

# Walk Wilkes-Barre

***Celebrating Wilkes-Barre's  
Bicentennial: 1806-2006***



***a self-guided  
tour of the  
historic center  
of Wilkes-Barre,  
Pennsylvania***



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# WELCOME to downtown Wilkes-Barre!

Wilkes-Barre was laid out in 1770 by settlers newly arrived from Connecticut. Following New England custom, the new town was planned around a square – the community’s civic center. The boundaries of the original town were the present-day North and South Streets, Pennsylvania Avenue, and the Susquehanna River, the approximate area covered in this walking tour.

The northern terminus of the Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor, Wilkes-Barre was the center of the Wyoming coal field, and the ultimate goal of the Corridor’s canals and railroads. This brochure offers you only a sample of the city’s rich architectural heritage. For more information, you may consult the Luzerne County Historical Society and its publications, which include *Wilkes-Barre Architecture: 1860-1960* and *The Luzerne County Courthouse*.

In the eighteenth century, Connecticut claimed all of what is now Pennsylvania’s northern tier. The “deep, strong, black” soil of the Susquehanna River plains attracted Yankee farmers to this valley, called Wyoming – a Native American name for “Large Plains.” Pennsylvania also had claims to this region, and, in addition to Revolutionary War conflict, the Wyoming Valley was the scene of bitter turf wars between the two colonies in 1771 and 1784, even though the Decree of Trenton in 1782 awarded the territory to Pennsylvania.

Once into the nineteenth century, the community focused on the peacetime concerns of agriculture, commerce, and politics. Wilkes-Barre became a borough in 1806, and the population multiplied. Imaginative and inventive men, such as the local entrepreneurs Jacob Cist and Jesse Fell, demonstrated that this valley had vast deposits of anthracite coal, and that this fuel could serve both domestic and industrial purposes. Wilkes-Barre was seized by anthracite fever. Local businessmen opened mines and drove canals, inclined planes, and railroads across the mountains, opening the region's riches to the great markets of the East Coast. Mining and its related enterprises – transportation, manufacturing, finance – flourished and became paramount.

Starting in the 1840's, wave upon wave of immigrants fleeing misery in Europe arrived here to fill the constantly expanding need for labor. Each successive group began at the bottom of the ladder, creating strong community institutions and neighborhoods in order to survive in an unforgiving new environment defined by anthracite. Together, the immigrants unknowingly brought the qualities that helped the community endure hard times to come.

The apparently endless anthracite-based expansion reached its peak in about 1917. Increasingly, industry and consumers turned to cheaper, more efficient fuels, and hard coal could not compete. In response, the



community began a continuing and remarkably successful effort after World War II to widen its economic base, to attract new industries, and to strengthen local cultural institutions. The mining industry continued its slow, painful decline until 1959, when miners working underneath the Susquehanna River accidentally broke through the riverbed several miles north of Wilkes-Barre. The Knox Mine Disaster, as it is known, killed twelve men, flooded the entire system, and forced a horrific conclusion to underground mining in the Wyoming Valley. The calamitous flood of 1972 brought yet another challenge, along with the opportunity to rebuild.

In spite of fire and flood and urban renewal, much of historic Wilkes-Barre remains to be used and enjoyed. In 1985, the River Street Historic District, which includes over 200 historic buildings, was accepted for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

This guide is divided into two walking tours, covering the north and south sides of downtown. Each tour begins on Public Square. After you visit the buildings on Public Square (#1 to #5), you may follow the tour of the south side (#6 to #30) or north side (#31 to #52) of the city. Site numbers are on the map that folds out from the back cover. Architectural terms and styles shown in bold italic are defined in the glossary at the end of tour narrative.





## 1. Public Square

Our tour begins here, at the historic centerpiece of Wilkes-Barre's downtown. At various times in its history, Public Square held a fort, a church, a school, and the Luzerne County courthouse and jail. As Wilkes-Barre grew, the area around the Square buzzed with commercial activity. In 1909, the old courthouse was demolished and the Square became a park. Today, Public Square has fountains, sculptures, an amphitheater, and a monument to the two British Members of Parliament who championed the American Colonies' desire for independence: John Wilkes and Colonel Isaac Barre, the city's namesakes.

The Square continues to be the scene of ceremonies and celebrations throughout the year. In May you'll find the Fine Arts Fiesta (Pennsylvania's oldest arts fair) here, and summer and autumn Thursdays bring the Farmers Market, a beloved Wilkes-Barre tradition, to this wonderful space in the heart of our city.

*On the south side of Public Square is a trio of highly individual buildings:*



## 2. First National Bank (1906)

59-63 Public Square

At the turn of the century, many financial institutions built new buildings which looked like Roman temples, leading the great modern architect Louis Sullivan to suggest angrily "that the banker wear a toga, sandals, and conduct his business in the venerated Latin tongue." The banks, however, admired the look of tradition and security provided by these structures, designed in the *Neoclassical*

**Revival** style. This banking temple, designed by Wilkes-Barre architect Albert H. Kipp, is a wonderful example.

### 3. Luzerne Bank Building (1928)

69 Public Square

Can you find the coal miners among the enormous sculpted figures, called telamons, which appear to support the ceiling of this building's banking hall? They are a stark reminder of the economy that produced this soaring skyscraper. New York architect Bertram Cunynham designed this fourteen-story building, rising from a fortresslike **Romanesque** base to an airy penthouse reminiscent of an Italian villa. The foyer ceiling has fine decorative reliefs in the **Art Deco** style of the later 1920's.

### 4. F.M. Kirby Center for the Performing Arts (1937)

71 Public Square

This Depression-era movie palace, clad in brightly-colored **terra cotta**, is lavishly decorated in **Art Deco** style.

When it opened as the Comerford Movie Theatre, patrons could see movies such as "Alexander's Ragtime Band" for fifty cents. The inclusion of the theatre on the National Register of Historic Places in 1981 inspired a group of private benefactors to restore and reopen it as a civic center.

Check out the Kirby's varied performance schedule; there's something for all tastes, and the atmosphere can't be beat!



### 5. Chamber Building (1895)

2 Public Square

Public Square was set diagonally into the city grid, and the prominent lots that resulted at the intersections have challenged the creativity of generations of architects. New York architect P. J. Lauritzen, designed this five-story dowager for the Jonas Long's Sons Department Store. He dealt with the oddly shaped site by creating a dramatic three-story entrance arch to mark the corner and draw in shoppers. The store later became Pomeroy's – the name by which it was known by twentieth-century consumers. In 1994, the Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber renovated the building for office and retail use.

