BUILDING-STRUCTURE INVENTORY FORM

DIVISION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION
NEW YORK STATE PARKS AND RECREATION
ALBANY, NEW YORK (518) 474-0479

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY
UNIQUE SITE NO. 03347.000013
QUAD
SERIES
NEG. NO.

L

YOUR NAME: CARL BEVILACQUA DATE: 7/14/83
YOUR ADDRESS: 12 MAIN ST SARANAC LAKE N.Y. TELEPHONE: 891-2233
ORGANIZATION (if any): Historic Saranac Lake

IDENTIFICATION

1. BUILDING NAME(S): POST OFFICE PHARMACY
2. COUNTY: FRANKLIN TOWN/CITY: HARRISTOWN VILLAGE: SARANAC LAKE
3. STREET LOCATION: 12 MAIN ST now 61 main ST
4. OWNERSHIP: a. public ☐ b. private ☒
5. PRESENT OWNER: CARL BEVILACQUA ADDRESS:
6. USE: Original: LIBRARY Present: PHARMACY
7. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Exterior visible from public road: Yes ☒ No ☐
   Interior accessible: Explain

DESCRIPTION

8. BUILDING MATERIAL: a. clapboard ☒ b. stone ☐ c. brick ☐ d. board and batten ☐
   e. cobblestone ☐ f. shingles ☐ g. stucco ☐ other:
9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM: (if known)
   a. wood frame with interlocking joints ☒
   b. wood frame with light members ☐
   c. masonry load bearing walls ☐
   d. metal (explain)
   e. other
10. CONDITION: a. excellent ☐ b. good ☐ c. fair ☒ d. deteriorated ☐
11. INTEGRITY: a. original site ☒ b. moved ☐ if so,when?
    c. list major alterations and dates (if known):

FALSE FRONT INSTALLED 1920's.

1936: Storefront remodeled from Gibney's to Post Office Pharmacy

12. PHOTO:



13. MAP:



14. THREATS TO BUILDING: a. none known ☒ b. zoning ☐ c. roads ☐
d. developers ☐ e. deterioration ☐
f. other: _____

15. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS AND PROPERTY:
a. barn ☐ b. carriage house ☐ c. garage ☐
d. privy ☐ e. shed ☐ f. greenhouse ☐
g. shop ☐ h. gardens ☐
i. landscape features: _____
j. other: _____

16. SURROUNDINGS OF THE BUILDING (check more than one if necessary):
a. open land ☐ b. woodland ☐
c. scattered buildings ☐
d. densely built-up ☒ e. commercial ☒
f. industrial ☐ g. residential ☐
h. other: _____

17. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS:
(Indicate if building or structure is in an historic district)

In the Berkeley Square Historic District.

18. OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES OF BUILDING AND SITE (including interior features if known):

SUPPORTS FOR FLOOR OF MAIN STRUCTURE MADE OF HAND HEW TIMBERS OF WHICH ORIGINAL BARK STILL ON BEAMS IN CELLER

SIGNIFICANCE

19. DATE OF INITIAL CONSTRUCTION: ? 1800 Prior to 1879 (photo).

ARCHITECT: ?

BUILDER: Milo B. Miller, owner.

20. HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE:

IS ONE OF THE ORIGINAL BLD'S ON THIS STREET

SEE ATTACHED.

