

St. Mary's Syrian Orthodox Church
(St. George's Serbian Orthodox Church)
300 Chestnut Street
Johnstown
Cambria County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5746

HABS
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11-3070,
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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

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

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Location: 300 Chestnut Street, Cambria City, Johnstown, Cambria County, Pa.

Description: St. George's Church faces northeast and is set near the end of a block, with single and multi-residential buildings on either side. The building is 30' x 63', rectangular, with a three-bay front by five bays deep. It is constructed with brick load-bearing walls. The front facade displays five pointed-arch stained-glass windows, and wood double doors in a pointed-arch opening with a stained-glass fanlight and a front stoop. Each side of the structure displays four pointed-arch stained-glass windows. A square wooden bell tower rises from the front of the roof, which is a front gable with asphalt shingles.

History: This church was constructed for St. Mary's Syrian Orthodox Church in 1911, according to the datestone. The congregation purchased a 50' x 70' foot lot on Chestnut Street in August 1910 from Edward O'Neill for \$3,600. During the Depression, the congregation lost title to the building, probably because of financial difficulties. The Cambria County Sheriff sold the church building and an adjoining residential structure (probably the church rectory) in 1936 for \$25. The St. Mary's congregation purchased the two buildings again in September 1941 for \$1,300. In the early 1970s, a dissident congregation from St. Petka's Serbian Orthodox Church began using the church. They renamed it St. Petka's Serbian Orthodox, affiliated with the Serbian Eastern Diocese for the United States and Canada, Libertyville, Illinois. The St. Petka's congregation purchased the church property and adjoining residence in May 1973. They changed the name to St. George's on May 1, 1977. The congregation has been very small for the last several years.

Sources:

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

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

Kory, William, "The Churches of Johnstown, Pennsylvania, Population Survey," (University of Pittsburgh, Johnstown, Summer, 1972), ms, ?.

"Southwestern Pennsylvania Ethnic Records Survey," Pennsylvania Ethnic Heritage Studies Center, Archives of Industrial Society, Hillman Library, 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.