## SOUTH TOUR

*Walk down West Market Street to the corner of Franklin Street.*

### 6. PNC Bank Building (1908)

11 West Market Street

### Wyoming National Bank (1914)

26-28 West Market Street

### Citizens Bank Center (1911)

8 West Market Street



Historically, the intersection of Market and Franklin Streets has been the financial center of Wilkes-Barre. The three large banks at this corner date from the era of the City Beautiful Movement, when American architects inspired by Imperial Rome transformed Victorian industrial centers into “White Cities” reflecting the nation’s

new-found status as a world power. Local architects McCormick and French designed two of the buildings – the PNC Bank Building, like other turn-of-the-century “skyscrapers,” is an abstracted *classical* column, with a base (the banking hall), shaft (the office floors), and capital (the top floor), while the Wyoming National Bank is a solid, marble-clad vault.

Daniel H. Burnham of Chicago designed the Citizens Bank Center, a landmark on Wilkes-Barre’s skyline. Burnham had been chief architect of Chicago’s 1893 Columbian Exposition – the event from which the City Beautiful Movement originated. The *coffered polychrome* ceiling of its banking hall is especially handsome.

### 7. Hotel Sterling (1897)

47-65 West Market Street



At one time, the Sterling was Wilkes-Barre’s largest and most luxurious hotel, and its guests included movie stars and nationally-known politicians.

Architect J.H.W. Hawkins had planned a brick Victorian castle, but the hotel's developers convinced him to change the design midway. The result – modeled after a flat-roofed *Renaissance* palazzo, and clad in rough-faced limestone – marked the end of the Victorian era in Wilkes-Barre's architecture. The Sterling is now undergoing a complete rehabilitation.

## **8. Market Street Bridge (1929)**

This stunning gateway into the central city was also inspired by the City Beautiful Movement; Carrere and Hastings, architects of the New York Public Library, designed it. The beauty of the Market Street Bridge and the proud eagles that guard its entrance towers have made it a well-loved landmark; it is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Since 1819, this has been the site of several spans across the Susquehanna, and as early as 1912, Frederick C. Olds had plans for a riverside park on the west side and a monumental bridge to link Wilkes-Barre with still rural Kingston. In 1922, F. M. Kirby, a partner in the F. W. Woolworth Company, hired the renowned Olmsted Brothers to design a park, which he then donated to the city of Wilkes-Barre. A quick walk across the Market Street Bridge will bring you to Kirby Park and its neighbor, Nesbitt Park. Together, they offer a full array of recreational amenities: athletic fields, tennis courts, playgrounds, jogging trails, a concert pavilion, and the 60 wooded acres of the Kirby Park Natural Area. Stroll to the river for a great view of downtown.

## **9. River Common**

A great legacy of Wilkes-Barre's New England founders, the River Common's parkland extends along the Susquehanna from North Street to South Street. Fort Durkee, the stronghold of the Connecticut settlers, and Fort Wyoming, built by the Pennsylvanians, faced each other at the south end of the Common and are denoted by historical markers. Near South Street a marker commemorates George Catlin, painter of the American Indian, who was born in Wilkes-Barre.

Today, the gardens at the north end of the Common are a popular spot for wedding pictures. A memorial statue of Ellen Webster Palmer is located here. Mrs. Palmer

established the Boys' Industrial Association to help the "breaker boys" – some only six years old – who once labored in the mines. A plaque on the stone wall honors Edith Brower, whose efforts helped secure the use of the Common as a public park.

## **10. Guard Center (1909)**

16 South River Street

### **Chapman Hall (1911)**

24 South River Street

The Guard Center building was constructed in just ninety days during the winter of 1908 to house the Lehigh and Wilkes-Barre Coal Company, one of eight major coal operators dominating the industry at the turn of the century. Its imposing granite columns signify the important role that the coal companies once played in the life of the city. Wilkes-Barre architects Welsh, Sturdevant and Poggi designed this *Neoclassical Revival* structure.

Coal company president Frederick Huber commissioned the same architects to design his home next door in 1911. The *Craftsman Style* detailing of the three-story mansion hints at the influence of contemporary *Prairie School* architects like Frank Lloyd Wright; however, the house's massing is resolutely traditional.

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In the early 1800's, River Street was Wilkes-Barre's commercial hub: its gateway, via the Susquehanna, to the world. The street was dotted with taverns and shops as well as houses; there were boat landings and warehouses on the River Common. After the construction of the canal to the rear of the town, commerce shifted away from the river, and the neighborhood became the preserve of the great family houses of the nineteenth century – residences made possible by the tons of coal moving on the canals to market. Wilkes University, founded in 1933, owns most of the remaining mansions on South River Street, and uses them for residence halls, offices, and classrooms.

## **11. McClintock Law Office (1840's)**

34 South River Street

Attorney Andrew McClintock's small *Italianate* law office, now the Baltimore Company, is a quaint survivor from

Wilkes-Barre's days as a sleepy county seat: Next door, McClintock's house has borne witness to both phases of River Street's existence. Originally, the house was designed in the *Greek Revival* style. In 1863, McClintock, made wealthy by the growth of the mining industry, engaged New York architects Calvert Vaux and F. C. Withers to remodel his house. The spare structure was soon transformed into the first *High Victorian Gothic* house in Wilkes-Barre, boasting a *polychrome* brick arcade which made the house as fashionable as any of its neighbors.

## 12. Sterling Hall (1860)

72 South River Street

The elaborate cast-iron ornament of this house, reminiscent of New Orleans, was made possible by the mass production of the Industrial Revolution; forged in an anthracite-fueled foundry, it is an

excellent example of the way in which Wilkes-Barre's coal was helping to transform America. Philadelphia architect Samuel Sloan designed this cubical Italian villa for banker Walter Sterling.



## 13. Rifkin Hall (1873)

80-84 South River Street

This *High Victorian Gothic* mansion was designed by architect Bruce Price for the Murray Reynolds family. Price married into a prominent local family, and his commissions comprised a veritable

“who's who” of Wilkes-Barre society. He would eventually leave Wilkes-Barre for New York City, becoming one of the most prominent turn-of-the-century architects in America. This was once also the home of Colonel Robert B. Ricketts, a Battle of Gettysburg hero, lumber baron, and early conservationist, who donated Ricketts' Glen State Park to the people of Pennsylvania.



