

531 SOUTH FIFTH STREET (Double house)
Jeannette
Westmoreland County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-6131

HABS
PA
65-JEAN,
38-

PHOTOGRAPHS

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
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ADDENDUM TO:
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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
531 SOUTH FIFTH STREET (DOUBLE HOUSE)

HABS No. PA-6131

- LOCATION: 531 South Fifth Street, Jeannette, Westmoreland County,
Pennsylvania
- SIGNIFICANCE: A high concentration of window, tableware, bottle and specialty glass plants distinguished Jeannette as “The Glass City” early in its history. Significant housing stock consists of company-built row and detached double houses, and several privately constructed dwellings.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

This property in the southwest section of the study area was part of a group of lots that H. Sellers McKee did not or could not sell during the early development of the neighborhood. McKee initially sold the lot to the National Glass Company, the successor to his own McKee Bros. glass works. After bankruptcy proceedings, National Glass re-emerged as the McKee Glass Company, and its president, Andrew J. Smith, held the residential property. In 1914, Smith sold this lot to John Ricardino, listed as a laborer in the tax records, and his wife Caterina. The Ricardinos sold the undeveloped property to Serafino and Caterina Lavigna in 1921 for \$700.00. Tax records indicate that the house was built between 1922 and 1923.

The Lavignas emigrated from Italy in 1905 to West Virginia. They came to Jeannette in about 1915, where Serafino worked for the Pennsylvania Railroad. Serafino and Caterina had ten children and one of their sons, Samuel, now owns the house. He is retired from Jeannette Glass.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

This unusual brick-veneered, two-story house is virtually unchanged from its original appearance. The house combines the urban, upright rectangular form and flat roof of the earlier brick houses in the neighborhood with a unique two-story front porch and a plan incorporating two front entry doors. The solidity of the brick porch walls gives way to plain wood railings on the second floor front balcony. A small, covered wood porch to one side at the rear breaks the rectangular shape of the house. The house has an entry

hall, living room, dining room, and kitchen on the first floor, and four bedrooms and a bath above.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Insurance Maps of Jeannette, Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania. New York: Sanborn Map Co., 1925, 1950.

Deed Books. Recorder of Deeds, Westmoreland County Courthouse, Greensburg, Pennsylvania, 291/14, 468/386, 481/461, 554/454, 555/153, 561/336, 699/82, 998/228, 2160/753.

Tax Assessment Books. Westmoreland County Tax Assessment Office, Westmoreland County Courthouse, Greensburg, Pennsylvania.

Interview with Samuel Lavigna, resident, 531 South Fifth Street, August 9, 1990.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

In February 1987, the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) and the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) began a multi-year historical and architectural documentation project in southwestern Pennsylvania. Carried out in conjunction with America's Industrial Heritage Project (AIHP), HABS and HAER undertook a comprehensive documentation of Jeannette, documenting industries, housing and cultural institutions.