

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

For HCRS use only
received
date entered

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic CAMBRIA COUNTY JAIL

and/or common

2. Location

street & number North Center and Sample Streets not for publication

city, town Ebensburg vicinity of congressional district 12

state Pennsylvania code 42 county Cambria code ; 021

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input 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 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 checked="" 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 Cambria County c/o County Commissioners

street & number South Center Street

city, town Ebensburg vicinity of state Pennsylvania

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Cambria County Courthouse

street & number South Center Street

city, town Ebensburg state Pennsylvania

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Pennsylvania Inventory
of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 11/28/79 federal state county local

depository for survey records Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission

city, town Harrisburg state Pennsylvania

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Cambria County Jail, completed in 1872, is significant for its historic and governmental association with the growth and development of Ebensburg and Cambria County, Pennsylvania.

Architect Edward Haviland designed the jail in Gothic Revival style. The contractor was William Callan from Ebensburg who was also known for building private residences in the Johnstown area and the County Home, or County Poor House, as it was called in the late 19th century.

The romantic Gothic Revival is a popular style for public buildings since it presents a sense of solidity of character. The Cambria County Jail is made of cut sandstone and the width of the original structure is 56' by 100' in length and it has a height of 60'. The jail is surrounded by a 20' wall, also made of cut stone, which connects with the structure at the front.

The verticality of the jail and rough-faced masonry relates a sense of mass and gives an imposing appearance. This was the obvious feeling the architect wished to translate; the jail as an inescapable and impenetrable fortress.

The most obvious distinction of the facade is the pointed drop arch windows and pointed arched portal. The windows are grated with steel bars on the outside and adorned with a simple pattern of tracery formed by twin wooden arches within the main arch of the window. Battlements and buttresses are located on the corners of the stone walls.

A tower surmounts the central pavilion of the original building. It was constructed for use as a reservoir to supply the jail with water.

The structure built in 1872 contains around 34 cells, a kitchen and dining room, parlor, baths and sleeping rooms for prisoners and the residence of the sheriff. Floors are wooden and underlined with steel plates. Partitions built between the cells are of heavy stone masonry and there are four skylights on each side of the building.

In 1910 an addition was built to the rear of the 1872 structure in the jailyard. The addition housed 206 more jail cells along with a bakery and barber shop in the basement. In keeping with the motif of the original jail, the annex, built of fired brick, displays heavily grated arched windows and a skylight pierces the apex of the plate roof.

The new jail's cellblock, put in by Van Dorn Iron Works of Cleveland, Ohio, was regarded as the most modern use in tiers of cells in the center of a large room. The advantage was that a guard could see into each cell as he walked around the perimeter of the block. The cellblock is a common feature in state and federal institutions but rarely is found on a county level. Along with the above mentioned improvements to the Cambria County Jail an electric elevator was installed which ran between the basement and the top tier of cells.

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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1872 **Builder/Architect** William Callan/Edward Haviland

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Controversy surrounded the construction of the Cambria County Jail. Many Johnstown residents felt that if the jail was built in the city, the county seat would then be moved to Johnstown. Bitter accusations and rebuttals were printed weekly between Johnstown and Ebensburg newspapers until the issue was settled and the jail was erected in Ebensburg where the county seat remained.

A gallows was constructed at the jail and hangings were considered a source of entertainment for county residents until 1909. Before this date hangings were public; the sheriff determined how many tickets were issued. Only those holding an admission ticket were admitted to the jail yard and those not receiving passes often sat on nearby roof tops or on the wall surrounding the jail. One of the most spectacular hangings in Cambria County was the double hanging of Jacob Hauser and Stephen Fellows in February of 1906. Both were convicted of murders and over 1,000 people came by rig and rail to see the executions.

The last hanging took place in 1909. Hangings had ceased to be the spectator sport they once were with only 20 people attending the last. The method of execution was changed to electrocution at that time and moved to Rockview Penitentiary in Bellefonte.

The Cambria County Jail has been the scene of a wide spectrum of activities ranging from the execution of criminal offenders to the implementation of criminal reform and education programs. These programs are very much a part of the contemporary philosophy of the jail's administration and of the county commissioners.

The county jail has served the needs of the county and the city of Johnstown by serving, for more than 100 years, as a holding and/or incarceration facility for county criminal offenders.

Architecturally, the Cambria County Jail displays a style typical of the philosophical mood in the U.S. during the later part of the 19th century. The use of Gothic architecture in the construction of jail applies a very stern psychological implication; that of strength, fortitude and mystery. These attitudes although very much part of the architecture of the Rival period was also reflectant within the society of the late 19th century.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1.59

Quadrangle name Ebensburg, Pa.

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A

1	7	6	9	2	7	2	0	4	4	8	4	0	2	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone Easting Northing

B

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Zone Easting Northing

C

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

E

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

F

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

G

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

H

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet.

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 Mary Ann O'Donnell Parfitt

organization Cambria Co. Redevelopment Authority

street & number 101 North Center Street telephone 814-472-6711

city or town Pennsylvania state Pennsylvania 15931

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

ED WEINTRAUB, Director
title Office of Historic Preservation date

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

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

CAMBRIA COUNTY JAIL

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

Caldwell, J. A., Atlas of Cambria County, Pa., Philadelphia: Atlas Publishing Company, 1890.

Swetham, George and Smith, Helene. A Guidebook to Historic Western Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1977.

Cambria Freeman, November 28, 1869 and March 20, 1874.

Nanty Glo Journal, "Cambria Prison Has Long, Colorful History", September 17, 1953.

Tribune Democrat, Wednesday, March 14, 1973 and February 14, 1908, p. 3.

Cambria County Assessment Office, Assessment Number 04-04-108 Ebensburg, Pa.

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

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

CAMBRIA COUNTY JAIL

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 2

Description found in Volume 30, page 764 in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds in the Cambria County Court House, South Center Street, Ebensburg, Pennsylvania.

The Description reads as follows:

"Certain square of ground situated in the West Ward of Ebensburg Borough, bounded and described as follows, to Wit; Bounded in the East by Center Street, on the West by an Alley, and on the South by Sample Street. Said Square of ground being known on the Original plan of said Borough as it appeared in the Record in Record Book Volume One page four hundred and nine as Square 17."

EBENSBURG QUADRANGLE 7.5 MINUTE SERIES
CAMBRIA COUNTY JAIL
EBENSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

5295 (I) SE
(COLVER)

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

EBENSBURG QUADRANGLE 7.5 MINUTE SERIES

CAMBRIA COUNTY JAIL
EBENSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

COMMONWEALTH
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
TOPOGRAPHIC AN

