***



Built in 1871-76, Trinity Church, like several others on West Fourth Street, was constructed on land donated by Peter Herdic so that prominent members of the congregation would be closer to their homes. Two founders of this church were Judge John W. Maynard, Herdic's father-in-law, and Judge Ellis Lewis. The church was designed by local

architect Fred G. Thorn. However, when Thorn moved to Philadelphia, Eber Culver took over. The spire, designed by Culver, is 265 feet high. Following completion of the church, the Maynard family generously donated a set of Westminster chimes that later became known as the "Maynard chimes." These chimes were the first of their kind in America. In 1987, the tower was renovated and the original clock faces were replaced on the steeple. This church is an example of the Victorian Gothic style. Its pointed arches and windows, tower with battlements, modified flying buttresses, nave, transept, and apse, colored glass, and Tudor arch are elements adapted from principles of English Gothic architecture.

12 ***Lycoming County Historical Society Museum,
858 W. Fourth Street***

This museum, archives and historical and genealogical research library complex, which houses the largest collection of artifacts in north central Pennsylvania, is located on the former site of the William Hepburn residence. Hepburn, Williamsport's first judge and senator, settled in Williamsport in the late 1700s. The house was later purchased and renovated by Judge John W. Maynard, Peter Herdic's father-in-law. Then in 1913, J. Roman Way, a lumber entrepreneur, purchased the home. The house was later procured by the Historical Society in the 1930s and converted into a museum. On Dec. 22, 1960, a fire destroyed the museum. The building eventually was torn down and a new modern museum building, designed by Frank Wagner Associates, was built in 1968. Permanent exhibits include period rooms documenting Lycoming

County family life, industry, and agriculture and the nationally-recognized Shempp Toy Train Collection. Books devoted to local history are available in the gift shop.

13 *Howard C. Taylor Residence,
904 W. Fourth Street*

Howard C. Taylor decided to build his home on land purchased from Peter Herdic in 1873. Later it was sold to Daniel Stiltz and then to Garrett D. Tinsman in 1891. Tinsman was president of the Williamsport Steam Company and ran a sawmill near Maynard Street. The stucco exterior gives a false impression of simplicity compared with many other mansions on Millionaires' Row. A niche partway up the curved central staircase made the staircase wide enough to accommodate a casket when necessary and the main floor included three large parlors, a dining room, kitchen and pantry. Like many houses in Williamsport, this house is a combination of styles typical of the Victorian era.

14 *Foresman-Hart-Baier-Clinger Residence,
912 W. Fourth Street*

This twentieth-century home, built in 1905, was constructed on the former site of the Chaapel Florist Shop by Henry Melick Foresman, a prosperous lumberman who wanted this residence to resemble a Dutch Colonial mansion in Emporium, Pennsylvania. Foresman's daughter, Martha Allen, moved into the newly completed house immediately after her marriage to John H. McCormick. The Flemish bond brick house with its moderately pitched gambrel roof has four main Ionic columns seventy-four inches around at the base and eighteen feet high and seventeen small columns. Though the house changed hands several times, changes have been minor.

15 *Herdic Double,
942-944 W. Fourth Street*



This structure, an example of the first "housing development" in Williamsport, exemplifies the Herdic/Culver collaborations of the 1870s. In 1875, undertaking a real estate venture conceived by Peter Herdic, who wished to sell the lots he owned along Third and

Fourth Streets, Herdic and Culver built the first "double" house, referred to as such because the house was divided

in half and each side mirrored the other. Their objectives were two-fold: to encourage more people to live in the western end of the city (on Herdic land) and to provide jobs for lumbermen who were unemployed because the lumber industry was waning. The double residence has had a series of owners throughout its history. Different gingerbread trim on two sides of this Second Empire building makes each side distinctive.

16 *Metzger Residence,
1006 W. Fourth Street*

This Queen Anne residence was built on the site of the former Hiram Mudge residence, which Judge John J. Metzger moved to the back of his lot when he purchased the property in 1905. Mudge, born in Lycoming County, came to Williamsport in 1838 and made his fortune in the mercantile business and banking. Then from 1887 to 1895, the Weed family lived in the former Mudge house. Although it has been greatly altered from its original appearance, the Mudge-Weed house can still be seen behind this residence. The large house John J. Metzger built became the Jayne Apartments in 1994.

17 *Sipe Residence,
1028 W. Fourth Street*

An early Victorian farmhouse built just after the Civil War, this house was occupied by the William Sipe family. Behind the house the Sipes also built a small pottery factory with three potter's wheels, and the family supplied first redware to customers in a hundred-mile radius, then expanded to include terracotta, sewer pipes and stoneware with plumes and sprays handpainted in blue.

Cross the street and go east on West Fourth Street.

18 *Peck House,
1075 West Fourth Street*

With its steeply pitched roof, pointed gables, and tall, vertical orientation, this residence is a fine example of Victorian Gothic style. The decorative bands highlighting the point of the gable and pointed arches over windows and doors are traditional elements of the Gothic style. The Peck family was living in this house during the 1870s when a diphtheria epidemic spread from Campbell Street to Susquehanna Avenue, taking the lives of thirteen neighborhood children, including two Peck girls under the age of ten. A stone cradle in memory of the girls marks their gravesite in Wildwood Cemetery.

19 *John G. Reading Residence,
1025 W. Fourth Street*

With a black marble fireplace in every room, this residence, constructed in 1865, was one of the first buildings built along West Fourth Street. It was the home of lumber

entrepreneur John Reading and his family for about ten years. Following the family's decision to move to Philadelphia, the house became the property of Franklin Reading, John's cousin. The mansard roof characterizes the house as Second Empire style.

