

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Church
8th Avenue and 11th Street
Fourth Ward Neighborhood
Altoona
Blair County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5854

HABS
PA,
7-ALTO,
69-

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
OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL CATHOLIC CHURCH

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Location: 8th Avenue and 11th Street

Date of Erection: 1912, 1922-23

Architect: D. G. Puderbaugh

Description: This Italian Renaissance-style brownstone church has a Latin-cross plan that measures 60' x 120'. The stone bearing walls are faced with a rough-faced random-course brownstone ashlar, with smooth-faced brownstone used for trim and the upper story. The nave is two stories, the side aisles one. The central entrance is composed of an arcaded trio of arched openings on the front facade.

History: The congregation of the Italian population of Altoona was formed in 1905, although it was not designated a parish until 1911. The parish was carved out of St. Mark's, and extended from 8th to 15th streets on the east side of 8th Avenue, and also included all Italians in the city. A school was started in 1911 with 325 pupils, and in 1912 a new school was built. Then the previous building, which served as a church and school, was demolished and construction began on a new church.

Ground was broken for the facility on June 20, 1912, and on August 25 more than 6,000 people attended the laying of the cornerstone. At that time, Bishop Garvey announced that completion of the building would have to be postponed, due to the large debt the parish had incurred. The basement was roofed over, and for over ten years the congregation met there.

Construction recommenced in 1922, and the building was dedicated by Bishop John J. McCort on December 16, 1923. The mortgage was paid off in 1950. In 1953, the interior was decorated for the first time. The church seats 700.

Sources: Our 75 Years Together. Altoona Tribune (August 24, 1912; January 15, 1916).

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 (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 Kim Hoagland, project supervisor 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.