

Polish National Alliance Building
Minersville Neighborhood
153 Benshoff Street
Johnstown
Cambria County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5777

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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
Polish National Alliance Building

HABS No. PA-5777

Location: 153 Benshoff Street, Minersville, Johnstown, Cambria County, Pa.

Description: No. 153 Benshoff faces southeast, surrounded by vacant lots and a parking lot. The two-story building is rectangular, 49' x 35', wood-framed, covered with asphalt. The hip roof is covered with asphalt shingles.

History: The Minersville Polish National Alliance, Council #832, was founded at the present location on March 3, 1907. Its original name was the "Free Poland Society." Since 1907 other affiliated groups have also utilized this location and some groups have merged with the Minersville council: the Polish National Alliance Council #22 (organized 1909 and active in 1980); the White Eagle Orchestra (1928-early 1950s); Polish National Alliance Women's Lodge #2125 (organized in 1920, merged with PNA Council #1771, merged with Minersville council in 1975). The present building at 153 Benshoff was constructed between 1913 and 1949.

Sources:

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

Sanborn Map Company, Johnstown, Pennsylvania, (New York, The Sanborn Map Company, 1913, 1949).

"Southwestern Pennsylvania Ethnic Records Survey," Pennsylvania Ethnic Heritage Studies Center, Archives of Industrial Society, University of Pittsburgh, 1980.

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 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.