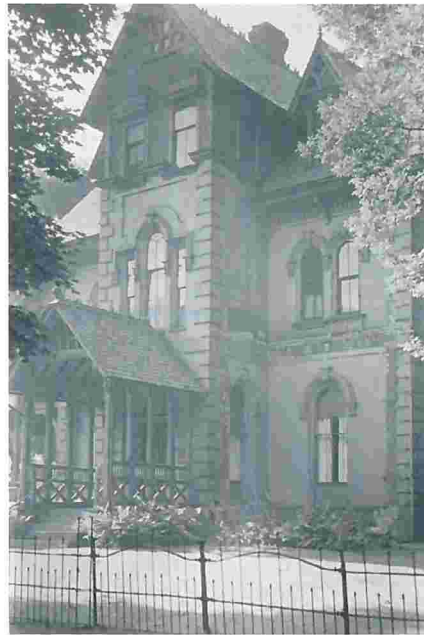
20 *Goodrich-Weightman-Walker-Cochran Residence,
1005 W. Fourth Street*



The home of "the richest woman in the world," this elegant residence was originally jointly owned by Peter Herdic, H.E. Taylor, and John G. Reading. From 1869 to 1879 it belonged to the John Goodrich family. Goodrich must have lost his lumber fortune in the panic of 1878 as the house was sold in a sheriff's sale. In the

1880s, R.J.C. Walker, a successful attorney and 16th District Congressman, bought the house and moved to Williamsport to oversee Anne Weightman's father's investments. The Weightman-Walker house became a popular social center for Williamsport's elite. The Walkers enjoyed horse racing, and R.J.C. owned the renowned thoroughbred, "Robert J." Anne gave elaborate parties on trains going to the races at Saratoga Springs. In 1904, Anne Weightman Walker inherited all of her father's estate, which made her the wealthiest woman in the world. After Walker's death, Anne married Frederick Courtland Penfield, the last American Ambassador to Imperial Austria, and was present at the Austrian court when World War I was declared. The house became the property of Henry J. Cochran in 1893, though Anne Weightman Walker Penfield often returned to thrill Williamsport society with lavish parties at the Park Hotel. In the 1930s, the interior of the house was greatly altered to divide the building into apartments. Despite these interior changes, the exterior of the house remained virtually the same, an eclectic mixture of Victorian Gothic and Eastlake styles with Italian arched windows and English Tudor chimneys. The Eastlake style, named for English interior designer Charles Locke Eastlake, combines a love of ornamentation with other styles, such as Victorian Gothic, Stick Style, and Queen Anne. Making use of Williamsport's woodworking expertise, this house features porch posts and railings turned on a mechanical lathe that, along with the complexity of the decoration, identify it as Eastlake.

21 *Robert Foresman Residence,
951 W. Fourth Street*



This residence was built in the late 1860s by George W. Lentz, a lumber manufacturer and banker, but the first known resident of the two-story mansion was Robert McCormick Foresman, who owned a hotel and later served as justice of the peace. Like several other West Fourth Street residences, this mansion was a successful combination of two architectural styles: Italian Villa and Second Empire. However, following fire damage to

the original mansard roof, the homeowners decided to renovate the house, adding a third story with a Queen Anne style roof and bringing the total number of rooms to over fifty. In 1917, this home was converted into the Cleveden Apartments.

22 *Lyon Residence,
921 W. Fourth Street*

Cut stone and hand-hewn shingles were used to build this roomy home for the Lyon family on land purchased from friend and neighbor, John T. Fredericks. After the death of her husband, Mrs. Lyon traveled to Europe where she became interested in French design. She decided to bring a French architect back to the States to remodel her home. Although extensive changes were made to the interior of the house, the only exterior change was the removal of the front porch. The house later became the home of Miss Henrietta Baldy-Lyon, who was an early advocate for woman's suffrage in Williamsport. The deteriorating shingles were covered with siding around 1970, and the building is now an apartment complex.

23 *Eutermarks-Harrar Residence,
915 W. Fourth Street*

Like several mansions along West Fourth Street, this residence was built as a wedding present. Designed by Eber Culver and constructed about 1870 by Samuel and Emma Otto Filbert for their daughter, Lucy, upon her marriage to John Eutermarks. When the city introduced an address numbering system, this house was designated as 913. The Eutermarks, considering thirteen an unlucky number, requested that the number be changed to 915. In 1901, the Elwood Harrar family bought the house. Built in the Italian Villa style, the house originally had a cupola and a porch that extended across the front.

24**Henry Johnson Residence,
901 W. Fourth Street**

This residence, built in 1890 for Henry Johnson, his wife and six daughters, was designed by Amos Wagner. The Johnsons, so pleased with their own house, decided to hire the builder to construct an identical house beside their home for one of their daughters upon her marriage. Henry Johnson, a state legislator from Muncy, served in the Senate from 1862 to 1864. Johnson was also responsible for swinging the votes for Abraham Lincoln in Pennsylvania and fought in the Civil War.

25**Way's Garden,
847 W. Fourth Street**

This park is the former site of the Robert Faries mansion, built circa 1855. Robert Faries, an engineer who helped design the Pennsylvania canal system, was also the superintendent of the Williamsport/Elmira Railroad, a position he used to help runaway slaves escape to freedom. In 1866, the mansion was purchased by John White, a prominent lumberman. Because it looked like a Gothic castle, the mansion became known as "White's Castle." After the death of White, the house was put up for sale and purchased by the Whites' neighbor, J. Roman Way, who supposedly bought the property to ensure that it would not be converted into a boarding house. Way decided to demolish the residence so that an attractive garden could be cultivated. Eventually the garden became the property of the city with an endowment for its maintenance as a public park under the condition that no money be exchanged within the park. The proviso is still honored today. Way's Garden is the site of several art exhibitions, but artists are not permitted to sell their works on the premises.

26**William Emery Residence,
835 W. Fourth Street**

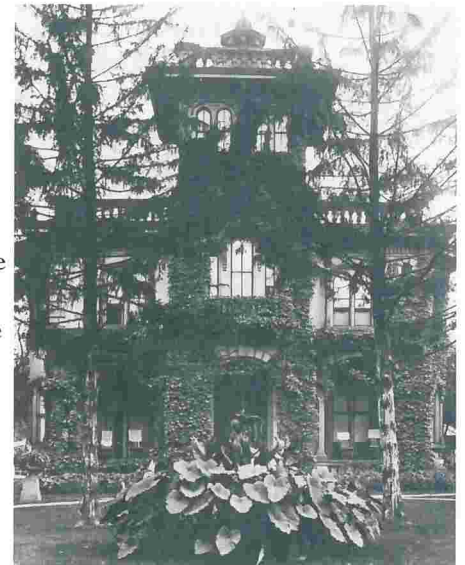
Built circa 1889, this home was the second residence built as a wedding present for Mary Emery on the occasion of her second marriage. The entrance hall, with a quartered oak staircase and a

pagoda-style fireplace, is lit by two chandeliers suspended from the 35-foot ceiling. Mary White Gamble Emery was so loved by the community that during her final illness, to prevent her from being disturbed in any way, the bells of

27**YWCA,
815 W. Fourth Street**

The YWCA was built on the former site of the Mahlon L. Fisher Residence, nicknamed the "Million Dollar House." The Park Hotel was said to have cost \$225,000, and Trinity Church a mere \$80,000. Other mansions were built for under \$50,000.