#### **14. Catlin Hall (1843)**

92 South River Street

#### **Weiss Hall (1850)**

98 South River Street

Along with McClintock Hall, the next two buildings help to illustrate the continuing desirability of River Street as an elite address, even as styles and generations changed. Catlin and Weiss Halls were once almost identical *Greek Revival* neighbors. In 1886, however, new owner E. L. Brown had architect Albert Kipp remodel his house, now known as Weiss Hall, into a turreted, richly textured *Queen Anne* showpiece. The transformation led to new commissions for Kipp throughout the neighborhood, including the rowhouses on the other side of Northampton Street.

#### **15. Chase Hall (1918)**

184 South River Street

#### **Kirby Hall (1872)**

202 South River Street

#### **Bedford Hall (1876)**

96 West South Street

At the intersection of South River and West South Streets sit three more great legacies of Wilkes-Barre's anthracite elite. The *Tudor Revival* mass of Chase Hall, built for the president of the Lehigh Valley Coal Company, sits next to the former residence of Fred M. Kirby, dime store magnate and philanthropist on a grand scale. Kirby purchased the mansion in 1905, three decades after architect F.C. Withers had designed it for a local businessman. If Kirby Hall is open, go inside to enjoy its aristocratic interior.

Across the street, the spindly towers of Bedford Hall reach for the sky. Architect Bruce Price's finest essay in the *High Victorian Gothic Style* was constructed for attorney and industrialist George Bedford.

#### **16. Temple Israel (1925)**

236 South River Street

This is the home of the Wyoming Valley's Conservative Jewish congregation, which was first established in 1922. The Byzantine Revival copper-domed exterior, typical of many synagogues of the period, is faced with buff tapestry brick and trimmed with granite and *polychrome terra cotta*; the interior is remarkable for its woodwork and domed stained glass ceiling. Ralph M. Herr was the architect.

## 17. Max Roth Center (1895)

215 South Franklin Street

In designing this elegant townhouse for a dentist, local architect J. H. W. Hawkins was influenced by two of America's greatest architects. The intricate naturalistic ornament in the window *frieze* is an echo of Chicago architect Louis Sullivan's designs, while Boston architect H. H. Richardson inspired the *rusticated* walls and stubby Syrian arches.

## 18. Congregation Ohav Zedek (1930)

242 South Franklin Street

During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, American architects struggled to find an architectural language appropriate to the synagogue: the *Moorish Revival* style, with its "Middle Eastern" overtones, was one common design response. Local architect Austin Reilly designed this colorful synagogue for Wilkes-Barre's largest Orthodox Jewish congregation, founded by a group of Hungarian Jews. *Moorish Revival* horseshoe arches, rendered in *terra cotta* tile, highlight the façade, which is crowned by a large curved gable.

## 19. Houpt/Stegmaier Mansion (1876)

304 South Franklin Street

Did you ever hear the Victorian era referred to as the "Gilded Age?" Tour the lavish parlors of this *High Victorian Gothic* confection, and you'll understand why. Architect/builder Missouriia Houpt designed the steep-roofed mansion for himself; it later became the home of brewer Frederick Stegmaier. Now a bed-and-breakfast, it is open for tours by appointment.

*Return to Franklin Street ...*

## 20. Weckesser Hall (1916)

170 South Franklin Street

This massive *Chateau-esque* mansion is the result of a dime store merger. Frederick J. Weckesser was a top executive of Wilkes-Barre's Kirby five and dime chain. After he directed the 1912 marriage of the Kirby and Woolworth empires, Weckesser commissioned New York



society architect C.H.P. Gilbert to design this mansion. Gilbert's selection was not surprising; the architect's earlier work had included a similar Fifth Avenue mansion for F.W. Woolworth himself. Today, Weckesser's grand home serves ~~as the administration building for~~ Wilkes University.

## 21. Mary Stegmaier Residence (1911)

156 South Franklin Street

Beer paid for this *Colonial Revival* mansion, designed by Wilkes-Barre architects Knapp and Bosworth for Mrs. George Stegmaier, descendent of the Wilkes-Barre brewing family. The scale of the Stegmaier residence, exemplified by its grand *portico*, is indicative of the success achieved by the brewing industry in the anthracite coal fields.

## 22. Luzerne County Medical Society

126 South Franklin Street (rear)

Wilkes-Barre's own *Pantheon* is tucked away behind a *Second Empire* house on Franklin Street. In 1914, architect Brice Hayden Long designed this *Colonial Revival* building, modeled loosely on Rome's great round temple, for the county's doctors. The first floor contains a medical library, while a wonderful circular auditorium, lit from above by a skylight, occupies the second floor. The Medical Society still calls this home, and visitors are welcome during business hours.

## 23. Moses and Gelso Law Offices

120 South Franklin Street

Wilkes-Barre architects Olds and Puckey designed this urbane 1907 *Beaux Arts* mansion – reminiscent of a Parisian townhouse – for department store magnate Henry Lazarus. The prim brick façade, garlanded in limestone, rises to a *balustrade* below a steep *mansard roof*.

## 24. Young Men's Christian Association (1934)

40 West Northampton Street

This fortress of a building is really the welcoming home of the Wilkes-Barre YMCA. Wilkes-Barre architect Thomas Foster modeled the exterior after the palaces of medieval Florence, and the result is a fine example of the historical eclecticism popular in the 1920's and 1930's. Handsome interior tile work and details echo its Mediterranean

influences. Foster, a versatile architect, also designed the Collegiate Gothic First Baptist Church on South River Street. (Restrooms and vending machines are available to the public.)

## 25. First Presbyterian Church (1889)

97 South Franklin Street



This massive edifice for the Valley's oldest congregation (founded 1779) is clad in Laurel Run redstone, a popular local building material. Look around downtown, and you will see the distinctive purple stone everywhere. Don't let this church's rugged *Romanesque* exterior fool you, however; with this commission, New York City architect James Cleveland Cady introduced large-scale steel frame construction to the valley. Cady also designed the American Museum of Natural History in New York.

