

Saint Michael's Greek Orthodox Church
High Street
Woodvale
Huntingdon County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5570

HABS
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31. WOVA,
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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
Saint Michael's Greek Orthodox Church

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Location: High Street, Woodvale, Huntingdon County, Pa.

History and Description: In 1917, immigrants from the Galacian and Carpathian Mountain region of eastern Europe organized a Greek Orthodox parish in Woodvale, obtaining a small parcel of land on High Street from the coal company, on which to build a church. The wood-frame structure, with a center-steeple plan, onion-dome, and Greek Orthodox cross atop its spire, was originally elaborately decorated with murals, according to members of the congregation. In the early 1930s, the building burned down, but the congregation rebuilt it immediately. Photographs of the exterior of the original building indicate that efforts were made to reproduce many of the original architectural elements. The new church, however, had one unique feature--a curved rear wall, whereas that of its predecessor had been straight. The congregation also established a large cemetery northwest of town and built a hall across the street from the church, where the congregation held meetings, dances, and other social events (HABS No. 5569). The 1935 church, social hall, and cemetery remain in use today and are integral parts of the community. The church originally rented half of a double house for use as a parsonage, but in recent years, it has undertaken the construction of a new parsonage adjacent to the church.

Project Information and Sources: This report was part of a larger project to document the Rockhill Iron and Coal Company towns of Robertsdale and Woodvale in Huntingdon County, 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). For an overview history of the towns that provides the significance and context for this building as well as a comprehensive list of sources see HABS Nos. PA-5553, PA-5484, and PA-5485. See also additional HABS reports on buildings in each town.

Project historian Lola Bennett completed the research and writing for this project during summer 1989 under the direction of Alison K. Hoagland, senior HABS historian. Bennett's work was published as The Company Towns of the Rockhill Iron and Coal Company: Robertsdale and Woodvale, Pennsylvania (Washington, D.C.: HABS/HAER, National Park Service, 1990). Illustrations in the publication include 35mm photographs taken by Bennett; large-format photographs taken by HAER photographer Jet Lowe; and historic photographs from the collections of Thomas L. Matthews, Kenneth Morgan, Ron Morgan, and the Huntingdon County Historical Society. The publication was compiled and edited by HABS historians Kim E. Wallace and Sara Amy Leach. Contemporary 35mm and historic photographs used in the publication as well as other miscellaneous research materials were transmitted to the AIHP collection at Stapleton Library, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Indiana, Pa.