Exciting considerable attention because of its rumored price tag, the elaborate Italian Villa mansion with twenty rooms added charm and elegance to an already stylish neighborhood. Fisher, born in Hunterdon County, New Jersey, came to this area in 1855 and quickly established himself as a leading citizen of Williamsport. Fisher's son, James Stires Fisher, was a poet and friend of still-life artist Severin Roesen, who often painted in exchange for room and board, staying at a number of houses during his time in Williamsport and producing some of his best work. Roesen, a German immigrant, lived in Williamsport for twelve years. His popularity was a result of lucky circumstances. His arrival to the United States coincided with an emerging interest in still-life art. Roesen's style was influenced by German and Dutch Baroque still-life and reflects classical training. His paintings deal with three common subjects: flowers, fruit, or fruit and flowers. Roesen's reputation as an artist was confirmed in 1962 when Jackie Kennedy hung two of his paintings in the White House. Paintings by Severin Roesen are also on display at the Lycoming County Historical Society Museum and at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. The Fisher Residence was demolished so that the YWCA could be built in 1928 during a decade that stands as

*Mahlon Fisher Residence*

Williamsport's heyday for the construction of large institutional and public buildings.

28 **Covenant Central Presbyterian Church,
807 W. Fourth Street**

This Romanesque style church resulted from a merger of the Covenant Church and the Central Church in April 1924. The Covenant Church, founded in 1840, was formerly known as the Second Presbyterian Church, and the Central Church was originally designated the Third Presbyterian Church.

Energetic walkers may wish to take a six-to-eight-block sidetrip here by turning right on Campbell Street and heading south to West Third Street, then east to Walnut Street. At 305 Campbell is the Emery house, one of Eber Culver's finest Queen Annes. While West Fourth Street was designated as "Millionaires' Row," West Third Street was lined with the well-appointed homes of managers and professionals, and West Second Street homes were built for laborers. Both Third Street and Vine Avenue have many examples of the Herdic/Culver double houses. On Third Street the double houses alternate with single homes, and single homes face double homes on opposite sides of the street. Another right turn toward the south will take you to West Second Street. The row houses in the 600 block of Second Avenue were built around 1870 as private dwellings for working class families. Return to West Fourth Street and Campbell via West Third Street or Vine and continue east.

29 **Deemer-Maneval House,
711 W. Fourth Street**

In the late 1880s, lumberman Elias Deemer commissioned Eber Culver to design a house for his family on West Fourth Street. The well-made Queen Anne style house had seventeen rooms and rich cherry woodwork.



30 **Rowley-Rishel Residence,
707 W. Fourth Street**

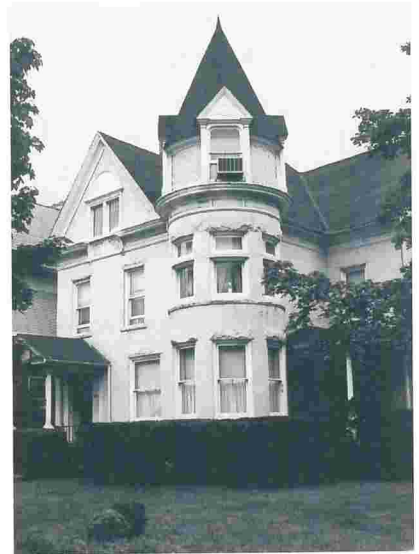


Said to be one of the finest examples of the Queen Anne style in Pennsylvania, and certainly one of Eber Culver's masterpieces, this residence was built in 1888 for E. A. Rowley of Rowley

and Hermance, manufacturers of woodworking machinery. Rowley was born in Rome, New York and moved into the area in 1868. The house was later purchased by J.K. Rishel, a furniture manufacturer, who lived there with his family until 1932 when it became the Convent of the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The many distinguishing features include a multi-planed roof, a projecting attic gable with recessed porch, fish-scale shingles, swags, encircling porch, and multi-gabled roof.

31 **William V. Emery House,
535 W. Fourth Street**

This brick and cut stone structure, built in 1888 and designed by Eber Culver, was owned by William V. Emery, who was a member of the Emery Lumber Company. The house was constructed on the former site of a house built circa 1865. With its turret, projecting dormers, and multi-planed roof, the house has many Queen Anne features



32 **Embick House,
531 W. Fourth Street**

Known as "Embick Cottage," this late-Victorian home designed by Eber Culver was built about 1880 for Colonel Frederick E. Embick, who fought in the Civil War. Embick became the director of the Demorest Manufacturing Company, which turned out an average of fifty sewing machines a day in 1892. When the family moved to New York City in the early 1900s, the home was purchased by Joseph B. Rhoads. The building later became the property of the West Fourth Street Corporation in 1951 and is now used for commercial purposes.