21. SOURCES: Franklin County Clerk's records, Malone, N.Y.

22. THEME: Pioneer Health Resort

ORIGINAL BLDG POST OFFICE PHARMACY 52 MAIN ST
SARANAC LAKE NY

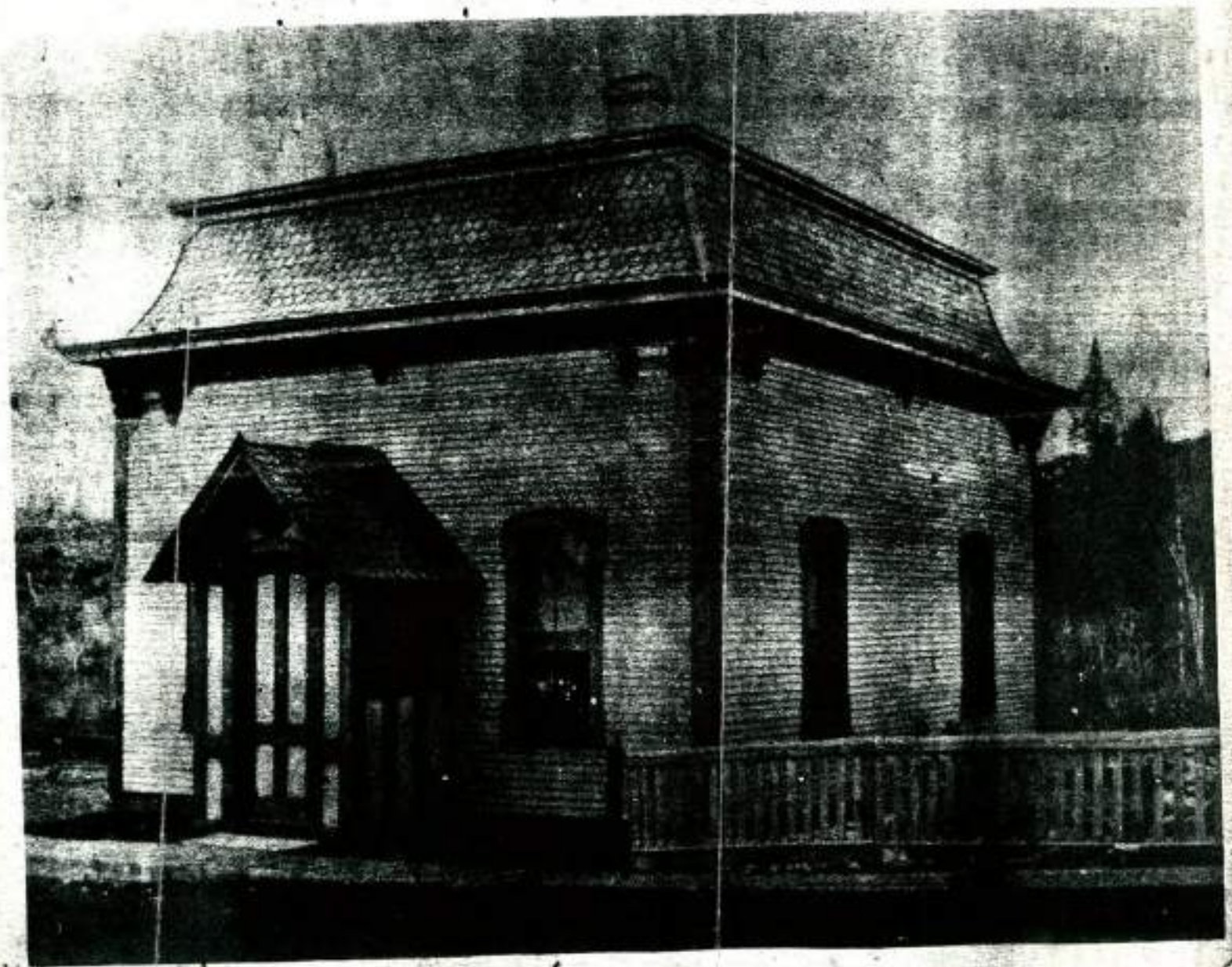




PHOTO TAKEN
APRIL 1936



PHOTO TAKEN

JUNE 1936

THE SECOND EMPIRE GROUP : POST OFFICE PHARMACY

The last of the Second Empire group, in terms of arrangement along the street, is 52 Main Street -- the Post Office Pharmacy. This building was built sometime prior to 1879, as it appears in a photograph of that date. That would make it the second of Milo Miller's commercial developments on his Main Street property.

