

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

| | |
|------------------|--|
| FOR NPS USE ONLY | |
| RECEIVED | |
| DATE ENTERED | |

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC **BENTLEY HALL, ALLEGHENY COLLEGE**

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER **Allegheny College**

CITY, TOWN **Meadville**

STATE **Pennsylvania**

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
24th

VICINITY OF
CODE

COUNTY **Crawford** CODE

3 CLASSIFICATION

| CATEGORY | OWNERSHIP | STATUS | PRESENT USE |
|---|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT | <input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE | <input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK |
| <input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> BOTH | <input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SITE | PUBLIC ACQUISITION | ACCESSIBLE | <input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT | <input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED | <input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED | <input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> NO | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER |

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME **Board of Trustees, Allegheny College, Dr. Lawrence L. Pelletier, President**

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN **Meadville**

(814) 724-3100
STATE

VICINITY OF

Pennsylvania 16335

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC
STREET & NUMBER **Crawford County Courthouse**

CITY, TOWN **Meadville**

STATE
Pennsylvania

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE **Historic American Buildings Survey**

DATE **1937**

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS **Library of Congress, prints and photographs division**

CITY, TOWN **Washington, D.C.** STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

| CONDITION | | CHECK ONE | CHECK ONE |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT | <input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED | <input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GOOD | <input type="checkbox"/> RUINS | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED | <input type="checkbox"/> MOVED |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FAIR | <input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED | | DATE _____ |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Generally Federal in type with Greek Revival wings, the college is capped by a graceful cupola. Reverend Timothy Alden constructed a kind of sophisticated vernacular structure. Charles Stotz records:

"The cornerstone was laid in 1820 and the roof was finished in 1824, but the many obstacles that beset this determined man delayed its completion until the year 1835. This building departs from academic rule in many details, such as the attenuated Greek Doric columns and abnormally low entablature of the porch wings; the brick pilasters, stepped back at each floor, with their curiously simplified Ionic capitals; and the odd relationship between these pilasters and the central pediment. But these architectural eccentricities do not detract from the effectiveness of the design; they rather lend to it a definite individuality. The cupola is particularly well proportioned and beautifully detailed. The New England Colonial character is quaintly intermingled with Greek Revival forms, which were at that time beginning to permeate architectural expression."¹

Smith describes actual construction:

"The first inquiry looked toward a structure of stone. A quarry was opened in the ravine a few yards to the east of the site. An advertisement in the local paper of August called for bids, and a contract was entered with John Petrie on December 11, 1820, to lay the foundation at \$3.12-1/2 a perch. After ground was broken, the size of the original plan was increased in length and breadth, until the present dimensions of one hundred and twenty by forty-four feet were reached. The earliest drawings of the building, however, were rigidly followed. The central portion, sixty feet in width and three stories in height, was to be flanked with two wings of thirty feet, standing back of the main line eight feet and fronted by heavy columns.

The work of excavation and of the masons did not get under way until spring, then the Trustees decided that the superstructure should be of brick. After another advertisement, the firm of Graworz and Lapsely, of Erie, was favored for the construction of the outside walls, partitions, floors and roof, their bid being \$8450. Walls of eighteen inches were specified and the minute details of the building were entered into the lengthy contract. After operations began, late in 1822, the erection

¹Charles M. Stotz, A.I.A. The Early Architecture of Western Pennsylvania. published by William Helburn, Inc., New York, for the Buhl Foundation, 1936.

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went forward with fair progress for a year. Then the firm fell into controversy with the Board and left in November with their work incomplete.

When a suit was entered by the vigilant lawyers of the Trustees, an arbitration was arranged, and the Erie partners required to refund \$1033 of the monies paid them. After the scaffolding had stood about the abandoned structure through the winter of 1823-4, the Board completed the roofing and protected the interior from the weather. A contract was made with Harm Jan Huidekoper to furnish glass and paint, the Trustees hiring occasional workmen to finish minor portions of the inside of the east wing."²

Money ran out and beginning in 1820 the Trustees began trying to raise funds to complete the college. In 1827 the money was appropriated by the state legislature in part because the school had received a great gift--the library of the Honorable James Winthrop, a descendant of the first Governor of Massachusetts, and son of John Winthrop who was the father of seismology and a Harvard professor.

By 1840 Bentley Hall (as described by a student at that time):

"Its wings were used as dormitories. Its four recitation rooms on the first floor were used by the four chief professors. A small steamboat bell hanging in the entry tapped the three-quarters hours of recitation, seven each day, save Saturday, from 8:30 to 2. The second floor was the chapel for daily morning roll-call and prayers, and Saturday exercises of composition and declamation; also it held the college library. The Allegheny and Philo-Franklin literary societies occupied the two long rooms of the third floor."

Finished in 1835, the structure had the elegant details it retains today--the elliptical fanlight doorway, Palladian windows and the graceful belfry. There have been some interior changes to accommodate administration offices.

