

William Fehse House
Cambria City Neighborhood
521-523 Power Street
Johnstown
Cambria County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5768

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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

William Fehse House

HABS No. PA-5768

Location: 521-23 Power Street, Cambria City, Johnstown, Cambria County, Pa.

Description: No. 521-23 Power Street is a two-family building facing northwest, with multi-family buildings to either side. It is a rectangular building, wood framed and clad in horizontal wood siding on the first floor and asbestos shingles on the second. The front-gable roof is covered with asphalt shingles. The building is two-and-a-half stories tall. Two double-hung-sash windows are between the two entryways; there are four double-hung-sash windows on the second floor, and one in the gable. Three concrete steps lead from the entryway to the street.

History: No. 521-23 Power Street was constructed in 1899, according to tax assessment records. William Fehse (spelled "Fees" in tax assessment records) was a native of Germany and owned a store and residence in Cambria City at 802 Chestnut. He also worked as a laborer in the steel mills.

Fehse apparently rented this property. The 1900 census notes August Fish, a Hungarian coal miner, and his family renting 521 Power (no mention is made of 523 Power). The 1910 census records Edward Rogers, an Irish railroad engineer and his family, renting 521 Power; Martin Alberter, a German coal miner, his family, a servant, and Francis Alberter (no occupation) and his family resided in 523 Power.

William Fehse died between 1900 and 1910. The Fehse family retained ownership of the property until 1953, when it was conveyed to the present owner, the Rozmus family.

As at 322-24 Second Avenue (see Victor Faith Building, HABS No. PA-5749) and 134 Iron Street (see Harrigan-Sturver Building, HABS No. PA-5782), this building represents the tendency of ethnic groups to cluster together. Fehse, a member of both the laboring class and the merchant class, represents upward mobility in Cambria City.

Sources:

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

Johnstown City Directories, 1895, 1901.

Sanborn Map Company, Johnstown, Pennsylvania, (New York, The Sanborn Map Company, 1895, 1911).

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 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

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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.