Certain old deeds for adjoining properties refer to it as the Milo B. Miller Meat Market but others, of comparable age, refer to it as Tobin's Market. A c. 1910 photo shows a rather proud looking sign on the building which reads: "Adirondack Beef Company, Meats, Fish, Fruits & Vegetables". A smaller sign in one of the windows is literally a sign of the times. It reads, "Fresh Oysters". There hasn't been a store selling fresh oysters -- or fresh seafood of any kind -- in Saranac Lake for over a quarter-century.

As to whether Miller actually ran a market at 52 Main St. and as to who Tobin was, there is as yet no answer. However, as to the various names noted above, it seems plausible that they could all refer to the same enterprise: i.e., Tobin operated the Adirondack Beef Company market in a building owned by Miller.

Beginning probably around 1917, 52 Main Street was the site of Gibney's Market. This was one of those places that has become a local legend.

The market was owned by William H. and Nellie L. Gibney; and by all accounts, Nellie was the "brains" behind the operation. She had been a teacher at the High School, but, more importantly, she was a LaTour. The LaTours were a local family of shrewd and energetic individuals. They had considerable political pull (Nellie's brother, James, was an Assemblyman) and were well connected socially.

The Gibneys loved a high lifestyle and they catered to people of like mind to whom money was no object. Their store was exclusively a meat market. In the center of the floor was a large, mosaic tile image of a pig. They sold the very best of beef and pork, etc.; but their specialty was wild meats. All who remember Gibney's remember the pheasant and squab and wild fowl that hung our front along with the venison. They also remember the lines of Cadillacs that used to park and double park near the store and the parades of be-furred and be-jewelled patrons going in and out the door.

Especially during the 1920's, there was a tremendous flush of wealth in Saranac Lake due in part to the number of moneyed patients curing in the village and also due to intense activity at the "camps" of the very rich around the Saranac and St. Regis Lakes. It is almost satire that one of the most ostentatious displays of this wealth could be seen consistently at a butcher shop.

In Dec., 1921, the Gibneys bought, from the Miller Estate, the building in which their business had begun to flourish. Because of the LaTours' political influence, the Gibneys were able to make their building more prominent in a unique way. They put a new front on 52 Main Street which was actually an extension of the structure forward. It brought their storefront 8 feet closer to the street line than that of their neighbors to the north in the Donaldson Block. The ploy didn't remain unique for long. Sagendorf quickly followed suit. When the Tousley (1924) and Gray (1925) buildings were erected, they were built to the new alignment of the Second Empire fronts. It is not known when the move forward occurred at the Miller Store building; but, today, all the structures north of 34 and south of 56 Main Street are considerably closer to the curb than others on the west side of the street.

Will Gibney loved horses -- particularly racehorses. In fact, he owned a couple; but, like Will himself, they were perhaps a bit too relaxed. While Nellie was running the store and making the profits (and making frequent trips in her own Cadillac to party at the Meridian, a speakeasy on the Canadian border), Will was in Saratoga running his horse and losing the profits. When the effects of this pattern combined with those of the Great Depression, the outcome was inevitable. Gibney's Market, Inc. went bankrupt and the Miller Estate foreclosed on the property, taking the building and immediately reselling it to Arthur O. Buck and William T. Lins in April, 1936, for $14,533.

Mr. Buck turned the meat market into a pharmacy -- the Post Office Pharmacy, which he moved from its original location at 67 Main Street, next to the old Fowler Post Office Block (which is now gone). At that time, there were nine pharmacies in Saranac Lake. Today there are three; but of the earlier nine, only the Post Office Pharmacy survives.