²Ernest Aston Smith. Allegheny, A Century of Education. Allegheny College History Company, Meadville, Pennsylvania, 1916, pp. 39-40.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

| PERIOD | AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING | <input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499 | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION | <input type="checkbox"/> LAW | <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599 | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS | <input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE | <input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY | <input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> ART | <input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING | <input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC | <input type="checkbox"/> THEATER | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE | <input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY | <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY | <input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION | | | |

SPECIFIC DATES 1820-1835

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Reverend Timothy Alden

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Bentley Hall is the original building of Allegheny College. It closely resembles a New England type with Federal details including a handsome cupola and two Greek Revival wings of grand proportions. The building was named for the Reverend William Bentley, an early benefactor of the school. Reverend Timothy Alden, the first president of Allegheny, attempted to synthesize Sir Christopher Wren's and Thomas Jefferson's architectural designs, adding his own highly individualized details producing what Charles M. Stötz has called the most impressive school building remaining from early days in Western Pennsylvania.

The origins of Allegheny College (Bentley Hall) are described as follows:

"The Rev. Mr. Alden's object in founding this institution of higher learning is epitomized in the college motto-- "the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose (Isaiah 35:11)." E.A. Smith, in his history of Allegheny College, wrote of Alden and his objective as follows:

Timothy Alden set an ideal of learning for Allegheny College that will be her boast as long as she shall endure. Latin, Hebrew and Greek may have been rich food for the frontiersmen but outside of the idealism of the Roman, the Greek and Jew the present civilization has made very little addition to the beauty of order, the beauty of form, and the beauty of holiness. Contact with such culture was perhaps what the frontier needed most.

Items placed in the cornerstone of the first building, Bentley Hall, July 5, 1820, symbolized Alden's idealism. The items were a piece of Plymouth Rock, marble from Dido's Temple in Carthage, mortar from the tomb of Virgil, and a portion of brick from the Tower of Babel. Since "A great part of the region for the benefit of which the Seminary is designed" was within the Allegheny River basin, the Committee resolved "that the institution be called Allegheny College." The College was closed, 1831-33, and reopened under the sponsorship

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of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the present name and spelling of it, Allegheny, was adopted. This affiliation still continues.

[The original] building of Allegheny College was named in honor of the Rev. William Bentley, who bequeathed "all my classical and theological books, dictionaries, lexicons, and Bibles to the college at Meadville, Pennsylvania." At the time of his death in 1819, Bentley, pastor of East Church in Salem, Massachusetts, had one of the most valuable libraries in New England. His gift prompted a further gift--500 carefully selected books presented by Isaiah Thomas, founder of the American Antiquarian Society. The cornerstone was laid July 5, 1820."¹

Dr. Ernest A. Smith described the building in rather Victorian prose:

"For its perfect colonial type, the college has to thank the founder. He specified every column, every capital, each slope of roof, each towering chimney. The plans were probably the fruitage of years of loving study. That the thorough completion did not take place until late in Mr. Alden's term, or in the years following, can in no sense detract from the insight that planned it all before the brick and mortar were a possibility, and before the necessary money for the labor was assured.

In State architecture, it is second only to Independence Hall in Philadelphia. In National architecture, it might stand beside historic Faneuil in Boston, or the famous homestead at Mount Vernon. It is, of course, surpassed in size and costliness, but in the subtle symmetry or perfect art, in the pleasant harmony of ornament and line, one would travel far to find its equal."²

The building does not compete with Independence Hall, but there is no question that it is one of the finest buildings of its type in America.

¹WPA Guide to Pennsylvania, American Guide Series, 1940, p. 471.

²Smith, E.A. Allegheny, A Century of Education, Allegheny College History Company, Meadville, Pa., 1916, pp. 38-40.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Smith, Ernest Ashton. Allegheny, A Century of Education, 1815-1915
 The Allegheny College History Company, Meadville, Pa., 1916.
 WPA Guide to Pennsylvania, American Guide Series, 1940.
 Stotz, Charles M. The Early Architecture of Western Pennsylvania.
 William Helburn, Inc., New York, Buhl Foundation, 1936.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approximately five acres

UTM REFERENCES

| | | | | | | | |
|---|------|---------|----------|---|------|---------|----------|
| A | 17 | 570000 | 4611120 | B | | | |
| | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING | | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING |
| C | | | | D | | | |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at a stone set for the NE corner of the west side of the Susquehanna and Crawford Turnpike Road, thence North 67.5° west forty perches to a post. Thence South 22.5° west 20 perches to a post thence South 67.5° east 40 perches to a stone set for the SE corner and thence North 22.5° east 20 perches by the Turnpike Road to the place of beginning containing five acres. (Perch equals 5-1/2 yards) Deed book H, pp. 404-405 Crawford County Court House

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Carolyn Pitts, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service

