

George and Catherine Lorditch House
Cambria City Neighborhood
202 Chestnut Street
Johnstown
Cambria County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5755

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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

George and Catherine Lorditch House

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Location: 202 Chestnut Street, Cambria City, Johnstown, Cambria County, Pa.

Description: No. 202 Chestnut Street faces southeast, on a corner lot with a single-family building to one side. The structure is irregularly-shaped, roughly 47' x 48', wood-framed, covered with asbestos shingles. The cross-gable roof is covered with asphalt shingles. The house is two-and-a-half stories tall. A main entrance faces the intersection of Chestnut Street and Second Avenue. Another entrance faces Chestnut Street. Four concrete steps lead from each entrance to the street.

History: Tax records indicate that 202 Chestnut Street was constructed in 1867, although its physical appearance indicates a later construction date. George Lorditch, a German puddler in the steel mills, came to Cambria City in approximately 1863. The Lorditch family also included Catherine Lorditch, his wife, four sons, and a daughter.

Sometime before 1880, Lorditch began to manufacture cigars here. In ca. 1886, the Lorditches and two sons lived here and operated the cigar factory. George Lorditch also sold tobacco, snuff and pipes. A son John was a tobacconist, probably at this location. A son Joseph was a shoemaker, and a son Michael, residing at 220 Chestnut, was a laborer. In 1900, George and Catherine Lorditch, their widowed daughter Mary Bopp, and their son Joseph, a teamster, and his family, all lived at 202 Chestnut. The elder Lorditches lived through 1910, when they were recorded on the census. George Lorditch apparently died shortly thereafter; Catherine Lorditch died in 1911. Her estate sold the property in 1913 to the Staroszak family. Several individuals have owned the property since then.

Sources:

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

Johnstown City Directories, 1869, 1887.

Sanborn Map Company, Johnstown, Pennsylvania, (New York, The Sanborn Map Company, 1886, 1891).

United States Census, Cambria County, Pennsylvania, Cambria Borough (1880); and same, City of Johnstown, Fifteenth Ward (1900, 1910).

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.