

A small grouping of structures along Water Street are what remains of Elizabethtown's former commercial district. Over the years a variety of enterprises have been housed in these buildings, ranging from grocery stores, to trade shops, to beauty parlors. Though most of the construction dates to the mid-20th century, a couple of older buildings remain. Both of the buildings in the photo were built in the 1940s by Albert and William Denton, with commercial space downstairs and four apartments on the second floor of each. They lack any significant architectural detailing, but represent the earlier demand for business and residential space. The center of the business district has since shifted to Route 9 leaving behind vacant storefronts.



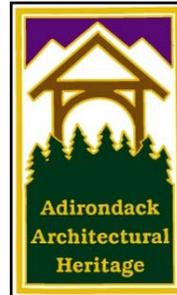
The Hand-Hale Historic District is located on both sides of River Street and features the stately homes and office of two prominent families. The white frame Hale House on the north side dates from 1818 and was the residence of Judge Robert S. Hale. On the south side of the river, Judge Augustus C. Hand built the brick Greek Revival structure, in 1849. The house features a partial return on the cornice line, a symmetrical, five bay façade, and a partial height entry porch with Ionic columns. Judge Hand was the grandfather of Learned and Augustus N. Hand, both justices in the US Circuit Court of Appeals. Many young students "read Law" in the small offices and went on to prominent careers.



Architecture of the Champlain Valley



Elizabethtown



Adirondack Architectural Heritage (AARCH) is the regional, nonprofit historic preservation organization for the Adirondack Park. This tour is one of over fifty events AARCH is offering in our 2009 program schedule. Further information is available by contacting AARCH at 518-834-9328 or by visiting our website at www.aarch.org.

AARCH would like to thank the Adirondack History Center Museum and Maggie Bartley for helping to prepare and lead this tour.

*For more information about Elizabethtown or Essex County history visit the museum's website: www.adkhistorycenter.org
Or call: 518-873-6466*

Be sure to see Maggie's slide presentation on historic photos of Elizabethtown on July 19 at the museum.

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Elizabethtown, first known as Pleasant Valley, is located on the Boquet River and the Branch (or Little Boquet) and is bordered to the west by Hurricane Mountain. Created in 1798, it was named by William Gilliland, first settler of Willsboro, for his wife and daughter who shared the name Elizabeth. The first settlers were veterans of the Revolutionary War, and crossed Lake Champlain from Vermont in search of less expensive farmland. For the first few decades the population remained low and the settlers isolated, relying on farming, lumbering and iron mining to bring in money.

Natural resources provided for a thriving community as mills and forges were established along the Boquet to process iron ore and timber. Naturally, school, stores and businesses grew as in other towns along the Champlain Valley. What separated Elizabethtown was its distinction as the county seat which led to an influx of educated men settling in the area to practice law. They built impressive homes such as those found in the Hand/Hale National Historic Register District.

Following the Civil War, Elizabethtown's industry turned towards tourism. Spending months in the mountains and breathing fresh air was considered beneficial to one's health and by the mid 19th century railroads and steamboats began bringing tourists from urban areas, especially in the summer. Local farmers supplied food and services to the guests and the tradition of guiding grew in popularity as guests sought to explore the wilderness through hunting and fishing.

Today Elizabethtown continues to be a thriving community as home to the county courthouse, the Essex County Historical Society, a number of businesses and a variety of architectural examples.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR...

Opened in 1915, the former Elizabethtown Central School is a great example of the design and style of early 20th century schools built to replace several smaller district institutions. The Neoclassical elements also seen in the county court complex are visible here in the pilasters flanking the entryway and the pediment over the central bay. The schools often boasted state of the art facilities such as laboratories, gymnasiums and nurses stations. It is now home to the Essex County Historical Society and Adirondack History Center Museum.



ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS, MATERIALS, STYLES, FUNCTIONS, ALTERATIONS

During its heyday as a resort destination Elizabethtown boasted four large hotels and several inns such as the Deer's Head Inn were built to accommodate summer visitors. The Deer's Head that we see today was built in 1808 and was known as "The Annex" as there was a larger hotel that comprised the majority of the Inn. The Annex was moved to its current location sometime after 1830.



The Essex county seat was located in the town of Essex until 1807 when it was then moved to Elizabethtown which, at the time, was located on the only major north/south route, Route 9, then known as the Platt Rodgers Road. On October 6, 1809, Simon Frisbee sold the county a one-acre parcel of land in the town of Elizabethtown "for the use of a courthouse and jail" at a price of \$150. The first courthouse was small and built of wood, but it burned soon after its construction, and was rebuilt again. In 1823, the second courthouse burned, and this time, in 1824 it was rebuilt with brick. The building was a one-story structure but in 1843, the second story was added and the courtroom was changed into one large room, with a balcony over the entrance. The county court complex in use today has expanded around this 1843 building and exhibits the Neoclassical style popular in the early 20th century, particularly in civic buildings.



Bay

A principal compartment or division in the architectural arrangement of a building, marked either by buttresses or pilasters in the wall, by the disposition of main arches and pillars, or by any repeated spatial units.

Example: The Baptist Church (below) has three bays.



Hubbard Hall was built in 1839 as the home of the Honorable Orlando Kellogg. In 1925 it was deeded by then owner, Mrs.

Eustace Hubbard to the Elizabethtown Community House, who opened the building as a hospital. It operated as such until 1966 when the current hospital was opened. North Country Community College then used it for several years to hold classes, after which county offices occupied it. In the past 20 years Hubbard Hall has been renovated and is currently in private ownership. The original 1839 home was most likely smaller and did not include the ornate detailing now present. Much of that would have been a mid to late 19th century alteration in keeping with the Queen Anne style popular at the time. It is the only building in Elizabethtown individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Built in 1837 as the Baptist Church, this building is currently in use as the Town Hall. Though the massing has not changed, the façade has, dramatically. Originally it was a simple Greek Revival design featuring divided transom lights and flat entablature over the entries, which were located in the two outer bays. Three rectangular windows occupied the three bays on the second story. The building's appearance today seems to have been remodeled using Colonial Revival elements such as pilasters and arched door and window openings, which is repeated in the fanlight over the center bay.



This early 19th century Federal style brick residence was built by General Ransom Noble. The Noble family was prominent

along the Champlain Valley, particularly in Essex where Ransom's son, Harmon, built in impressive home and business. This 5 bay house offers many traditional Federal details such as a symmetrical facade, Palladian window and elliptical fanlight. The partial height entry porch with columns and the partial return on the cornice indicate a Greek Revival influence.