DATE

7/28/76

STREET & NUMBER

1100 L Street, N.W.

TELEPHONE

202-523-5464

CITY OR TOWN

Washington, D.C. 20240

STATE

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

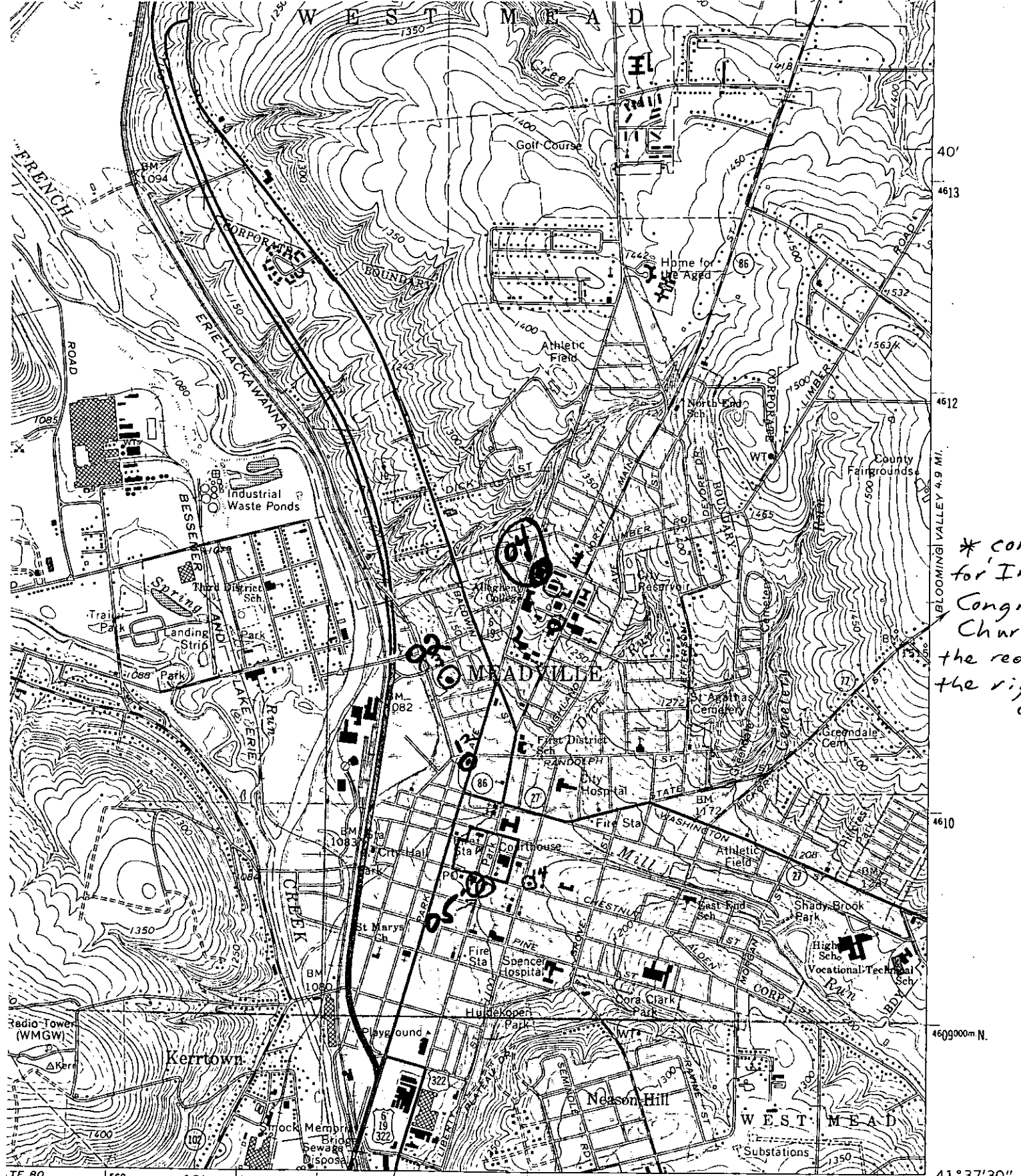
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
 ATTEST:

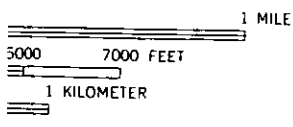
DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



* correct for 'Index Congrega Church' the red circle the right 05

TE 80 1569 10' 970 COCHRANTON 12 MI. FRANKLIN (U.S. 62) 28 MI. INTERIOR- GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA-1975 572000m.E. 41°37'30" 80°07'30" 4609000m N.



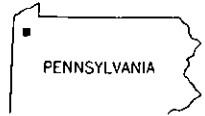
PSU GIS

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

- Primary highway, all weather, hard surface _____
- Secondary highway, all weather, hard surface _____
- Light-duty road, all weather, improved surface _____
- Unimproved road, fair or dry weather _____

- Interstate Route
- U. S. Route
- State Route

pmw 6/5/98



MEADVILLE, PA.

(COCHRANTON) 1967 1:50,000