33 **Peter Herdic Residence,
407 W. Fourth Street**

Born in Montgomery County, New York, Peter Herdic is a colorful figure in Williamsport's history. At the height of his success, Herdic, an owner of the Susquehanna Boom Company, was involved in nearly every business in town. Owning most of the land on what would become West Fourth Street, he bought with an eye to encouraging the well-heeled citizens of Williamsport to relocate the residential and business center of town. The collaboration of Eber Culver, an architect, and Peter Herdic, entrepreneur and man of ideas, transformed West Fourth Street into what became known as "Millionaires' Row," an elegant stretch

lined with elaborate mansions. Built about 1845 as a present for Herdic's first wife, Amanda, this house was one of the first homes to be built on Fourth Street west of Elmira Street. Amanda died in 1856, leaving Herdic a widower with a young daughter to raise. In 1860, Herdic's marriage to Encie Maynard, daughter of the prominent judge, John

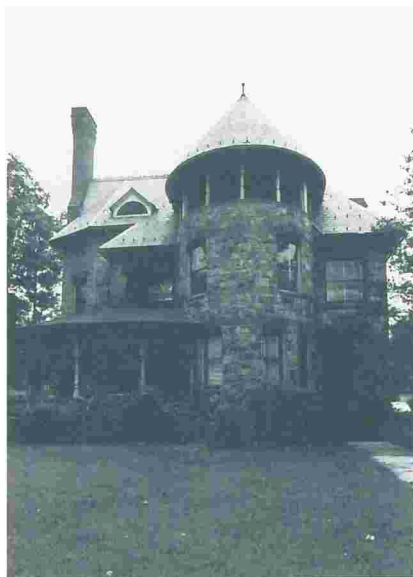


Maynard, brought Herdic social respectability. In addition to his development projects, including the Herdic House Hotel, Herdic's activities include serving as Mayor of Williamsport

from October 12, 1869 to May 9, 1871, owning the *Gazette and Bulletin*, and buying his own bank. He also invented the Herdic coach, a horse-drawn carriage used for mass transportation. The coach differed from other stagecoach-like conveyances in the way the axle was designed. The coach was first used in Williamsport in 1865 and became popular throughout the United States, especially in New York City and Philadelphia. At the age of 64, Herdic died of a concussion suffered after a fall while surveying a new waterworks in Huntingdon, PA. After the accident, Herdic refused medical attention and died as a result. Today, the house has been restored and currently is a restaurant called the Herdic House. Artifacts from the 1800s are on display inside. This square structure, with a low-pitched hip roof, cupola, wide eaves and brackets and double doors with glass panels, is a fine example of the very popular Italianate style.

34 **Albert Hermance Residence,
405 W. Fourth Street**

This Richardsonian-Romanesque house was built in 1887 by Albert Hermance. Hermance was born August 8, 1847 in Saratoga County, New York. His father, Richard Hermance, an inventor, developed an attachment for ranges and cooking stoves that was in general use throughout the country. Like his father, Albert Hermance also dabbled in inventions, creating a woodworking machine



that he patented in 1873. Albert married Agnes Levan in 1870, and their house was designed by her uncle, Eber Culver, whose career included designing seventeen of the homes built by the eighteen millionaires on West Fourth Street.

End West Fourth Street tour.

To return to the starting point, continue east on West Fourth Street to William and turn right. The Tourist Information Center is on the east side of William Street.

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ATTACK of the KILLER OATMEAL



from *The Baiers of Bastress and Other Tales of Nippenose Valley*
Becky Day

It was 4 a.m., in the dark before dawn, when Edith Baier and her brother Norbert were awakened by their mother, Rebecca, to prepare for market. Rebecca had a cooked breakfast waiting for the early risers, who included her husband, Robert (R.C.), and her sister, Amelia Stopper (Aunt Meal). As soon as they finished the cooked breakfast, the teenagers helped pack the truck for the trip to the Williamsport Market House. They worked at least half an hour, and longer on some mornings, carrying the berries from the cellar of the house to the back of the old van.

In the cellar there was electricity so they could check the condition of the fruit before packing it for market. The berries were not held overnight in crates; rather, in the absence of refrigeration or coolers, the individual wooden quart boxes were set out on tables, allowing the cool air to circulate around them. Edith and Norbert carefully picked through the berries and removed any moldy ones before packing 32 quarts in each crate. Often times, when the weather was particularly humid, the berries would fall out of the box in a block, the entire quart glued together by the fast-growing mold. These berries could not be sold. Instead they were poured into large pots and cooked up immediately for jam for family use. No one ever died from eating the jam, and Edith surmises that the family learned this

important information by a process of experimentation. Besides, it required several hours of cooking and stirring and an equal amount of sugar to reduce a pot of berries to a thickened jam. When berries were particularly plentiful, the overflow was stored in some of the outlying sheds instead of the cellar, and Edith and Norbert examined these by the light of a kerosene lantern hung from a rafter, for there was no electricity outside the house.

The Baiers cultivated tender leaf lettuce and sweet baby beets for the city market. The house garden was planted with perhaps forty rows of onions—each spaced exactly three inches apart—for spring and early summer sale as bunched scallions (tender green onions). By the time the onions were done, the ground had warmed sufficiently to plant string beans. During the summer months, the old van would lumber to Williamsport, hauling the green and yellow string beans, slicing cucumbers for salad, and quantities of tiny gherkins to pickle, tomatoes, crates of red currants, wild huckleberries from the church mountain, and red raspberries, black raspberries, wild black berries from the river thickets, cherries both sweet and sour, and the myriad varieties of plums, for which there was little demand at the market. Edith remembers riding in the rear of the van, often sitting atop a pile of ten or twenty bushels of sweet corn.

The family raised long rows of lima beans, but when the supply was short, Aunt Meal would purchase a few bushels wholesale from another vendor at the Market House, and one of the children would sit at the rear of the stand and shell the tough, flat pods for appreciative customers who wished to avoid the time and trouble of shelling. The sore fingers that resulted from this task were always worth the treat of a day at the market for a lucky child.

Mid-summer brought golden red peaches, crisp, tart, early apples, and crabapples prized for both jelly-making and pickling. In fall, pears and apples became abundant, and the incomparable scent of quince permeated the air.

