

Fifth Avenue Hotel  
(George Blimmel Building)  
Cambria City Neighborhood  
502-04 Broad Street  
Johnstown  
Cambria County  
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5735

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
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## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

### Fifth Avenue Hotel (George Blimmel Building)

HABS No. PA-5735

Location: 502-04 Broad Street, Cambria City, Johnstown, Cambria County, Pa.

Description: No. 502-04 Broad Street is a multi-family and retail building facing southeast on a corner lot, with a single-family building to one side. The structure is irregularly-shaped, roughly 42' x 76', wood-framed, covered with asbestos shingles. The mansard roof is covered with asphalt shingles. The building is three stories tall. The foundation is constructed of concrete and cut stone. There are a number of dormers on the third floor.

History: No. 502-04 Broad Street was constructed between 1881 and 1889. Blimmel purchased the lot from Margaret P. McConaughy for \$400 in 1881. This building may have survived the 1889 Johnstown flood. In both pre-flood and post-flood city directories for 1889, the building is noted as a saloon, operated by Mary Burkhardt (or Burkhard).

George Blimmel (also spelled "Blemmel") lived in Cambria City as early as 1863. Blimmel was born in Germany, worked as a miner and earned \$30 in 1863. Blimmel was employed by the Cambria Iron Company in an unspecified position and lived at Broad Street and Fourth Avenue, according to an 1876 city directory.

In 1891, the building was known as the "Fifth Avenue Hotel," operated by the Blimmel family. Blimmel's son, John C. Blimmel, a bartender, purchased the structure in 1897 and continued operation of the hotel through at least 1901. Mary Blimmel, a widow, John C. Blimmel, his wife Rose, their five children, and three boarders resided at 504 Broad in 1900. The 1910 census recorded two families boarding in 504 Broad. The structure has been owned since 1922 by the Mikesic family, who continued to operate the Fifth Avenue Hotel through 1949.

With more than three decades of German ownership, and with possible pre-1889 construction, this building represents both the German heritage of Cambria City and the pre-flood neighborhood architecture.

Sources:

Deed and Tax Assessment Records, Cambria County Courthouse, Ebensburg, Pa.

"Cambria County Historic Sites Survey, Johnstown Inventory," Redevelopment Authority of Cambria County, 1981.

Johnstown City Directories, 1869, 1876, 1889, 1901.

Sanborn Map Company, Johnstown, Pennsylvania, (New York, The Sanborn Map Company, 1891, 1949).

United States Census, Cambria County, Pennsylvania, City of Johnstown, Sixteenth Ward, 1900, 1910.

Project Information: This report was part of a larger project to document the city of Johnstown, Pennsylvania. The project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER), Robert Kapsch, chief, at the request of America's Industrial Heritage Project (AIHP). An overview of history of the city (HABS No. PA-5669) and an overview of the neighborhoods of Cambria City and Minersville (HABS No. PA-5672) provide context

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for these buildings as well as a comprehensive list of sources. See also additional HABS reports on buildings in the downtown and other neighborhoods.

This report was prepared by Jeffrey Hickey in August 1988 under the direction of Alison K. Hoagland, HABS historian, and Kim E. Wallace, the supervisory historian of the project. Hickey's and other project historians' work was published as The Character of a Steel Mill City: Four Historic Neighborhoods of Johnstown, Pennsylvania (Washington, D.C.: HABS/HAER, National Park Service, 1989), edited by Kim E. Wallace. Illustrations in the publication include large format photographs taken by HAER photographer Jet Lowe and 35 mm photographs taken by the project historians.