

Benjamin Benshoff House
Minersville Neighborhood
144-46 Iron Street
Johnstown
Cambria County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5779

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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

Benjamin Benschhoff House

HABS No. PA-5779

Location: 144-46 Iron Street, Minersville, Johnstown, Cambria County, Pa.

Description: No. 144-46 Iron Street is a multi-family building facing south, between an empty lot and a vacant retail-residential building. It is an irregularly-shaped building, approximately 48' x 32', wood-framed, covered with clapboard, with a side-gable roof covered with asphalt shingles. The building is three stories tall. A second-story front porch is 31' x 5' and is sheltered by a roof that extends the full length of the building. The windows were altered and new siding was applied in 1972-73.

History: No. 144-46 Iron Street was constructed in ca. 1883, according to tax assessment records. Benjamin Benschhoff conveyed the building to Michael Lynch for \$2,100 on December 29, 1883. Michael Lynch, a "buggy man" who earned \$40 in 1883, died on September 6, 1887, survived by his wife Bridget and children Jeremiah, Mary E. and Catherine S. Lynch.

Between 1883 and 1913, the building served variously as residential housing; as the "City Hotel" (approximately 1895 through at least 1903); and as "tenements" (1913). Bridget Lynch lived in 144 Iron through at least 1900, with her daughter Catherine and son-in-law John S. Harrigan, a "steel blower;" Ellen Laffey, a daughter and a boarder lived in 146 Iron, according to the census. In the 1903 city directory, Harrigan and Laffey are listed as proprietors of the hotel.

Bridget Lynch died between 1900 and 1910. Mary E. Lynch inherited the building. In 1910, John Harrigan and Catherine S. Lynch Harrigan and their six children rented 144 Iron, presumably from Mary E. Lynch. Peter Shustic, a Polish miner, his family of five, and the Urbane family of three rented 146 Iron. The Harrigan and Lynch families may have intermarried several times, as Mary E. Lynch Harrigan transferred ownership to Catherine S. Lynch Harrigan in 1914. The Stavras family acquired the building in 1946.

Sources:

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

Johnstown City Directory, 1903.

Sanborn Map Company, Johnstown, Pennsylvania (New York, The Sanborn Map Company, 1895, 1913).

United States Census, Cambria County Pennsylvania, City of Johnstown, Fourteenth 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.

This report was prepared by Jeffrey Hickey in August 1988 under the direction of Alison K.

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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.