Rebecca and the younger children—Rose, Mary, Frances, Mimi, and Marcella—also gathered asters, Queen Anne’s lace, and other wildflowers to tie into bouquets with cultivated blooms from the garden: zinnias, snapdragons, and daisies, strawflowers, and other dried flowers that were always in demand. The colorful bouquets, both cheap to raise and requiring little labor, graced the rough market table, attracting additional customers. Throughout the year the family sold any excess cottage cheese and butter produced

from the milk Edith hauled in pails from the barn each morning and evening. As the supply of fresh produce dwindled in late fall, after potatoes and turnips were done, the children had permission from Aunt Ellie Danneker to gather bags of trailing pine from the Danneker pine woods. Back at the house, the children would dump the evergreens on the floor and table of the farmhouse kitchen in the warmth of the wood stove and clean away the dead foliage, the roots, and any stray dried leaves of forest floor debris. Aunt Meal tied the cleaned aromatic vines to a rounded wire coat hanger to form a wreath. R. C., Edith’s father, preferred to make the wire rounds, for he formed perfect circles. He complained that Aunt Meal always ended with an oval wreath. Then the children would take the car and scour the back roads around Bastress and Nippenose Valley for stands of the deep orange bittersweet, picking all they could find. The bittersweet was bunched to sell alone or tucked into the holiday wreaths. While the Baiers’ winter apples were not a great seller because of the mediocre quality, the wreaths and bittersweet were snatched up by customers eager for fresh holiday greens.

R.C., Rebecca, and Aunt Meal never grew squash



A P Store in Old Market House between Market and Church Streets



or pumpkins, even for their own use. Edith remembers the novelty of a spaghetti squash her father brought home from a farm where he had spent the day threshing grain. The family considered it an oddity, but the experience did not convince them to plant squash for themselves.

While other families baked cookies, pies, and breads for market, Edith thinks her mother had difficulty just supplying the family's baking needs, and so there was no excess to sell.

Edith began to help Aunt Meal at the Market House when she was about twelve or fourteen, at an age to be responsible and of some real assistance. The Market House was open for business on Wednesdays and Saturdays, year round, the vendors arriving at 5 or 5:30 a.m., and customers starting the promenade through the aisles by 7. There was a raw, moist odor in the open building, the cement floors always seemed greasy, and the smell of both fresh and smoked meats permeated the air around the butchers' stalls. Customers packed the aisles, eyeing the goods, probing, hunting the best and the freshest, the first or the scarcest produce. Loyal customers were appreciated, and a special item might be held for them behind the counter. Edith loved to spend the day at market, but only when all the produce sold. Leftovers had to be peddled door-to-door on the way home so nothing was wasted, and Edith hated peddling.

Edith remembers shredding newspapers with a paper cutter to provide bedding in the hutches for the rabbits that were killed, dressed and sold at market when customers ordered them. Likewise, pigeons were grown and sold as squabs—a delicacy akin to a Cornish game hen—but there were few buyers interested in this specialty.

The Baiers bought brown paper bags for produce, bags just big enough to hold two-quart boxes of berries. Many customers carried splint baskets on their arms to hold the berries. Others

carried hand-sewn bags of heavy fabric, much like canvas or denim. Some of these bags could hold four quart boxes in the bottom. Paper shopping bags were used and reused until they wore out. It was more convenient to carry produce, too, in handled bags or baskets.

At the age of sixteen, Edith began to work in Omer Audet's restaurant, located along an entire wall of the market building. Edith estimates the fountain-style seating accommodated up to thirty-five people. Mrs. Audet worked all day and all night before market days. She baked thirty dozen of her famous sugar cookies and another thirty dozen of her raisin-filled cookies. The restaurant used about fifty pies each day, too, which Mrs. Audet baked herself: coconut cream, butterscotch meringue, lemon meringue, and, of course, apple, peach, berry, and pumpkin pies in season. Customers had a choice of two entrees, one of which was often chicken potpie. Edith remembers dropping the potpie dough into two large kettles of homemade boiling chicken broth. Meat loaf was served, or roast beef or roast pork. Customers could have potatoes with the meal and vegetables. Ice cream was another selection offered, and soft ice cream was also available. Edith gave her entire salary to the family during the years she worked at the restaurant. But she pocketed the tips from a favorite customer: Mr. Egli, the butcher, who appreciated her service and tipped accordingly.

For years the family relied on an old delivery truck, a van that R. C. purchased specifically to carry the large quantities of produce necessary for the market. The van was bumped and dented, rusted brown, with little of the original paint still visible. It was distinguished by the separate seats in the front and the wide flat windshield through which the driver viewed the road over the rusted hood. R. C. spent little money on repairs; he was no mechanic as we understand the term today. His trust in the efficacy of baling wire was well known in the family. Baling wire, used to bind layers of



dry hay into 100-pound bundles, was used extensively for farm and tractor repairs before the invention of duct tape. However, the old van must have been a formidable vehicle, for despite its decrepitude and R. C.'s mechanical talents, it rolled on for years.

About 1938, when Edith was seventeen or eighteen, the old van's radiator began to leak, and so each trip to Williamsport necessitated a stop along Route 654 to add water to prevent overheating. One of the children would grab the glass gallon jug stored in the van and run down to the Susquehanna River for water. Or water was obtained from the stream that bordered the road above Nisbet. One day Rob Baier, Edith's older brother, told his father about a compound that could be added to the radiator to plug the leaks. R. C. liked the idea; he had no intention of replacing the leaky radiator, and water was being added so frequently that someone had lost the radiator cap, too. He approved of a cheap, quick fix. Unbeknownst to anyone, R. C. went to the barn and added a quantity of finely chopped grain to the radiator. He expected it to sink to the bottom and plug the cracks.

So, one dark summer morning, Edith and Norbert rose early to pack the van for market. Because the day promised rain, Edith would stay at the Market House to help Aunt Meal. But after they had arrived at the market at 5:30 and unloaded the van with the wheeled carts provided by the management, the sky began to clear, and Aunt Meal decided to send Edith back home to pick berries. The van had performed well on the downhill trip to Williamsport, but the return to the farm proved a problem. As Norbert rounded Dead Man's Curve above Nisbet for the pull up the mountain, he knew there was trouble. He and Edith could tell by the noise that it was worse than the perpetually overheating radiator problem; there was no familiar hiss of steam. Rather, the front of the van had begun to gurgle and glug, emitting thick, heavy noises instead of the normal hiss and siz-

zle of steaming water. A short distance ahead was a pull-over, and Norbert began the maneuver to steer the van to the roadside. But before he reached the pull-over, a thick, hot substance spouted volcano-like out of the radiator and back on the windshield. Norbert and Edith both froze, speechless at the mess obscuring their view, the substance now boiling out and down over the front fender, too. As it became impossible for Norbert to see clearly, he stuck his head out the side window, but the hot drops splattered on his face, widening its attack as the radiator boiled more furiously.

