

Annie and George Renner House
1222 2nd Avenue
Fourth Ward Neighborhood
Altoona
Blair County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5823

HABS
PA,
7-ALTO,
72-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

ANNIE AND GEORGE RENNER HOUSE

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Location: 1222 2nd Avenue

Date of Erection: hy 1890

Description: An example of the two-and-a-half-story, three-bay, side-gable type, the Renner House is interesting because it retains much of its original trim yet it also has an alteration common in the Fourth Ward, the addition of a later ornamental brick porch.

This frame house has an enclosed central chimney, an entrance door on the right front next to a wide picture window (possibly added), and a first-floor bay window at the rear of the north side facade. The cornice is decorated with four evenly spaced sets of paired brackets and a horizontal strip of sawtooth decoration. Pairs of brackets support the return of the cornice at the base of each side gable. Window surrounds have projecting flat-topped pediments, here picked out in multi-colored paint.

The red-brick front porch, somewhat overbearing in its scale, has two square brick columns and front and side walls--the front wall has two arched windows into the basement and a row of sawtooth corbelling just below the white stone cap. The same saw-tooth design is picked out at the top of each column. The porch roof has a wide front-facing gable.

History: In Altoona's first years, lots were often sold repeatedly as part of speculative development. The land on which the Renner house rests rapidly changed hands several times. John and Emma Wright sold a parcel of four lots, 400' x 120', to John Thompson of Altoona on August 8, 1872, for \$1,000. On July 2, 1884, John Thompson and his wife Helen sold a full 50' x 120' lot to James McKerihan of Altoona for \$400, indicating that the ground was still unimproved. In 1886, McKerihan was a boilermaker, living at 1321 3rd Ave., also in the Fourth Ward neighborhood.

James and Faith McKerihan sold a half-lot, 25' x 120', three years later in 1887 to Theophilus Schraf and Annie Renmark (See also 1327 3rd Ave., HABS No. PA-5837). On July 25, 1894, Theophilus and Frances Schraf sold their share to Renmark, now Anna Renner, for \$600--"with building thereon erected, No. 1222 2nd Avenue." Tax books seem to indicate that a house stood here in 1890; neither Renner nor Schraf is listed in the tax hook for 1889, but in 1890 Annie Renner has a house and lot at this address valued at \$1,000. Directories, however, show Annie Renmark, widow of Wolfgang, living here as early as 1888 along with George O. Renmark who worked in the roundhouse. Schraf does not appear in tax records.

Annie Renmark seems to have changed her last name without remarrying. She died intestate in 1899, and her son, then known as George W. Renner, lived here as a machinist in 1900 and a shophand in 1925. He married a woman also named Anna; this Anna Renner still lived at the house in 1951, after his death. Jean A. Graham, who worked as a clerk at Altoona Beauty & Barber Supply acquired the property on January 27, 1955, for \$3,200. Her two sisters, Leah E. and Mary M., lived at this address with her and ran the Graham Market next door (1224 2nd Ave., HABS No. PA-5824). Graham owned the property until 1988.

Sources: Maps: 1882, 1909. Deed books: 28/218, 59/275, 103/226, 700/333, 1157/135. City directories. Tax assessment records.

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. Overviews of the history of the city (HABS No. PA-5784) and the fourth ward neighborhood

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(HABS No. PA-5786) 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 Susan Garfinkel in the summer of 1989 under the supervision of HABS senior historian Alison K. Hoagland and Kim E. Wallace, supervisory historian. Garfinkel'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.