

Phillip Kimmel House  
104-06 14th Street  
Fourth Ward Neighborhood  
Altoona  
Blair County  
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5863

HABS  
PA  
7-ALTO,  
59-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
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Department of the Interior  
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

PHILLIP KIMMEL HOUSE

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Location: 104-06 14th Street

Date of Erection: 1894-95

Description: Constructed of solid brick rather than the more common brick veneer, this side-gable double house is arranged as two side-by-side, mirror-image three-bay units. Each has an entrance door by the inner party wall with two windows beside and three above. The wood cornice below projecting eaves is without ornament (returns have been boxed in below the side gables); window surrounds are plain with projecting lower sills. A stoop with steps at each side rises to the entrance door where a small awning is currently installed. Two interior chimneys rising from the roof ridge add to the symmetry. The brick is painted dark gray.

History: Like many other street- rather than avenue-facing structures, the Kimmel double house represents modest speculation on the part of Altoona land owners. It is the sole survivor from a set of three identical structures built by Philip Kimmel on a corner lot facing 14th Street. Kimmel purchased the 50' x 120' corner lot from John A. Wright in May 1891 but did not develop it for several years. A tinner by trade, Kimmel first built a different set of double brick houses at 101-03 and 105-07 14th St. in 1892. His 1895 tax assessment shows a dramatic increase in the number of properties owned, including the houses at 102 through 106 14th St., and another set of three double houses at 305, 307, 307-1/2 14th St. In 1896, Kimmel had a tinning and roofing business at 609 14th St. and a home at 1411 4th Ave., both in the Fourth Ward neighborhood.

Helen McNeely of Philadelphia acquired this and other lots at a sheriff's sale of Kimmel's property in 1897. William H. Staake, an attorney, acquired many of her holdings in June of that year. The 50' x 120' lot with three double houses was sold to Minnie Dora Segel for \$4,800 in February 1901. Thomas Weir, who had a hardware and real estate business on 4th Avenue, acquired the property in November 1902. When sold at sheriff's sale to V. A. Oswald in 1916, the property was described as "having thereon erected three two-story double brick dwelling houses with all modern improvements and necessary outbuildings."

Venantius A. Oswald, proprietor of the American Brewery and a resident with wife Annie on prestigious Broad Avenue, sold this single house on a 38' x 50' lot to Herman G. and Laura P. Miller in June 1923. (Other properties went to John F. and Lillie M. Dorman in 1933 and to the county commissioners for delinquent taxes in 1955.) Herman Miller was pastor at the Brethren in Christ Church and lived to the north of the Fourth Ward. The Millers sold the house to laborer Lesin R. and Rosa T. Oldbam in June 1939, who transferred the title to Clifton W. Johnson in 1941. Clifton W. and Helen Johnson sold the property to Paul M. and Kathryn L. Clark for \$2,200 in May 1974; they kept it until 1977. In 1975, she was a clerk at Revco Inc. and lived outside the city.

The Kimmel House has always been a rental property; information on tenants is available from city directories starting in 1939. In that year Russell D. Clapper lived at No. 104; no occupation is listed. John Mittermeir lived at No. 106 with his wife, Rose; and he worked as a warper for the Schwartzbach-Huber silk mill.

Sources: Maps: 1882, 1894. Deed books: 86/314, 116/134, 116/134, 129/676, 155/242, 240/244, 308/614, 308/416, 958/575, 446/669, 462/7, 960/1182, 1007/752. 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 (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

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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.