



## Central House Hotel and Railroad Depot

In the early days of the oil excitement, housing was at a premium. Travelers were advised to "carry no baggage except a small traveling bag or haversack, suspended by a strap over the shoulder" and told that "a blanket will be found very convenient in case no bed can be obtained." It was not long, however before fine accommodations were available, and the Central House Hotel ranked among the best. President Grant even attended a reception there during his visit to the oil regions in 1871.

A fire burned the hotel in 1878, one of the great fires that hit Petroleum Centre in its waning days. An eyewitness described the start of the blaze: "I was sitting under a small maple tree that stood on the corner of the Central Hotel lot. A train came along on its way to Titusville. A spark from the engine fell onto the roof of the passenger station. Soon the crackling fire ate its way to adjoining buildings. About the time the Central Hotel was in full blaze, the wind changed to the north. . . Burning sparks began falling among all the buildings."