## 26. Osterhout Free Library (1848)

71 South Franklin Street

There is nothing as permanent as a temporary building! That is certainly true of Wilkes-Barre's unusual *Gothic Revival* public library, which was originally built as the First Presbyterian Church. In 1889, when Isaac S. Osterhout, a local merchant,



left his estate “to establish and maintain in the city of Wilkes-Barre a free library,” famed librarian Melvil Dewey, inventor of the Dewey Decimal System, recommended that the old church building be utilized as a “temporary” library until a permanent replacement could be built. In 1981, the Library added a children’s wing, designed by Eyerman Csala Hapeman.

## **27. Luzerne County**

### **Historical Society Museum (1893)**

69 South Franklin Street

The Historical Society, founded in 1858, currently occupies two buildings on South Franklin Street, as well as the Swetland Homestead across the Susquehanna River in Wyoming. In its museum behind the Osterhout Free Library, three floors of exhibits highlight the fascinating history of the Wyoming Valley, from the prehistoric period to the present. You are welcome to visit the exhibits and the museum shop.

## **28. Bishop Memorial Library (c. 1875)**

49 South Franklin Street

This house, a late example of the Italian Villa style with *Queen Anne* revisions, is a reminder of quieter times on South Franklin Street. Designed by architect Willis Hale, it now houses the research library and administrative offices of the Society, and it is also open to the public. Don’t miss the restored Victorian garden in the back – it is a wonderful refuge in the midst of downtown’s bustle.

## **29. WBRE-TV and WYOU-TV (1960)**

62 South Franklin Street

Samuel Moskowitz, a pioneer of contemporary architecture in the Wyoming Valley, designed the studios for Wilkes-Barre’s first television station. Inspired by the *International Style*, this is an elegant combination of aluminum, glass, limestone, and marble. Moskowitz also designed the Jewish Community Center on South River Street.

## **30. St. Stephen’s Episcopal Pro-Cathedral (1896)**

35-41 South Franklin Street

With a *campanile* presiding over South Franklin Street as if it had been transported from an Italian hilltown, St. Stephen’s is a downtown landmark. This church, built of locally-quarried yellow stone, was modeled after the colorful Gothic churches

of Northern Italy. It was the second church that Philadelphia architect Charles M. Burns designed for the site: the first, built in 1885, burned in a spectacular Christmas Day fire in 1896, leaving only the tower standing.

Go inside, if you can. The interior has *polychrome* brickwork and reliefs by sculptor J. Massey Rhind; an impressive *hammer beam truss*, capped by carved wooden angels, supports the roof. It is a favorite venue for concerts; the acoustics and pipe organ are superb!



## NORTH TOUR

### 31. Spring Brook Water Supply Company Building (1910)

30 North Franklin Street

Rows of intricately carved dolphins seem to spew water from the top of this *Neoclassical Revival* office building. They playfully declare the purpose of the structure over which they stand guard, for it was designed for the Spring Brook Water Supply Company by architects Welsh, Sturdevant, and Poggi.



### 32. Irem Temple (1907)

52 North Franklin Street

With four crescent-topped *minarets* piercing the skyline, this exotic fantasy on North Franklin Street probably provokes more comments than any building in the downtown. Wilkes-Barre's Shriners constructed the *Moorish Revival style* auditorium for their activities. For many years, Irem Temple was the city's premiere cultural venue. Architect F. Willard Puckey patterned



its design after the Mosque of Omar on the outside and after the Court of Lions of the Alhambra Palace on the inside.

### 33. First United Methodist Church (1883)

45-53 North Franklin Street



The front of this imposing building rises like a mountain range from the sidewalk, reflecting architect Bruce Price's interest in evolving from his earlier, more spindly Victorian designs to something more simplified and modern. Price combined stylistic elements of French Gothic and *Romanesque* to compose the rugged façade of this building.

### 34. Kirby Health Center Annex (1883)

63 North Franklin Street

This house, which was publicized nationally in *American Architect and Building News*, began a phase of architect Bruce Price's career which greatly influenced the early work of Frank Lloyd Wright. Price designed it for his aunt at the same time that he was working on the very different Methodist Church next door. The architect started with a simple gabled form, which he pushed and pulled, using different materials and textures to express the varied spaces of the interior. With this residence, Wilkes-Barre was introduced to the *Queen Anne style*, which had a wide influence on domestic architecture in the area.

### 35. Pennsylvania Millers Mutual Insurance Company (1935)

72 North Franklin Street

Though Wilkes-Barre's days as a farming town are long gone, this building, the headquarters of an insurance company founded for the purpose of insuring *gristmills* against fire, serves as a reminder of that time. The company recently demonstrated how the past and present can work together when it rehabilitated its original building, with its elegant combination of Art Moderne and *Colonial Revival* motifs, joining it to a new office wing in the back.

### 36. Kirby Memorial Health Center (1930)

71 North Franklin Street

Designed by Thomas Atherton, the Kirby Health Center is a magnificent example of simplified *Classical style*. Its interiors exhibit a fabulous use of the tiles and colors that were



favored in the 1920's and 1930's. The Center, another gift to the community from the generous Kirby family, is dedicated to Angeline Elizabeth Kirby; its purpose is "to promote the health of the people and the control and elimination of diseases." Many health services and organizations are housed in the Center and its annexes; visitors are welcome. The intricate tile work on the underside of the front *portico* is only a hint of what awaits you inside.

### 37. Stickney Block (1887)

108-118 North Franklin Street

With its striking front bays and Gothic *Palladian* windows, the Stickney Block is an urbane example of the rowhouses built throughout the city's fashionable neighborhoods during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. This handsome reminder of things Victorian was designed by William W. Neuer, a local contractor turned architect.

### 38. Beaumont Block (1893)

54 West Union Street

#### Dickson Row (1904)

60-64 West Union Street

The prolific architect Albert Kipp designed these two adjacent sets of rowhouses. The Beaumont Block, which now houses Luzerne County offices, is a solid work rendered in brick and Laurel Run redstone. A decade later, the architect drew upon more playful influences for the Dickson Row, constructed toward the end of his career. Steep "Dutch" step-end gables crown three of the houses, while the fourth wears a *mansard roof* and features French doors opening onto a front terrace.

### 39. King's College

#### Administration Building (1913)

133 North River Street

King's College is a liberal arts school founded in 1946 by the Congregation of the Holy Cross, who also established the University of Notre Dame. The administration building was built as the headquarters of the Lehigh Valley Coal Company. It was designed by Daniel H. Burnham of Chicago, also architect of the Citizens Bank Center.

