

123 BRECKENRIDGE STREET REAR (HOUSE)  
Gettysburg  
Adams County  
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5629

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PA  
1-GET,  
14-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
Northeast Region  
U.S. Custom House  
200 Chestnut Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

123 Breckenridge Street Rear (House)

HABS No. PA-5629

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Location: Borough of Gettysburg, Adams County, Pennsylvania

Significance: Located within the federal Gettysburg Battlefield Historic District and adjacent to the boundary of the borough's Historic District, this dwelling is one of four low-cost, vernacular urban structures built by a Jamaican immigrant during Gettysburg's Historic Context Period, Between the Wars: 1919-1940, in a 154 year-old "blue-collar" neighborhood.

Description: This two-story, L-shaped, side-gabled frame structure, that currently fronts to the north, stands about half way between #123 Breckenridge and 123 Rear-Rear on the west side of Warner Alley. Though from appearances the building's main axis runs east-west, the house's main or larger (east) section, actually fronts on the alley, whose first floor, accessed by an exterior door at either (north & south) end, is composed of a single room with that accesses a smaller room in the "L" and the stairway. The main section's second floor also is composed of a single room with a bathroom along its south wall, and the single room in the "L." The exterior siding, added during the late 1950s, is composed of grey asbestos shingles. Windows are two-over-two with double-hung sash. A one-story, side-gabled, frame shed is situated immediately north of the house.

History: On 22 September 1919 for \$300, Philip Hoffman sold to Joseph C. Johns, a 30-by-141.5 foot lot on the north side of Breckenridge Street, bounded on the east and north by Warner and United alleys, respectively. Joseph Charles "Chef" Johns, born in Jamaica in 1879, immigrated to the United States at the age of nine, and later worked as a cook at various eateries including the Hotel Gettysburg. By comparing deed, tax and building permit records, and the Sanborne Fire Insurance Maps, we can identify the construction date of the subject dwelling and accompanying shed as the summer 1925. We speculate that the building possibly was constructed to house Johns' relatives and/or to serve as an income property. Since Johns' death in 1952, the structure has served as a rental property.

Source: A History of the Scattered Sites Rehabilitation Project Area in the Second Block of Breckenridge Street, Borough of Gettysburg, Adams County, Pennsylvania.

Historian: Elwood W. Christ  
Historical Consultant  
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