"It looks like cooked cereal!" Edith cried incredulously.

"Cereal!" yelled Norbert. "How can it be cereal?"

He finally found space to pull the van off the road. Nervously, he and Edith descended to the safety of flat ground and gingerly inspected the goo still spurting from the mouth of the radiator. The substance was indeed cereal, however difficult it was for the sister and brother to believe. They took the jug to the stream, carried water to the steaming van, and finished without further incident the last miles home.

Norbert related the story to R.C., who laughed and laughed, finally admitting he had added the chopped grain and showing no remorse for the trouble he caused. For sixty years this has been Edith's favorite story of her father, the story R.C.'s grandchildren love best to hear. It tells so much about a man we never knew. Only the oldest of his almost 100 grandchildren remember him, and only vaguely. But in this, and other tales, his spirit lives on in his family.

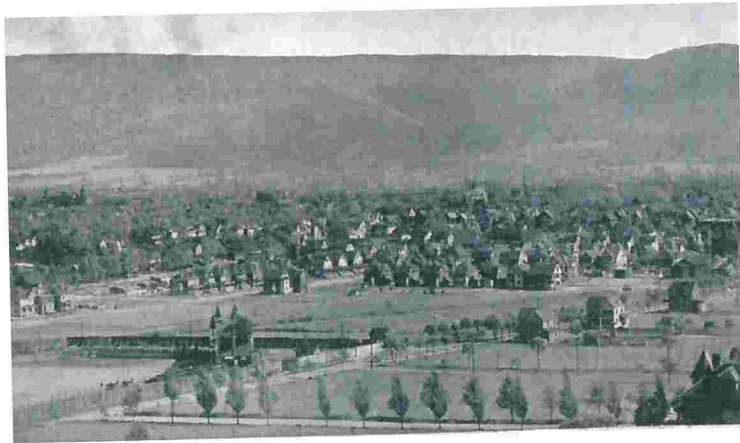
Related recipes: Spiced Crabapples, Mrs. Audet's Sugar Cookies, Raspberry Jam, Quince Honey, Edith's Raisin-Filled Cookies, Cottage Cheese, and my own personal recipe for Breakfast Oatmeal.



A Successful Planned Community: Vallamont

Elizabeth A. Yoder

When Williamsport, Pennsylvania celebrated its centennial in 1906, the *Williamsport Sun* hailed Vallamont as "Our City's Ideal Suburb For Ideal Homes." The development of Vallamont as a desirable residential community on land just north of Williamsport's 1839 city boundaries was no accident. Months after the city suffered devastating losses in the flood of 1889, a group of men led by James B. Krause purchased the "Packer Farm" for the formation of the planned community of Vallamont, arguably Williamsport's first such comprehensive housing development.



Panoramic View — Williamsport

Certainly, Williamsport had been expanding and developing since Michael Ross first began selling lots in his new town in 1796. And Peter Herdic is well known for the role he played in the city's growth. The development of Vallamont, however, was more than the selling of lots and the erection of homes. Vallamont was, from the beginning, a planned community with architectural controls, recreational provisions, and services and transportation aimed at serving residents from a broad economic spectrum. This planning helped to build a strong neighborhood that has, for the most part, maintained its desirability.

Vallamont's story begins with a group of men interested in purchasing a section of land for the purpose of creating a housing development. The Hezekiah B. Packer Farm was sold by his heirs in 1889 for \$100,000 to James B. Krause. The Loyalsock township property consisted of 418 acres north of Rural Avenue between Market Street and

Fifth Avenue, the area just north of Williamsport's city limits. Over the next few years, Krause became involved with a shifting group of investors. Krause's original partners in this business venture were Hiram R. Rhoads, E.B. Westfall, Thomas Lundy, and Dr. J.D. Hill. In 1890, Westfall and his wife, Mary A. Westfall, bought out all of the partners except for Krause (*Williamsport Sun* 2 July 1906: 8-9). Then in July 1891, the Westfalls sold half interest in the Packer Farm to J. Henry and Avis A. Cochran and Eugene R. and Emily A. Payne for \$40,000. These transactions made Westfall, Krause, Cochran, and Payne Vallamont owners.

Vallamont's developers, who formed the Packer Land and Improvement Company, were all prominent businessmen with many interests throughout Williamsport (*Daily Gazette and Bulletin* 26 November 1891:1). Cochran, described by Thomas Taber as the "acknowledged leader of the lumber industry in the West Branch Valley," owned lumber mills and was part owner with Payne, also a mill owner, of the Susquehanna Boom Company (Taber 75). The 1890 city directory lists "lawyer" as Krause's occupation, while Westfall served as superintendent for the Pennsylvania & Erie Railroad Passenger Station.

These men had a plan when they embarked upon the development of Vallamont. They correctly perceived the desire among Williamsporters to locate homes on an elevated and thus flood-free site. Severe flooding in 1865 and 1889 had had disastrous effects on the community. The flood of 1889 ripped through city businesses and homes and broke the lumber boom, causing tremendous losses to Williamsport's largest industry (Larson et al 59). Vallamont's idyllic, natural surroundings appealed to the late Victorian interest in "healthful," spacious outdoor conditions and an improved quality of life. As people began to understand disease prevention, "germ-free fresh air" was considered a necessary component to good health (Elliot 38). An early advertisement map for "Williamsport's Beautiful Suburb, Vallamont" lists the "magnificent stretch of native forest . . . splendid natural drainage . . . charming scenery" and "pure air" among reasons to

own a home in Vallamont (LCHS). Hunting Springs Grove, a beautiful, wooded area with natural springs running through it was reserved as a public outdoor site and soon became known as Vallamont Park (*Daily Gazette and Bulletin* 26 November 1891:1).

