

14. THE LITTLE JOE TOWER

(1912), CORNING INCORPORATED CAMPUS

Look north, towards the Chemung River, to see this striking landmark. This two-hundred-foot tower is the centerpiece of historic Corning and once served a very practical manufacturing purpose. The company, then known as Corning Glass Works, manufactured various household and scientific products, including thermometer tubing until 1973. The tubes were produced by using the "vertical draw" process. Skilled technicians and glassworkers formed molten glass batches, and then stretched them to the top of the Little Joe Tower using a cable system. This formed a long, continuous tube of hot glass. After cooling, the tubes were cut to desired lengths for thermometers. Local legend traces the name of the tower back to a prominent glassworker who spent his days devoted to making glass thermometer tubing in the tower.

15. MARKET STREET APOTHECARY

(1903), 72 W. MARKET STREET

Architectural Style: Gallery Arcade

Behold, Corning's Gaffer District's first parking garage. This building originally housed a livery stable for owners to board their horses during overnight stays in Corning. Many travelers also went to the stable for a horse while they were in town. Livery stables were one of the most important buildings in a growing town in the late 1800's.

16. THE HAWKES BUILDING

(1882), 73-79 W. MARKET STREET

Architectural Style: Eastlake with Italianate Modifications

Some of the world's finest cut crystal was created right here in the Hawkes building. As T.G. Hawkes became more successful, the building was updated to include glazed terra cotta adornments. Although the company went out of business in 1976, the original sign painted on the building has been preserved as a lasting tribute to the company and to this important era in Corning's history. The building is now home to Vitrix Hot Glass Studio, which invites you to step inside and watch their master glassblowers at work.

17. THE CLUB HOUSE

(1878), 51-59 W. MARKET STREET

Architectural Style: Utilitarian

This three-story structure was originally built as a flour mill. In 1926 Corning Glass Works purchased the building and renovated it as an employee recreation facility, hence the moniker Club House. The renovation included an addition on the west end to accommodate a bowling alley, excavation of the basement for a swimming pool and the raising of the roof fifteen feet to allow for a basketball court!

18. THE ROCKWELL CENTER

(1881), 23-33 W. MARKET STREET

Architectural Style: Eastlake

These two buildings served the downtown as a major department store till 1991. Long before computers and modern cash registers, this building housed a unique pneumatic tube system that whisked customer receipts from one floor to another. Rockwell's Department Store, owned by Bob Rockwell, was also home to his collection of art that is now housed in The Rockwell Museum, located at 111 Cedar Street (a half block east of here). Take a moment following the tour to enjoy this spectacular display of Western and Native American art.

19. THE BARON STEUBEN PLACE

(1929), 1 W. MARKET STREET

Architectural Style: Renaissance Revival

Named in honor of the eighteenth-century German military leader, the Baron Steuben Hotel was built on the site of the old Dickinson Hotel in 1829. It was said to have offered the "latest and greatest", as well as serving as the center of all cultural and social events for the City of Corning. The Baron Steuben served a bustling clientele, taking advantage of its location between the Erie Railroad (now Denison Parkway) and the Tioga Railroad (now Tioga Avenue). Renamed, Baron Steuben Place, the building now houses many businesses and the Information Center of Corning.



What's a Gaffer?

That's a question we get a lot here in the Crystal City. A gaffer is a master glassblower, and our name is a tribute to Corning's rich glass heritage. But, while this explains the name, it is our buildings that tell the story.

The town was originally developed as the hub of the region's huge lumbering industry. The Chemung River provided the necessary transportation and in 1851 the rapidly growing community was incorporated as the City of Corning.

Corning's Historic Market Street, a model for downtowns everywhere, was the lumber industry's central thoroughfare, and enjoyed as much traffic then

as it does today. And you know, it hasn't changed in appearance much either.

