

CAMBRIA STEEL COMPANY, MACHINE SHOP  
(Bethlehem Steel Company, Machine Shop)  
Cambria Iron Works  
Lower Works  
Johnstown  
Cambria County  
Pennsylvania

HAER No. PA-312-A

HAER  
PA  
11-JOTO,  
137A-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
P.O. Box 37127  
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD  
CAMBRIA STEEL COMPANY, MACHINE SHOP  
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Location: Lower Works, Johnstown, Cambria  
County, Pennsylvania

Quad: Johnstown, Pennsylvania

UTM: 17 E.676380 N.4466950

Date of Construction: 1906

Fabricator: unknown

Present Owner: Bethlehem Steel Corporation

Present Use: Abandoned

Significance: The interior contains a large  
central space flanked on either  
side by a series of mezzanines.  
Most of the machinery, including  
lathes, shapers, planers, saws, and  
boring mills, has been removed  
since the Machine Shop ceased  
operation in this buildings in  
1983. Among the most significant  
remaining machines in the shop is a  
vertical boring mill, dating from  
1905, manufactured by William H.  
Sellers & Co. of Philadelphia.

Historian: Gray Fitzsimons

Project Information:

The results of the study of Cambria County were published in  
1990: Fitzsimons, Gray, editor, Blair County and Cambria County,  
Pennsylvania: An Inventory of Historic Engineering and Industrial  
Sites (Washington, D.C.: America's Industrial Heritage Project  
(AIHP) and HABS/HAER, National Park Service). The contents of the  
publication were transmitted to the Library of Congress as  
individual reports. Research notes, field photos and copies of  
historic photos collected during the project were transmitted to  
the AIHP Collection, Special Collections, Stapleton Library,  
Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Indiana, PA 15705.

## HISTORY

One of the first buildings erected by the Cambria Iron Works at its iron works in Johnstown was a machine shop. It was used initially to machine parts for the rolling mill and the blast furnaces. According to S.A. Cox, the company's engineer, the shop contained "lathes, planers, and other tools, suitable for building any and all of the rolling mill and blast furnace machinery required." Located on the site of the present Machine Shop, this earlier shop was expanded a number of times. By 1867 the brick building measured 250' in length, 50' in width, and was one story tall. It was used as both a machine and pattern-making shop. Additionally, Cambria Iron erected an octagonally-shaped blacksmith shop with a connecting wing to the machine shop in 1864. By about 1890 a two-story addition had been built along part of the north elevation.

In 1906 the reorganized Cambria Steel Company demolished the outdated machine shop, erecting in its place a large, fire-proof, four-story machine shop complete with new machinery. The steel for the building was made by Cambria Iron Co. A large central open space topped with steel monitors was flanked on either side by several mezzanine levels. From its completion in 1906 through the 1970s the machine shop employed as many as 400 men in a single shift. The Bethlehem Steel Company, having acquired Cambria in 1923, continued to use the Machine Shop until about 1984, when it began contracting out much of its machine work. Recently a much smaller machine shop was established in a former Cambria-built powerhouse located near the Turbo-Blower Building. Several lathes, boring mills, a universal mill, drill presses, and grinders, dating from the 1950s and 1960s, were relocated from the large 1906 Machine Shop. Bethlehem Steel is currently selling the remaining machinery in the vacant 1906 shop. The most impressive machinery in the abandoned shop includes a 76" vertical boring mill, manufactured in 1905 by William Sellers & Co. of Philadelphia, and a large 1950s Morton universal mill.

## SOURCES:

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Cox, S.A. Cambria Iron Company of Johnstown, Pennsylvania (New York: George T. Nesbit and Company, 1853) pp. i-v.

Doran, T. Plan of the Boroughs Johnstown and Conemaugh Together with Cambria Iron Works, Cambria, and Prospect, Cambria County, Pennsylvania, surveyed, drawn, and published by T. Doran, 1854.

Galasso, Ralph. Pattern-Maker, Bethlehem Steel Corporation, Johnstown Plant, Lower Works Division, interviewed February 1987.

M'Cormick, S.B. A Sketch of Johnstown and Suburbs; and the Cambria Iron Works. (Pittsburgh: Barr and Myers, n.d. [ca. 1867]), pp. 11-15.

Sanborn Map Company. Johnstown, Pennsylvania. New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1891 and 1911.