Over the years, the Post Office Pharmacy building has undergone so many changes that little of its original exterior appearance remains. One tantalizing tidbit is a curvaceous, dual bracket with pendant supporting part of a small cornice near the front of the building's north wall.

by Phil Gallos

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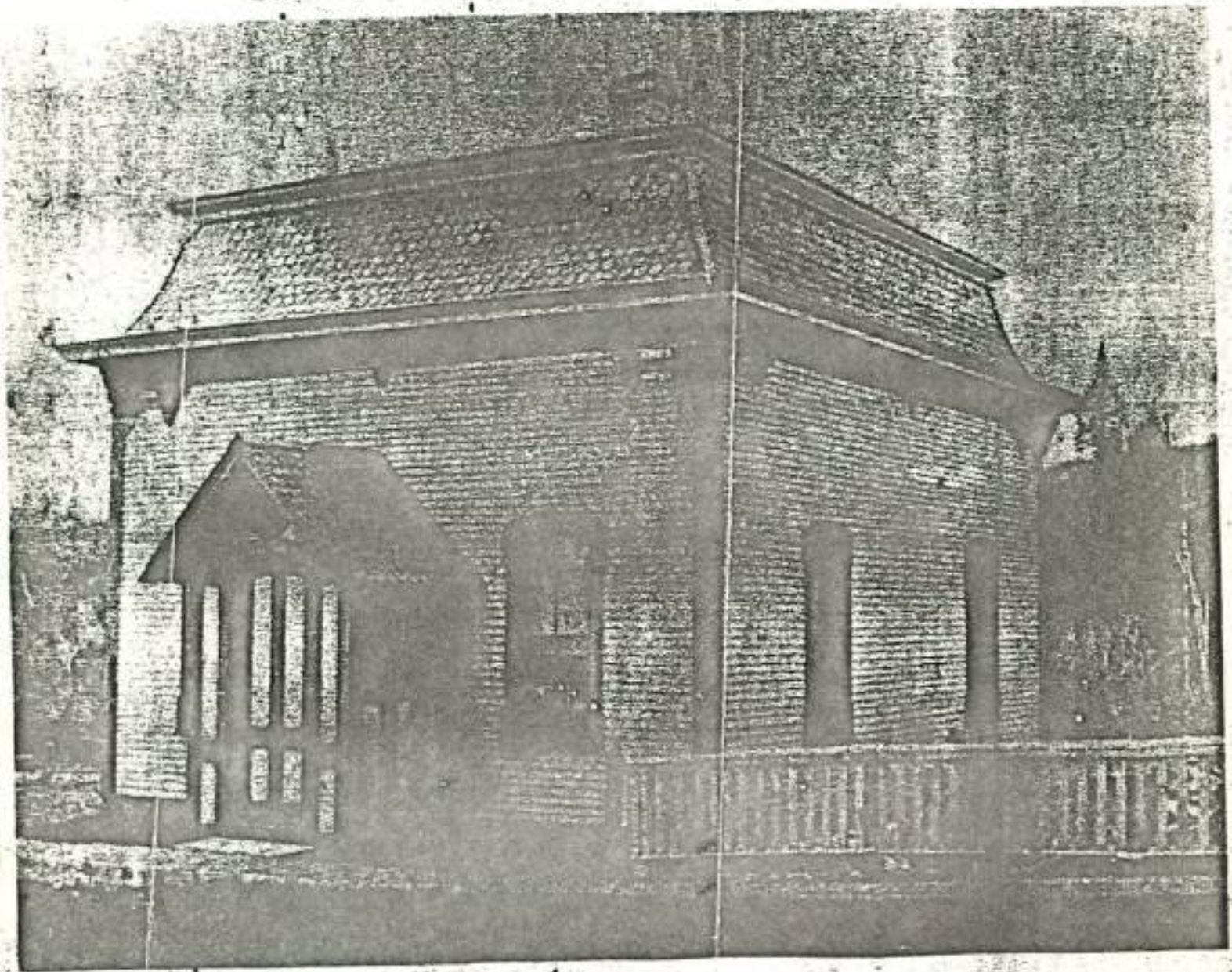
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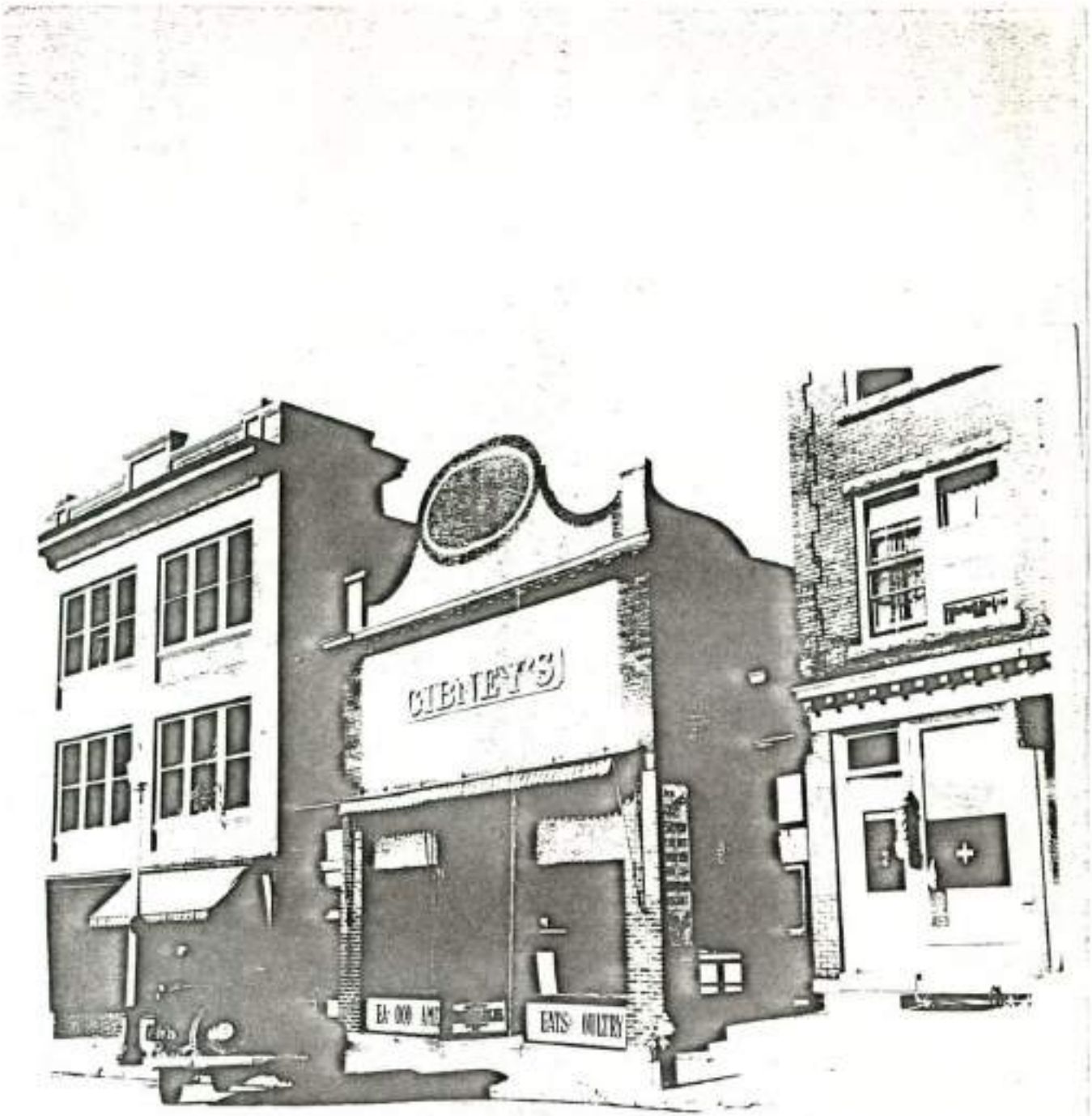


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