Not only did developers capitalize on Vallamont's desirable setting, they also had a plan for creating an appealing neighborhood. Streets measured 60 feet in width and were lined with magnolia, elm, poplar, and maple trees (*Williamsport Sun* 2 July 1906:8-9). Large lots offered space and luxury to the potential homeowner. Though lots ranged in size from 30' x 150' to 262' x 202', the typical lot measured 60' x 161'. Developers advertised "Proper and Effective Restrictions" regarding the character of buildings to ensure that the quality of the neighborhood would be maintained (LCHS). The *Daily Gazette and Bulletin*, in an 1891 article extolling the virtues of Vallamont, noted the Packer Land and Improvement Company's choice to "prohibit slaughter houses, pig styes and other things of that kind which might prove offensive or contaminate the air or water" (26 November 1891:1). Even the name Vallamont, combining the French or Latin roots for valley and mountain, gave an air of sophistication and beauty to the burgeoning suburb (*Williamsport Sun* 2 July 1906: 8-9). Street names such as Woodmont, Glenwood, Fairview, Oakland, Glen Echo, and Holly Wood also evoked pleasant, pastoral images. Interestingly, Holly Wood appears as two words as early as 1898 before the advent of the movie industry that made Hollywood famous.



Beautiful Suburb — Vallamont

The street is now known as Hollywood Circle.

Although large lots were advertised, Vallamont was not intended only for the wealthy. The southeastern section of the development between Walnut Street and Market Street offered smaller lots for those of "moderate means," while the section "west of Walnut Street has been divided into 1,000 lots which are being reserved for future palatial homes," the developers explained to a *Daily Gazette and Bulletin* reporter (26 November 1891:1). Indeed, examination of a map published in 1898 reveals that smaller lots routinely measured 50 feet in width while more extravagant properties stretched more than 260 feet across. In the case of C.R. Harris, an entire block along Prospect Terrace (now known as Vallamont Drive) served as grounds for his greystone mansion. The Williamsport Home for the Friendless also appears on this map on Vallamont's southern border.



Home for the Friendless

Vallamont was a community designed to serve as home for people from a wide range of financial means, from the wealthy to the indigent, with the upper-middle class targeted as residents although lot sizes did not encourage the random dispersion of those from different economic groups. Large lots were grouped together in the higher northwestern areas, further from the city, while smaller lots were clustered along Vallamont's southeastern corner, still within walking distance from Williamsport's business district. And of course, the Home for the Friendless safely confined the poor to one block along Vallamont's southern border. Perhaps the location of this facility within the neighborhood had more to do with soothing the consciences of the

wealthy, who were becoming increasingly concerned with helping the less fortunate.

Krause, Westfall, Cochran, and Payne had put together a plan that, by controlling site use, lot size, and street appearance, painted a beautiful picture of life on the hillside. Only one further inducement was necessary to persuade city dwellers to abandon the activity and convenience in town for the bucolic expanses Vallamont had to offer. A convenient form of transportation was absolutely essential. The Vallamont Traction Company completed a trolley line through Vallamont by 1893. Cochran, who owned interests in this railway company as well as in the housing development, fueled their combined growth. Vallamont was part of a larger national trend in which transit lines spurred the growth of suburbs, making commuting possible.

Onlookers gathered on the day the trolley cars made their first run through Vallamont carrying railway officials and Vallamont owners. The cost of a round trip was 5 cents (*Daily Gazette & Bulletin* 5 June 1894:5). The route, which took twenty minutes to complete, began at Market Street and traveled north to Glenwood Avenue. From Glenwood Avenue the line ran north on Cherry Street, west



Entrance to Vallamont Park

park, located between Belmont Avenue and Prospect Terrace (Vallamont Drive) proved to be an ideal spot for a wide range of activities. In 1894, construction was begun on a two-story pavilion, housing a bandstand on the upper story and a restaurant below, with plans for the installation of electric lights throughout the park (*Daily Gazette and Bulletin* 5 June 1894: 5). Concerts and theatrical performances, popular forms of entertainment for the time, attracted many during the summer months. When the Fisk Military Band performed in the newly opened park, over 7,000 people crowded onto the Hunting Springs Grove hillside to hear the concert (*Daily Gazette and Bulletin* 15 August, 1894:8). The pavilion's formal opening in 1897 featured Gilbert and Sullivan's opera *H.M.S. Pinafore* at a cost of 6 cents for the afternoon performance and 10 cents for evening seats (*Daily Gazette and Bulletin* 11 June 1897: 5).

The family entertainment and natural surrounding of Vallamont Park continued to attract many visitors as it expanded its offerings. At some point in its 25-year history, the park boasted an



Glenwood Avenue

on Belmont Avenue, south on Woodmont Avenue, west again on Glenwood Avenue for a block, and finally south on Campbell Street, from which point it made its way back through the city to Market Street (Graves & Steinbarger 1898). With the addition of this service and the plan for further services such as gas and sewer lines, Vallamont was well on its way to becoming a thriving, successful suburb.

While Vallamont's population was growing, Vallamont Park attracted more visitors, residents and non-residents alike. With the trolley stop located within feet of the park entrance, a more accessible day in the country could hardly be had. The



Entrance to Vallamont Park

amphitheater, a pavilion, a merry-go-round, a bandstand, an adjoining 9-hole golf course, and for at least a short time, a skating rink (*Williamsport Sun* 3 July 1905: 8-9).

Nearby Athletic Park provided even more outdoor recreational space. Located along Cherry Street where Cochran Elementary School now stands, it was built by the Athletic Park Association in 1890 to accommodate outdoor sports (*Williamsport Sun* 2 July 1906: 8-9). Improvements and additions to the race track and grandstand were made by the Vallamont Improvement and Land Company (formerly the Packer Land and Improvement Company) in preparation for hosting the Lycoming County Fair (*Daily Gazette and Bulletin* 14 November 1894:5).

In the decade following its birth, Vallamont saw many improvements. Trolley lines and sewage systems linked it to the city center. Most Vallamont homes reportedly put in gas when it was piped to the neighborhood in 1898 (*Williamsport Sun* 22 September 1898:1). Plans in 1894 were made to organize a volunteer fire department (*Daily Gazette and Bulletin* 12 November 1894:5). A breakthrough in postal services occurred in 1900 with a plan for residents to erect private boxes for the collection of mail, replacing a system of coming to the mail wagon when the whistle blew (*Williamsport Sun* 2 October 1900:1). The parks highlighted Vallamont's carefully cultivated pastoral character. In 1894 a local reporter observed that Vallamont had become a "thriving community" whose "echoes are awakened now by the warning sound of the trolley car gong bearing scores of people to happy, suburban homes" (*Daily Gazette and Bulletin* 12 November 1894:5). Vallamont possessed the convenience of the city and the serenity of nature.