Nearby, at the corner of Franklin and Jackson Streets, the college's Chapel of Christ the King houses a moving tribute to the tempestuous relationship between coal and the Wyoming Valley – a 4200-pound anthracite altar, created for King's in 1954 by the great African-American coal sculptor C. Edgar Patience, a Wilkes-Barre resident.

### 40. Luzerne County Court House (1909)

N. River and W. North Streets



Throughout its planning and construction, controversy and scandal swirled around the *Beaux Arts* courthouse. Pittsburgh architect F. J. Osterling originally designed it to be placed on Public Square. It was finally completed by

architects McCormick and French, who designed the lavish interior with its stunning rotunda. Step inside to see the history of the county illustrated in mosaics and murals. Built during the period of Wilkes-Barre's greatest prosperity, the Court House is now a treasured local landmark.

The site of the Court House was once the Public Basin of the Wyoming Division of the North Branch Canal. From 1834 to 1881, when the last canal boat left Wilkes-Barre, the canal was a major means of transporting coal and other commodities in and out of the Wyoming Valley.

Stroll onto the courthouse lawn to view the memorials to the county's war dead and the anchor of the USS Wilkes-Barre, a World War II cruiser. The nearby cast-iron deer is a relic of the 1850's, when the courthouse sat on Public Square. Local wags would commonly cite the deer as a source of courthouse gossip in newspaper columns. What does the deer say today?

## 41. Memorial Presbyterian Church (1872)

29 West North Street

This beautiful church, built by a grieving father as a memorial to the three children he lost to a scarlet fever epidemic, was designed by Edward Kendall of New York.

Three gorgeous Tiffany windows in the baptistry depict the children so that they, “being dead, might yet speak.”

Another large window, above the front entrance, symbolically illustrates the twelve Apostles. Built of Campbell’s Ledge sandstone laid up in elaborate rubblework, with a rare stone spire and exceptionally well-detailed porches, domers, and cast iron *cresting*, Memorial Presbyterian is a *Gothic Revival* gem.



## 42. Polish Union Building (1936)

53 North Main Street

The surface of the streamlined classical Polish Union Building is embellished with *Art Deco bas-relief* carvings; note particularly the eagle – a symbol of Poland – over its central entrance. Joseph E. Fronczak of Buffalo was the architect for this, the headquarters of a national Polish fraternal organization. The Polish Union is only one of the many ethnic institutions founded by the immigrants who came to call Wyoming Valley home; two blocks away, at the corner of North Main and North Streets, inscriptions on another building proclaim its former role as the home of the Pennsylvania Slovak Roman & Greek Catholic Union.

## 43. Blue Cross Operations Center (1946)

30 North Main Street

The streamlined Operations Center, built as the Wyoming Valley Veterans Building, was the first major structure to be built here in a truly modern idiom. The horizontal bands of windows and rounded corners of this nine-story building are marks of the *International Style*. The architects were L. Vern Lacy and Thomas Atherton, founders of a local firm.

#### 44. Quad Three Group (1925)

33-37 North Washington Street

#### ~~Quad Three Group Annex (c. 1889)~~

39 North Washington Street

The eagle perched atop the offices of Quad Three Group testifies to the building's past life as the Fraternal Order of Eagles Lodge. Wilkes-Barre architects Schmitt and Schroeder designed it in 1925. The intriguing little *Classical Revival* building next door, built as the offices of Wilkes-Barre's first electric utility, later served as the home of the Wilkes-Barre Press Club, a one-time haunt of local newspapermen. President William Howard Taft and Admiral Robert Peary, among others, enjoyed the hospitality within these walls during their visits to Wilkes-Barre. Quad Three Group, a local architectural and engineering firm, rehabilitated both buildings for its use in the 1980's.

#### 45. James M. Coughlin High School (1912)

80 North Washington Street

When it was opened, Coughlin High School was the city's only public high school. Within a decade, however, Wilkes-Barre's population growth necessitated the construction of two more high schools in other parts of the city. Wilkes-Barre architect Owen McGlynn won an architectural competition organized to select a design for the high school; years later, McGlynn's florid *Beaux Arts* building continues to serve its original purpose.

#### 46. Wilkes-Barre City Hall (1893)

40 East Market Street



The honeybees illustrated in Wilkes-Barre's city seal, depicted in stained glass over the front door, are emblematic of the city's nineteenth-century boast that it was "busy as a beehive." The stained glass window is only one of the many interesting late Victorian details incorporated in this, Wilkes-Barre's first municipal building.

When it was built, City Hall presented an unusual combination of architectural styles: a redstone *Romanesque* base; Victorian banded brick and *terra cotta* upper floors

with gargoyles and balconies; and *Queen Anne* towers and gables at the roofline. Though its towers and gables are no more, City Hall remains a building of substance. The architects were William W. Neuer and Benjamin Davey, Jr.

#### **47. Pennsylvania Labor & Industry Building (2005)**

37 South Washington Street

The heroic *terra-cotta* garment workers flanking the entrance were salvaged from the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union Health Center that once stood here. Enormous mills built for silk and lace manufacture still dominate many Wyoming Valley neighborhoods, testimony to an industry drawn here by the massive supply of female labor. During the collapse of the anthracite industry after World War II, jobs in the dress factories kept many mining families from financial ruin.

#### **48. St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church (1872)**

134 South Washington Street

This noble building is the seat of the oldest Roman Catholic parish in Luzerne County, founded in 1842 by Irish emigrants fleeing famine and poverty in their homeland. Designed by E.F. Durang, a Philadelphia architect who specialized in Catholic churches, it has a stately *Baroque* façade and a grand interior boasting a *frescoed* ceiling and gilded columns. Its tower, however, is no more, having been felled by a tornado in 1890.

#### **49. St. Nicholas German Catholic Church (1887)**

240 South Washington Street

This church is one of the greatest *High Victorian Gothic* structures in Wilkes-Barre. German-born architect William Schickel created a building whose details, such as the triple-entranced frontispiece, or *westwerk*, and the single central tower, are typically German. For decades, people in central Wilkes-Barre set their watches, went to lunch, and closed shop by the clock on its steeple. The church's beautiful interior woodcarvings and stained glass windows merit your visit.



## 50. Good Shepherd Lutheran Church (1845)

190 South Main Street

Take a short detour to view the oldest church in Wilkes-Barre. This simple *Greek Revival* structure, built by German immigrants, is one of the traditional focal points of what was once a largely German neighborhood.

