

Mary Wilson House
708-10 Lexington Avenue
First Ward Neighborhood
Altoona
Blair County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5799

HABS
PA,
7-ALTO,
38-

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

MARY WILSON HOUSE

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Location: 708-10 Lexington Avenue

Date of Erection: 1873

Description: Each half of this double house has undergone considerable alterations. Originally, each half measured 21'-6" x 25' with a three-bay front. The wood-frame structure had horizontal wood siding. The side-gable roof has a chimney placed on a diagonal, shared by both units. Alterations to No. 708 include a two-story projecting bay and aluminum siding. No. 710 has been altered by a large gable dormer with fishscale shingles, and a one-story porch across the front.

History: The radically different appearance of each unit of this double house testifies to the fact that the units had different owners early in their history. Mary Wilson bought a 50'-wide lot here from Robert H. McCormick in 1872. She apparently built this double house, for after her death in 1876, the same lot was sold for \$2,200. The new owner, John P. Levan, sold each half of the house to a different owner for \$1,200. No. 710 was owned and occupied by Jacob Sauder, a German-born carpenter and car builder. Sauder and his wife, Matilda (they had no children), lived there for at least twenty years; his widow sold the house in 1903. Arthur Mechen, an immigrant from England, bought No. 708, and also lived there with his wife and daughter for more than twenty years. In 1896, Mechen was chief clerk to the master mechanic of the PRR.

Sources: Maps: 1859, 1882, 1894. City directories. Tax assessment records. Deed books: 28/617, 40/486, 41/492, 52/96, 151/304, 175/214, 188/447, 405/180, 636/228. U.S. Census, 1880, 1900.

Project Information: This report was part of a larger project to document the city of Altoona, 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), Randy Cooley, director. An overview of the history of the city (HABS No. PA-5784) and an overview of the first ward neighborhood (HABS No. PA-5788) provide context for these buildings as well as a comprehensive list of sources. See also additional HABS reports on buildings in the city and other neighborhoods.

This report was prepared by HABS Senior Historian Alison K. Hoagland, project leader and editor, in the summer of 1989. Hoagland's and other project historians' work was published as Railroad City: Four Historic Neighborhoods in Altoona, Pennsylvania (Washington, D.C.: HABS/HAER, National Park Service, 1990), edited by Kim E. Wallace, supervisory historian, and Sara Amy Leach, HABS historian.