

Joseph Komara House I
Cambria City Neighborhood
403-403 1/2 Chestnut Street
Johnstown
Cambria County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5750

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

JOSEPH KOMARA HOUSE I

HABS No. PA-5750

Location: 403-403 1/2 Chestnut Street, Cambria City, Johnstown, Cambria County, Pa.

Description: Compact and economical two-family house set directly on Chestnut Street. Two stories, four-bay front, asbestos shingles over wood frame, 22' x 36'. Side-gable roof. Now vacant.

History: In April 1864 George Kebler of Cambria Borough bought lot no. 26, which was 50' wide, from David McConaughy for \$250. In 1887 Kebler sold half the lot to Joseph Komara for \$1,000. The 1886 Sanborn map shows a house and shed on this lot, which would in some way account for the high price which Komara paid for the property. It is likely this early house was lost in the flood.

The present house appears on the 1891 Sanborn map. The property also had at this period a summer oven, outdoor water closet, and shed. Joseph Komara worked as a bartender. In the late 1890s he rented out his house on Chestnut Street and moved to a house he bought on Broad Street, no. 117. He rented out the premise next door, no. 119, and ran it as a saloon and boarding house. Komara was a Hungarian, and he rented his house on Chestnut Street to Hungarians. In 1900 he rented no. 403 to a laborer at the steel mill who had a wife and two children. They had five Hungarian boarders who all had jobs at the steel mill.

Joseph Komara died on October 28, 1916, leaving a widow and seven children. In 1936 his wife died and the property was vested in the children and grandchildren. It was described as "lot vested in Joseph Komara having erected thereon two frame dwellings, both of said houses being a double house" (see also 403-403 1/2 Brallier Place, HABS No. PA-5754). The property passed to various members of the Komara family until it was sold in 1972 by Helene Komara McGovern to Armand Cimorelli for \$4,500. In 1986 it was bought by Stephen Pisarchik and Frank Zack for \$5,500.

Sources:

Deed Records (21:757, 60:51, 483:230, 787:231, 777:188, 780:142, 637:326, 793:312, 929:331, 1169:306), Cambria County Courthouse, Ebensburg, Pa.

Johnstown City Directories, 1891, 1893, 1895, 1899.

Sanborn Map Company, Johnstown, Pennsylvania (New York, The Sanborn Map Co., 1886, 1891).

Tax assessment records, Johnstown, Pa., 16th Ward, 1895 to 1903. Tax assessment card, assessment no. 86-001.-302.000, Cambria County Courthouse, Ebensburg, Pa.

United States Census, Cambria County, Pa., City of Johnstown, 16th 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 for these buildings as well as a comprehensive list of sources. See also additional HABS reports on buildings in the downtown and other neighborhoods.

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This report was prepared by Bernadette Goslin in August 1988 under the direction of Alison K. Hoagland, HABS historian, and Kim E. Wallace, the supervisory historian of the project. Goslin'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.