After 1855, brick and stone replaced the predominately wooden structures that lined Market Street. Less susceptible to fire, it was Corning Brick Works that met the challenge to produce the bricks necessary to preserve the buildings that you enjoy today. The Victorian love for ornamentation prompted an additional terra cotta to the product line. This natural brick-like material could be molded into any decorative pattern or shape, and thus architectural integrity met beauty. Many unique examples of such splendor are still enjoyed today, by citizens and tourists alike.

While the area's foundation was developed with the lumber, and grew with brick, it's crystal that allowed the city to soar.

The growth of the railroad and the city's connection with the Erie Canal attracted the Brooklyn Flint Glass Company to move here from New York City in 1868. With that move, the company took on the name of the town it now called home and became Corning Glass Works, which today is

Please visit
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or dial (607)376-5090
to start the tour!

known around the world as Corning Incorporated.

1. THE CLOCK TOWER

(1883), CENTERWAY SQUARE

Fifty-feet high with a bell that weighs 1400 pounds, the clock tower was a favorite watering stop for local horses, (notice the water spout at the base of the tower). Built of Antrim stone found locally, the clock tower in Centerway Square is a memorial to Erastus Corning, for whom the City of Corning is named. It has become one of Corning's most famous landmarks and a favorite spot for visitor photos, celebrations and festivals of various kinds. take place in Centerway Square throughout the year. Take a few moments to look beneath your feet at the many bricks in honor and memory of local residents and businesses.

2. SOUND COMMUNICATIONS - H.G. WILLIAMS BLOCK

(1887), 25 E. MARKET STREET

Architectural Style: Eastlake

Be careful! Animals are watching over this Market Street building. Can you locate the lions' heads? Also perched proudly atop the cornice of this building is Market Street's famous owl. It is made of terra cotta, as are all the decorative elements on the building. In the early part of the 1900s, it was common practice for a building to proudly display its name, the year it was built and the name of the architect. You will notice this building's information is presented above the entrance.

3. 31 E. MARKET STREET

(1892)

Architectural Style: Ruskinian Venetian

Look up! Do you see the terra cotta griffin's head sculpture on this building façade? The griffin is a symbol of good luck for merchants. The storefront is made of Carrara Glass, also known as Vitrolite, a glass material that was commonly used in Art Deco styles in the 1920s. Designers quickly found pigmented structural glass to be an increasingly popular modernizing material for older and "out-of-date" buildings. As a result, storefronts became a favorite subject for "modernization" through Roosevelt's New Deal programs.

4. BEDCAT STUDIOS AT THE GLASS MENAGERIE

(1903), 37 E. MARKET STREET

Architectural Style: Beaux Arts Renaissance

Walk inside this store in the afternoon as sunlight streams through the transom window and you will see that it is magically filled with rainbows. The unique leaded-glass transom was designed to be seen both from the inside and out, and the storefront's southern exposure allows the sunlight to shine through the prism glass. The sign is comprised of 560 pieces of glass and took seven weeks to complete. The façade of the building is created using a glazed terra cotta which was added in the 1920s. Near the top of the building you will notice the egg-and-dart molding. The Greeks designed the egg-and-dart molding thousands of years ago. The egg symbolizes birth and the dart symbolizes death.

5. TOMMY HILFIGER

(1885), 45 E. MARKET STREET

This beautiful Victorian building was designed by and originally housed the offices of H.C. Tuthill, our most famous architect and master builder. You will notice Mr. Tuthill's name on many building cornerstones throughout Corning's Gaffer District. Tuthill was born in East Otto, New York; he moved to Corning in the 1850s and began work for the Drake and Townley Sash and Blind Company before becoming a prominent architect.

6. MARKET STREET COFFEE & TEA / THE BOSTON STORE

(1890), 61 E. MARKET STREET

Architectural Style: Eastlake

Originally built for the Boston Store, this building features the only second-story bay windows still in existence in a historic district for over a hundred mile radius. The basket weave design on the building is made of terra cotta, an Italian term that means cooked earth. Terra-cotta was widely produced here in Corning after 1889 when the Corning Brick Works opened.

