

Brief History

Built in the 1850's the Cambria Iron Co. blacksmith shop's primary function was to service the many operations the steel mill needed to function. In its early years the facility supported Iron production though forging tools and parts necessary for the process, and also played a huge role servicing the mining operations necessary for the mill to harvest the iron ore and coal found in the hills of Johnstown.

As The Cambria Iron Co. grew, producers became familiar and started experimenting with the Kelly/Bessemer process and the Cambria Iron Co. shifted focus from iron to steel production. In the late 1800's and early 1900's the Cambria Iron Co. was the largest producer of steel rails in the country and major innovator in the steel making and production process. Because of these innovations steel production was now possible on a larger scale and Johnstown's Cambria Iron Co. became an industrial epicenter.

As the steel production in Johnstown grew, so did the need for larger forging tools and equipment. In 1904 the Cambria Iron Co. purchased and installed two Chambersburg #3000 utility hammers in the blacksmith shop. Located in the center of the room they functioned as the main forging hammers for this shop helping produce anything the mill needed to function and grow.

In 1992 the mills in Johnstown closed. Lots of factors contributed to this decision, some of which were overseas production, the depletion of natural resources in Johnstown, and the modernization of the industry. That year, workers put their tools down, left the shop, the doors were locked. At that point the fate of the historic blacksmith shop was bleak and uncertain.