## 51. Lehigh & Susquehanna Railroad Station (1868)

33 South Wilkes-Barre Boulevard



This *Italianate* railroad station served Wilkes-Barre for a century before it closed in 1972. Since restored, it is again undergoing reuse. The Lehigh and Susquehanna Railroad, later the Central

Railroad of New Jersey, was established by Philadelphia investors who conquered the mountains and tapped the Wyoming coal fields; today, its route forms the backbone of the Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor.

## 52. Stegmaier Brewing Company (1890-1913)

Wilkes-Barre Boulevard and East Market Street

Brewer Charles Stegmaier came to Wilkes-Barre from Germany in 1851; in the 1890's, he hired Philadelphia architect A.C. Wagner, a brewery design specialist, to build the Stegmaier Brewery. This cupola-topped brewhouse became the city's last great Victorian red brick monument and an impressive reminder of one of the region's major industries. At the time it merged with the Lion Brewery in 1974, Stegmaier was the third largest brewery in Pennsylvania, producing 800,000 barrels of beer annually. The Lion still brews at its North End brewery, while the Stegmaier now serves as a Federal office building – the result of an epic 20-year preservation battle. Go inside and enjoy the details of Bohlin Cywinski Jackson's award-winning rehabilitation.



## GLOSSARY of ARCHITECTURAL TERMS

**Art Deco:** An architectural style, popular in the 1920's and 1930's, which featured streamlined forms, simple geometric motifs, and the common use of vivid colors.

**Balustrade:** A series of upright vase-shaped posts (balusters) used to support a rail.

**Baroque:** An architectural style that originated in 17th century Italy, following the revival of Classical architecture during the Renaissance. Baroque buildings used Classical orders and ornament in a lavish, sculptural manner.

**bas-relief:** A sculptural relief that projects very slightly from its background.

**Beaux-Arts:** A style which takes its name from the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, a French school which dominated architectural training at the end of the 19th century. Beaux-Arts buildings, which were inspired by ancient Roman architecture, are characterized by symmetrical plans and grandly composed Classical details like paired columns, domes, arched openings, and grand stairways.

**campanile:** A bell tower, usually freestanding.

**Chateausque:** A revival style, popular during the early 20th century, which was derived from the architecture of French chateaus during the reign of King Francois I. Chateausque buildings combine Gothic and Renaissance features, and feature steep hipped roofs, decorative dormers and pinnacles, and masonry walls.

**Classical:** A broad term pertaining to the architecture of ancient Greece or Rome.

**Classical Revival:** A style, reviving the elements of ancient Greek or Roman architecture, which was very popular during the turn of the century. Banks, public buildings, and grand houses were often built in the Classical Revival style, which is not as grandiose as its companion Beaux Arts style.

**coffering:** A series of recessed box-like panels, or coffers, in a ceiling.

**Colonial Revival:** A style reviving architectural forms and elements originally found in the buildings of the English colonies. The Colonial Revival first became popular in 1876, when the Centennial focused attention on the nation's Colonial past.

**Craftsman Style:** A turn-of-the-century style emphasizing simple design, "honest" construction, and fine craftsmanship. Craftsman style buildings often feature hipped roofs with wide, open eaves, exposed structural elements such as beams and brackets, and geometric detailing.

**cupola:** A rounded tower-like device rising from the roof of a building, usually terminating in a dome.

**fresco:** The technique of painting on freshly spread wet plaster.

**frieze:** The flat, horizontal panel in the center of an entablature. By extension, any elevated horizontal decorative band or panel.

**Gothic Revival:** An architectural style reviving the forms and elements of medieval Gothic architecture. Gothic Revival style buildings are characterized by pointed arches and steep gabled roofs. The Gothic Revival style came to the United States from England at the beginning of the 19th century.

**Greek Revival:** An architectural style reviving the forms and elements of Ancient Greek architecture. The Greek Revival style was wildly popular in the United States during the early 19th century, and many buildings were built to look like Greek temples. More modest Greek Revival buildings feature pedimented gables, wide bands of trim under the cornice, and bold, simple moldings.

**gristmills:** Mills for grinding grain.

**hammer beam truss:** A roof truss design in which short horizontal beams, cantilevered outward from the top of the wall and supported by brackets, support the weight of the roof.

**High Victorian Gothic:** An eclectic interpretation of the Gothic Revival, popular during the mid-19th century, and inspired by the colorful Gothic buildings of Northern Italy. High Victorian Gothic buildings combine Gothic Revival forms with extensive polychroming and ornament.

**International:** A 20th-century “universal” architectural style celebrating modern structural principles and materials. International Style buildings reject the use of ornament; they are characterized by simple, geometric forms and the extensive use of glass, steel, and concrete.

**Italianate:** An architectural style inspired by the picturesque rural villas of northern Italy, and popular during the mid-19th century. Italianate buildings are characterized by low roofs, wide eaves with decorative brackets, tall round-headed windows with elaborately decorated hood moldings, and bracketed porches.

**Mansard roof:** A hip roof divided into two slopes – a steeper lower part and a shallower upper part. Named after 17th century French architect Francois Mansart, the Mansard roof is the hallmark of the Second Empire style.

**minaret:** a lofty, slender tower attached to a mosque, and topped by a projecting balcony.

**Moorish Revival:** An architectural style reviving the forms and ornament of Islamic architecture. Moorish Revival buildings are characterized by colorful and “exotic” decoration, horseshoe arches, and minarets.

**Neoclassical Revival:** Common in public buildings and grand houses, the movement is characterized by giant paired columns and an ashlar base with arched fenestration. It is characteristic of many of the buildings of the Federal Government of the United States.

**Palladian:** In the style of Italian Renaissance architect Andrea Palladio. This term is often used to refer to one of Palladio’s favored motifs, in which a round-headed window is flanked by two smaller rectangular windows.

**Pantheon:** A building dedicated to all the gods; specifically, the ancient, circular, domed temple located in Rome, Italy.

**polychrome:** The use of many colors. During the 19th century, this term also referred to the use of different building materials with contrasting colors.

**portico:** A porch, with a roof carried by columns, which protects the main entrance to a building.

**Prairie School:** A group of turn-of-the-century Chicago architects, led by Frank Lloyd Wright, who consciously rejected revival styles in favor of buildings which reflected the rolling Midwestern prairie landscape. Prairie School buildings feature low horizontal lines, broad hipped roofs, and ganged casement windows.