The progress experienced across the nation early in this century was also felt by Williamsporters as they watched Vallamont "[f]orge ahead and grow until now it is a little city by itself nestled comfortably and healthfully high above the level of the river" (*Williamsport Sun* 2 July 1906: 8-9). By Williamsport's 1906 centennial, Vallamont boasted "over 250 houses, two churches, two school houses, two parks, a golf club house and the Home for the Friendless." The *Williamsport Sun* writer continues praising the community in a glowing report: "With its wide well-cared for streets, its handsome houses, its numerous shade trees, its sewer systems, its invigorating atmosphere, and the restrictions placed on the construction of buildings, Vallamont cannot do otherwise than become an

ideal suburb" (8-9).

As progress marched on, and more lots were filled, some of Vallamont's initial attractions began to fall by the wayside. After the death of its manager, W.H. Amer, in 1918, the park's pavilion, whose playhouse had been host to countless productions over the years, did not reopen. The general manager of the Williamsport Railway Company, which controlled the park and theater, cited possible plans to make the park a playground (*Williamsport Sun* 23 March 1918: 7). It was not long, however, before the park was divided into lots and sold. Perhaps Vallamont was, in some sense, a victim of its own success. It became more profitable to sell lots than to continue the entertainment offering that had originally made the neighborhood a desirable place to live. Anne Linn Cheyney, in a 1932 *Williamsport Sun* column, remembers with nostalgia the pleasant summer evenings spent at Vallamont park, drinking from the spring, enjoying a performance at the pavilion, and picnicking under the trees. "We may not be-grudge [sic] the land those lovely homes," she writes, "but we do miss our days of clean entertainment" (20 January 1932: np). Cheyney's column, "Jacqueline's Letter to the Home Folks," ran from 1927-1932. She recalls in several issues the joys of Vallamont Park, and before that, Packer Farm.

Vallamont slowly evolved from a suburban community towards a city neighborhood. In the 1920s Vallamont experienced a major change as a community. Loyalsock Township, of which Vallamont was a part, only served grammar school students. High school provisions were badly needed. This was, in no small part, the reason behind the push that finally resulted in Williamsport's annexation of Vallamont, Grampian, and the East End districts to the city (*Gazette and Bulletin* 2 September 1922: 1). Bus lines replaced trolleys through Vallamont in the early 1930s, a transition made throughout Williamsport (*Sun Gazette* 1 August 1958:6).

While many changes occurred within Vallamont, it retained a distinct neighborhood atmosphere. In addition to the subdivision of the park area, a few of the larger lots were also carved up into smaller properties. However, Vallamont never experienced the decay that resulted on Williamsport's West Fourth Street as many former mansions of the lumber barons were split up into apartments, drastically altered to serve business interests, or simply demolished. Ironically, most of the men responsible for Vallamont's development owned grand homes on West Fourth Street.

The history of one property in particular, the greystone built by C. R. Harris along the present Vallamont Drive, offers a useful examination of Vallamont's evolution. In 1894, Charles R. and Ida H. Harris purchased Inglenook, described in the deed as "part of a larger tract of land heretofore known as the 'Packer Farm' and now known as 'Vallamont'" for \$6,000. The property stretched across an entire block of what was then known as Prospect Terrace. The hillside was bounded on the west by Glen Echo Road and on the north by Belmont Avenue's extension (approximately where Campbell Street now continues after intersecting Vallamont Drive). Restrictions on this lot exemplify the efforts of Vallamont's planners to maintain a bucolic setting. The property deed specified "no more than two (2) dwelling houses," and "said dwelling house shall cost at least the sum of six thousand dollars." In addition, 30 trees were to be left along Glen Echo road for the preservation of the road's natural beauty (Lycoming Co. Deed 144:233).

Harris typified the elite class of Vallamont's wealthiest residents. His invention and manufacture of the suspender buckle created his fortune (*Daily Gazette and Bulletin* 12 November 1894:5). The house, described as "one of the finest country residences in the state," next became home to another of Williamsport's most prominent citizens (*Daily Gazette and Bulletin* 12 November 1894:5). In 1900 the property was purchased by Allen P. Perley for \$10,000. Perley was involved in the lumber business as a manufacturer and dealer with interests in numerous companies. He also served as president of the West Branch Valley Bank of Williamsport. His residence, listed as "Greystone,

Vallamont Drive" was maintained by his wife, Ann Perley, after his death in 1926 (Lloyd 652-3).

The 800 block of Vallamont is one of the finest that early Vallamont developers had to offer. Throughout its one hundred-year history, it has been altered but remains a desirable place to live. Compare this to Williamsport's West Fourth Street. Many of the beautiful mansions built by lumber barons in the latter nineteenth century have suffered greatly from neglect, mutilation, and in many cases, demolition. One need only see old photos of West Fourth Street to realize what has been lost. Fortunately, some restoration efforts are now being made. Many of the factors that contributed to Vallamont's success were likely reasons for the decline of what was once Williamsport's finest neighborhood, West Fourth Street. Floods repeatedly ravaged the city. With the availability of public transportation, escaping the cramped city life for high, spacious country land became a tempting option. Vallamont's planners successfully built their development to take advantage of these concerns and trends.

Vallamont has weathered its first hundred years well. Over time, of course it has seen its share of changes, the most notable being the conversion of Vallamont Park into lots on which houses now stand. While it remains a pleasant, desirable location to live, Vallamont is by no means the costliest neighborhood in the Williamsport area. New, prestigious developments with enormous, extravagant homes spread farther up the hillside each year. But Vallamont essentially remains the community it was planned to be. Long-time residents describe it as a peaceful, wholesome, family-oriented neighborhood with attractive, unique homes (*Sun-Gazette* 8 September 1996: A-2). The quiet, wide, tree-lined streets and well-cared for homes that span the neighborhood reflect the plan expressed by Vallamont's early developers.



Greystone, Vallamont Drive

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