

Twelfth Street Car Shops, Erecting Shop No. 3  
Ninth Avenue at Twelfth Street  
Altoona  
Blair County  
Pennsylvania

HAER No. PA-231-A

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

TWELFTH STREET CAR SHOPS, ERECTING SHOP NO. 3

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Location: Ninth Avenue at Twelfth Street, Altoona, Blair County, Pennsylvania  
USGS Quad: Altoona, Pennsylvania (1:24000)  
UTM: 17 E.720360 N.4487840

Date of Construction: 1905-07

Builder: Pennsylvania Railroad

Present Owner: Altoona Pipe & Steel Supply Company

Present Use: Manufacturing Railroad Rolling Stock

Significance: Erecting Shop No. 3 was one of the last major facilities to be constructed in the shop complex, utilizing several unique design features pioneered by the Pennsylvania Railroad in the 1870s.

Project Information: This project was undertaken by HAER in conjunction with America's Industrial Heritage Project as part of an architectural survey covering a nine-county region in Southwestern Pennsylvania, Randall Cooley, Director. See HAER No. PA-108, Pennsylvania Railroad, Altoona Works, Altoona, Blair County, Pennsylvania for further project information and documentation.

Compiler: Peter Stott, Historian  
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### History:

By the early 1900s the crowded conditions at the Altoona Machine Shop dictated a substantial reorganization of the complex. Extensive additions were made to the machine shop facilities. In 1904 iron and wheel foundries were transferred to South Altoona, and the following year the present erecting shop was begun at Twelfth Street on the site of the old Round House No. 1.

Completed in 1907 Erecting Shop No. 3 was one of the last major facilities to be constructed in the shop complex. The new shop building preserved several of the design features in which the PRR had pioneered in the 1870s including longitudinal (as opposed to transverse) tracks and powered overhead cranes. In addition, the railroad introduced electric jib cranes carried on overhead runways supported by longitudinal girders below the large traveling crane bridges. These were built by the Morgan Engineering Company of Alliance, Ohio. The two-ton cranes have a maximum radius of 24'.

The PRR last erected box cars here in the 1950s, before selling the property to Altoona Pipe & Steel Supply Co., who used the building as a steel warehouse for a number of years. About 1978 they began railcar repairs (now about 30 percent of the plant's business), thus returning the building to the railroad repair operations for which it was built. Many of the PRR tie downs are still in place, now used by AP&SS in its own repair business. Although both the old traveling crane and jib cranes are still in place, the steel company installed a new crane in 1961.

### Sources:

"The Altoona Erecting Shop No. 3," The Railway Age 44:13 (20 September 1907), pp. 394-395.  
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