**Queen Anne:** A late 19th century style that was inspired by late medieval English buildings grafting classical ornament with medieval forms. Queen Anne buildings incorporate many different materials and colors, such as combinations of brick, stone, and shingles. Other common features are steeply pitched roofs, elaborate chimneys, and corner turrets.

**Renaissance:** The European transition between medieval and modern times, noted for a flowering of arts and culture. It began in 14th century Italy, and lasted until the 17th century. The Renaissance was characterized by the revival of classical influence in architecture.

**Richardsonian Romanesque:** A uniquely American style, named for architect H.H. Richardson, whose strongly personal designs were widely emulated in the late 19th century. Richardsonian Romanesque buildings feature very heavy, rusticated masonry walls and irregular massing, combined with round Romanesque arches and short, thick columns.

**Romanesque:** An architectural style that developed in early medieval Europe prior to the growth of the Gothic style. Romanesque buildings are characterized by round arches and vaults, the use of piers in place of classical columns, heavy masonry construction, and profuse ornament.

**rustication:** Masonry cut into massive blocks with a rough finish, and laid with deep joints.

**Second Empire:** An architectural style, popular in the United States during the late 19th century, which originated in France during the reign of Napoleon III. Second Empire buildings are characterized by the use of mansard roofs, used together with ornate window hoods and surrounds.

**terra cotta:** A hard, fired clay, capable of assuming many different forms and colors. Terra cotta, which means “baked earth,” was a very popular cladding and decorative material during the early 20th century.

**Tudor Revival:** An architectural style that revived the forms and elements of architecture in late medieval England. Tudor Revival buildings, which were most common in the early 20th century, are characterized by half-timbered gables and walls, steeply pitched roofs, massive chimneys, and multipaned windows.

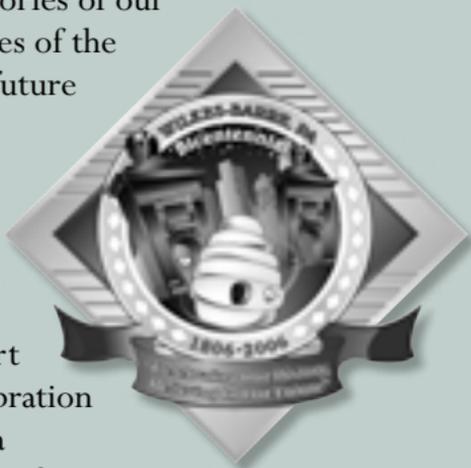
**westwerk:** A type of monumental entrance hall common to many medieval German churches. It takes its name from its placement on the church’s western facade.

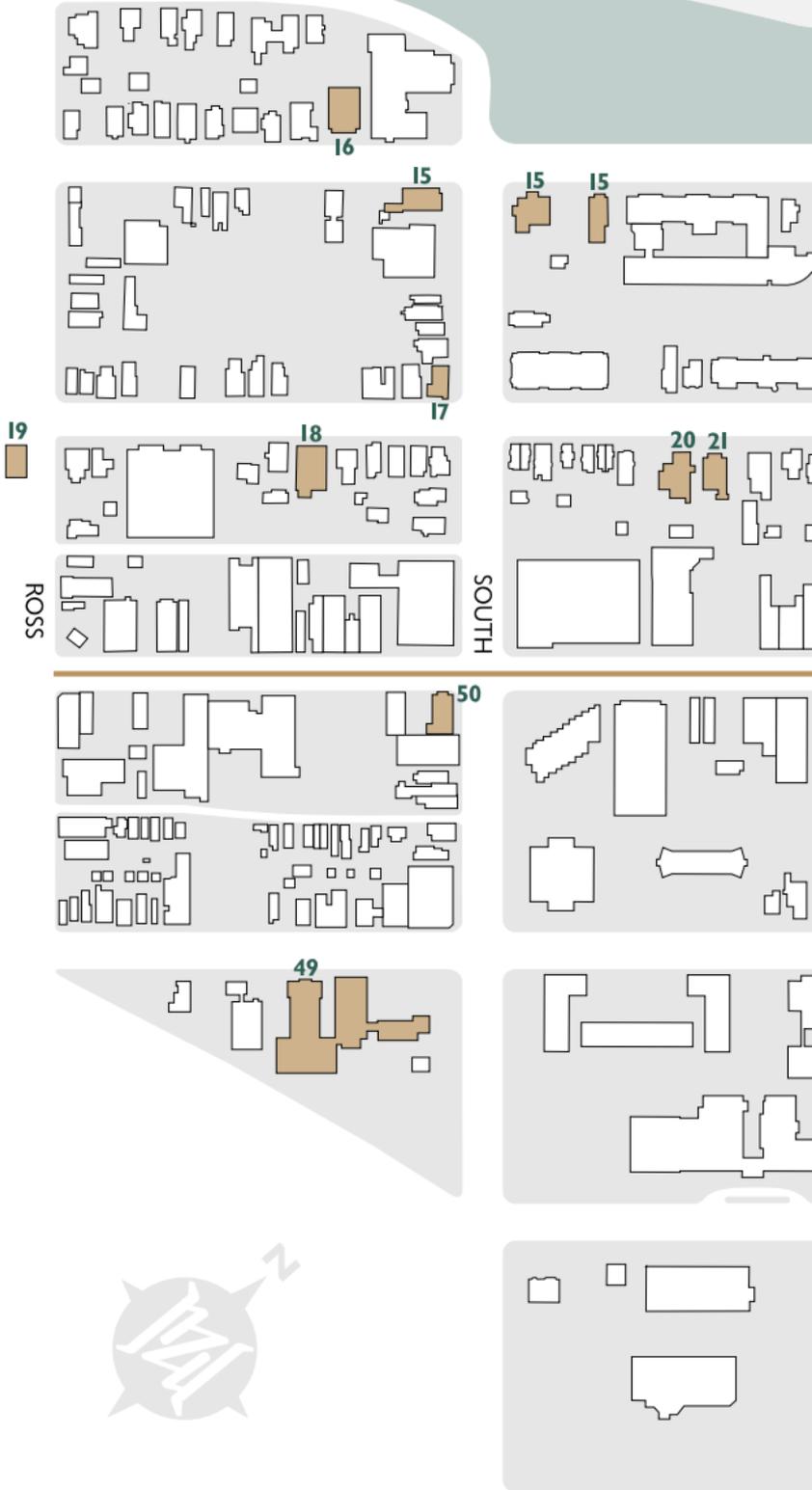
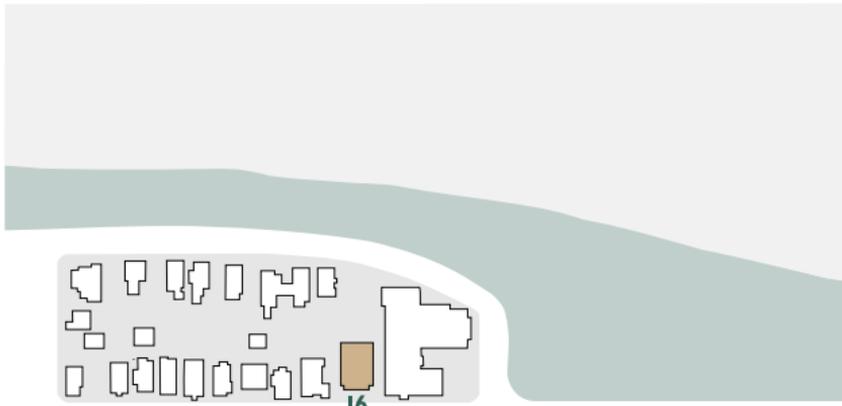
## **The 2006 *CELEBRATE WILKES-BARRE* Bicentennial Celebration**

