



THE GREATEST ARCHITECTURAL GEM within Sullivan County, is probably Joyner's Store, shown above, on route 17-B, in the village of Bethel.

When this country was founded, the need for a model of a republic was fulfilled by the Roman Republic and the Greek city-states. Roman and Greek names spread throughout the young democracy from Rome, N.Y., to Athens, Ga., to Cincinnati. The style of American architecture called Greek Revival, inspired by Thomas Jefferson's home, Monticello, and his copies of classical temples for the capital at Richmond and for the University of Virginia, spread across the land. Banks, churches, schools, private dwellings, even the Capitol of Washington, developed columns and pediments.

The vogue was at its height about 1825 and flourished for many years. One of the finest examples of this style, adapted to a commercial building, is the store seen above. Take away a few modern intrusions such as the neon beer signs and the gas pumps, and it could blend into a 19-century landscape. Whoever was the architect, with his sense of proportion and his love of details [such as the moldings], evidently built two other stores in the county, Heinle's in Cocheton Center, recently destroyed by fire, and one in Callicoon Center 'modernized' out of all resemblance.

This store has been in many hands — the original owner, Roosa, who had it built about 1825, Reuben Towner who took over c. 1840, George Acklum, DuBois, Clifford VanWert in 1930, Richard and Clara Joyner in 1950, Bruce and Nadine Warter in 1974 — all have left the building basically unaltered. The only major change in recent years was the Joyners' decision to change the paint from white to barn red several years ago when the road was relocated and the store was set further back, so that visibility would be increased.

Inside, the store is a museum of Americana, with horsecollars and kerosene lanterns hanging over the modern refrigerated showcase and modern displays on the worn plank counters. In the rear Clara Joyner holds forth in her tiny cubicle as postmistress.

This is a building to which the county should give thought for preservation and exploitation as a tourist attraction.