

A very special Linden Summer Happening tribute to Union Block.

(This page will remain on the Linden Summer Happening official web site so that you may remember as well as see the all the changes to the historic site. We will post new photos and info throughout the process.)

Fire destroys a piece of Linden's downtown history and many memories.
The 137-year-old building will be sadly missed by all.



Union Block - Linden History
By: Anna Troppens, Staff Reporter
05/28/2007



Linden - When the Union Block in downtown Linden burned last Friday night, it took a page from the city's history book with it.

Longtime Linden resident Claude Cranston said the building was erected in 1870 and 1871. It was made with bricks from the Hyatt brick yard, which was located on the corner of today's Hyatt Lane and West Broad Street.

The two men most responsible for the Union Block were A. B. Hyatt and James Moshier, who also were instrumental in the construction of Linden's eight-room original high school. The Union Block and the school were built at the same time, Cranston said.

In 1871, a group of men who were involved in the building applied for Linden to become a village. There were eight stores in the Union Block, which included Hyatt and Moshier's grocery store. A man named Buck had a meat market, and the Cook brothers opened a clothing store. Dr. Zenas Fairbanks had a drug store.



Drug stores

During the late 1930s and early 1940s, Linden had two drug stores located on Broad Street, according to information from the Linden Historic District Commission. Eugene Farner was a pharmacist and owned Farner's Drug Store, which had a pharmacy and a soda fountain. The other store, formerly owned by Emil Brundage, was Kimble's Cut Rate. It sold patent medicine, now called "over-the-counter drugs," and more. There also was a long soda bar with jukeboxes.

High school students hung out, enjoying the two pinball machines and a pay telephone booth. Small children examined the selection of penny candy and 5-cent ice cream cones.



Grocery store

William and Crystal Felch first came to Linden in 1913, where Bill started a bakery and restaurant at 117 E. Broad St., in the Union Block, according to the Linden Historic District Commission. Felch also owned the next building at 121 E. Broad St. He operated there until 1924 or 1925. Later, Felch went to work for the A & P Company, eventually moving to Holly. In 1939, they returned to Linden and opened W.P. Felch & Sons Bakery and Grocery.

At the time there were four grocery stores in downtown Linden and one meat market. The grocery stores were A. B. Hyatt & Son on North Bridge Street in the first level of the Masonic Temple, Groom's Grocery Store at 103 E. Broad St., the Byerly Store, which was part of a

chain, at 109 E. Broad St. and W. P. Felch & Sons at 121 E. Broad St. Doug Donovan, who owned the meat market, was where Felch's bakery and restaurant were in 1913-1924.

During World War II, Felch's two sons, Gordon and Bryce, were in the army. Gordon was sent to the European Theater where he was killed in March of 1945. Bryce, who was not sent overseas, married and returned to work for his father. He bought the store from his parents in 1953.

In 1962, Bryce and Marjory built Felch's of Linden bakery and grocery in another part of town, at 604 W. Broad St. In December of 1981, Bryce sold the store to Larry and Paula Quinlan. It is now Alpine Food Center.

More history

As the years went by, the Union Block was home to many other businesses. These included a bakery and an Italian restaurant. At one time, there were dentists' offices on the second floor. While Cranston was growing up, Dr. Taylor was the dentist there. Taylor eventually sold out to another dentist. There also was once a card room upstairs, where people played poker in the early 1900s. "It was a place people went to socialize," Cranston said. The upstairs area of the Union Block was later made into apartments.

©Tri-County Times 2007



To view additional
photos of the UNION
Block.

(Visitors please keep checking back to see the progress of
rebuilding downtown Linden.)

Please Click here.

Coming Soon