was a moment in time to reflect on the memories of our rich heritage, the opportunities of the present and our belief in the future as we move forward into the next century.

The Bicentennial celebration was a chance for everyone in and around Wilkes-Barre to become a part of history. The year-long celebration included community events; a commemorative poster contest for Wilkes-Barre students; historical displays; the Bicentennial Blastoff; the City of Wilkes-Barre’s Bicentennial Parade; a Gala Ball: “A Night to Believe;” and a free open-air performance of The Beach Boys in Kirby Park.

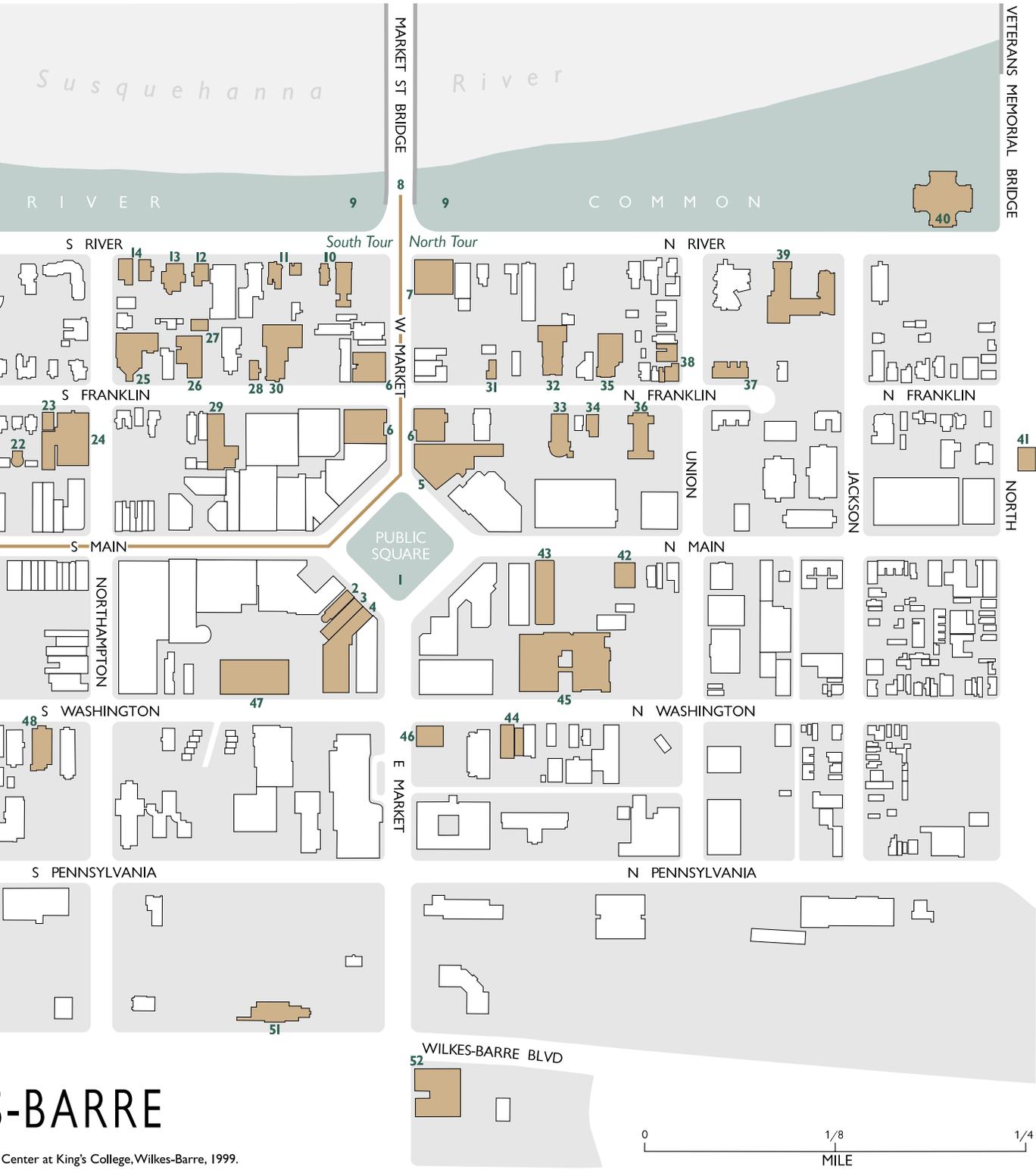
Events were coordinated by volunteer committee members from throughout the area and are overseen by Mayor Thomas M. Leighton and his staff. *CELEBRATE WILKES-BARRE*, a not-for-profit organization, was established to coordinate the bicentennial events and extend the spirit of the bicentennial celebration into the future.





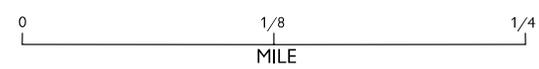
# DOWNTOWN WILKES

Second Edition Map by NaZa Designs, Philadelphia, 2007. First Edition Map by The MAP



# WILKES-BARRE

Center at King's College, Wilkes-Barre, 1999.



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