7. THREE BIRDS RESTAURANT / BECRAFT GARAGE

(1929), 73-75 E. MARKET STREET

Architectural Style: Modernistic

At first glance you might think this is a modern building but it was actually built in 1929 for the Becraft Garage. The unusually large windows were used to display the new automobiles that were available for sale at the dealership. A ramp was available to take cars to the second floor and a large elevator would take vehicles to the second and third floors. Imagine the first Model A Fords driving through this building!

8. GLASWERK OPTICAL / THE HENKEL BLOCK

(1893), 72 E. MARKET STREET

Architectural Style: Romanesque

You are looking at the Southern Tier's late 19th century skyscraper! This building was the only five-story building in New York State's western region at the time it was built. One of the ultra-modern features it offered was a hydraulic elevator that was hooked to and powered by a city water main. The second through fifth floors are now luxury apartments.

9. THE ROCKWELL MUSEUM / OLD CITY HALL

(1893), 111 CEDAR STREET

Architectural Style: Historic Revival

The buffalo bursting out of this building is named Artemus (for "art is a must"), and is the museum's mascot. Artemus was named by a local second grader in a museum-sponsored contest. Built for \$29,000, this building served as the city hall, fire station and jail for the City of Corning. Horses were kept in the back of the building to be brought inside and harnessed to fire wagons. Corning Glass Works purchased the building for one dollar in 1980 to save it from demolition. Currently the property is home to the world-famous Rockwell Museum. Step inside and enjoy art about the American experience.

10. BROWN'S CIGAR STORE / EAGLE STEWARD LIMITED

(LATE 1870's), 4 W. MARKET STREET

Architectural Style: Victorian Baroque

This is the original storefront of Brown's Cigar Store. The decorative cornice is pressed metal with cast iron columns. At the base of the lower right column you will notice the foundry name, Turner and Pond, from Elmira, New York. This façade, tiled entryway and interior floor are one of a very few original storefronts remaining on Market Street.

11. JIM'S TEXAS HOTS / BACALLES GLASS

(1893), 8 – 10 ½ W. MARKET STREET

Architectural Style: Victorian Corbelled

In the late 1800s a popular swindle was sweeping the nation. Scheming bank robbers would rent a building next to a bank, establish a credible business and during the evening hours they would tunnel into the bank's vault. Eventually they would empty the vault and the new business would be gone before dawn. During this time, two Corning gentlemen wanted to establish a bank but, with the current scam in mind, they bought two building lots to leave space between neighboring businesses and the bank vault, to be located in what is now Bacalles Glass Shop. However, after the construction was completed the gentlemen didn't have enough money left to start the bank! So, they sold the buildings and the lots; three separate shops were created by adding facades, a roof, and back walls.

12. SPRAGUE INSURANCE

(1895), 34 W. MARKET STREET

Architectural Style: Romanesque

The Sprague Insurance Building is a handsome, renovated three-story structure built in 1895. Previously known as the May-Callahan Block, it replaced the two wood frame structures which burned on the site in previous years. This Romanesque design has terra cotta and sandstone trim and a pressed metal cornice with leaf brackets. The original tenants for this building were a confectioner, a cigar jobber, a boot and shoemaker and a dance hall. An elevator in the rear of the building made the third floor accessible for a number of uses.

The description was taken from a handwritten history of the Sprague Insurance Building compiled by our Historic Walking Tour honoree, Mary Ann Sprague.

13. IRON FLAMINGO BARREL HOUSE

(1875), 52 – 56 W. MARKET STREET

Architectural Style: Victorian Italianate

This three-story building speaks a language all its own. The gray stone columns contain interesting examples of carvings of symbols that were very common in the Victorian era. Often referred to as the "flower language," they include an anchor symbolizing hope, a shield for government, a flag for patriotism, a sheaf of wheat for fertility, a beehive for industry, an arm and hammer for labor, a bowl of fruit for hospitality and grapes for plenty. These carvings were not discovered until the building was sandblasted in 1974.