

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

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

received

date entered

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

1. Name

historic PHILIP NOON HOUSE

and/or common YMCA Building of Ebensburg, Philip Collins House, Noon-Collins House

2. Location

street & number 114 East High Street 12th Congressional District, Pennsylvania
not for publication

city, town Ebensburg vicinity of

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	n/a in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	n/a being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: vacant

4. Owner of Property

name Borough of Ebensburg

street & number Municipal Building, West High Street

city, town Ebensburg PA 15931 vicinity of state Pennsylvania

5. Location of Legal Description

Recorder of Deeds
courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Cambria County Courthouse Assessment No. 25-03-406

street & number South Center Street

city, town Ebensburg PA 15931 state Pennsylvania

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Cambria County Historic Site Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

Site Inventory Book 2, Card No. 021-EB-010 (1980)
date Final Selection List (1981) federal state county local

(Survey funded by US Dept of Interior and PA Historical & Museum Commission)

depository for survey records Historic Preservation Department

Redevelopment Authority of Cambria County
city, town 207 West High Street, Ebensburg PA 15931 state Pennsylvania

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered by	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date _____ n/a _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed	addition only (annexed Gymnasium)		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The former Noon/Collins Residence at 114 E. High Street in Ebensburg, Pennsylvania (constructed in 1834 with later additions), is one of the only remaining Federal Style structures standing in Cambria County. The term "Federal" refers to the new Republic and Architectural Motifs followed after the successful war for Independence in the American Colonies. Architectural influences include Georgian, Late Georgian, Adamesque, Neo-Classicism and Romantic Classicism. Specifically, the Noon/Collins House appears to be influenced by the Late Georgian and Adamesque Styles.

In plan, the center Entry Hall (with staircase) and rooms to either side are typical of Late Georgian and Adamesque models (First Harrison Gray Otis House in Boston, Massachusetts, by Charles Bulfinch). Generally, rectangular plans are a very important part of these structures, with circulation and movement becoming very convenient. An overall lack of decoration, flat surfaces, and a clean-cut grace are evident in the exterior composition of this local example along with its contemporary structures. Formal Georgian symmetry is apparent: five-bay composition, center entrance, massive recessed chimneys on either side, and a gable roof. Adamesque curved forms are evident in the center three-part entrance topped by a fan-light window and a fan-light window at the attic level.

Dressed stone corners with rubble stone infill act as a play of rustication versus the delicateness of the Adamesque. One can see the vernacular variation which developed a local indigenous style. Local builders transformed the monumental forms from larger, populated areas into buildings appropriate to local conditions, materials, and the talents of local carpenters or masons. The same overall symmetrical stone form is visible nearby at the "Lemon House" (National Register Property) on Cresson Mountain; a contemporary, it was constructed in conjunction with the Allegheny Portage Railroad/Canal System.

The overall composition of the Noon/Collins Residence remains intact with no disruptions from later additions (the two-story ell addition blends identically with the original in material and proportion). A sense of power is evoked by the bold, simple, massive exterior with unadorned window surrounds (stone lintels and sills at the front and sides, wood lintels and sills at the rear) which visually identified the wealth of the owner. This sense of grandeur is heightened by the center Entrance Hall with large, open staircase, wide plaster crown-mouldings, paneled doors and massive dorr jamb/head compositions.

As a transitional structure, the formal, symmetrical, ordered elements of the Late Georgian in combination with the simple, unadorned features of the Adamesque are clearly expressed. The dressed stone corners act as quioning to visually strengthen the structure and the doorways (exterior and interior) are principal features of design. Based on earlier East Coast and English examples, the structure is the result of the spreading westward movement of civilization after the American Revolution. This example is in contrast to Neo-Classic structures of the same period.

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The Gymnasium Addition was added in 1906 during the building's conversion to the local Young Men's Christian Association. The structure is functional in composition and construction, appropriate for structures spanning large, open areas. A regular, classically inspired rhythm is evident on the facades. Also visible is the simple expressionism of structural pier elements (in line with the supporting roof trusses) and infill panels of masonry and window openings.

In plan, the central Gymnasium space (with original balcony area) with exposed supporting roof trusses and decking is typical of turn-of-the-century industrial/commercial examples. An important feature of this structure is the imposing feeling which is conveyed by the sheer size and volume of space easily enclosed by the exterior walls and roof. Although overall decoration is not evident, variations in masonry surfaces provide modulation required to visually relieve the exterior and interior facades. An equally-spaced rhythm on the exterior walls and gable roof call attention to the classically inspired forms. "Modern" influences are expressed by the restrained use of decorative elements.

Large, flat masonry areas contrast recessed and corbelled brick areas, creating an interesting play of texture and light. Apparent is the quality of workmanship created by local craftsmen which produced a monumental structure for recreational use by the community. Although creation of the structure followed typical models, the skillful use of proportion and materials assist the structure in standing apart from its contemporaries. The Gymnasium remains intact (the Balcony was dismantled in later years). The structure is essentially influenced by classical proportions and rhythm in combination with the simple, undecorated features of more functional buildings; i.e., a transitional structure where Classical and Functional elements are contrasted.

Survival of this early structure (stone house & additions) in the area is due to its solidity of construction and associations with the community which respects it as part of its cultural patrimony. It occupies a place of prominence at the very center of the county seat, bounded by the courthouse in the rear and old High Street on the front, and is a key piece in the architectural heritage of the town and county.

Item No. 7 prepared by: Benjamin A. Policicchio, A.I.A.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates Built 1834 **Builder/Architect** Philip Noon, Esq.

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Philip Noon House has been closely associated for a century and a half with events and personalities of local, national and international significance. Its builder was a key figure in the founding and settlement of Cambria County and Philip Collins, the second occupant, was a pioneer railroad builder of world renown. In the 20th Century it has served the community as an important cultural center.

The Noon Period (1834-60). The builder and first occupant, Philip Noon, was born in Donegal, Ireland, in 1784. At the age of 13 he was a bearer of dispatches for the rebellious United Irishmen which caused his arrest and imprisonment. He fled Ireland to escape further persecution, arrived in the United States on Independence Day 1801, and settled at Blair's Gap where he was received into the family of John Blair (for whom Blair County, Pa., is named). He was an energetic, literate boy of some education and taught school in the Gap.

He moved atop the Allegheny front to Ebensburg in 1804-5 just as Cambria County was being organized out of northern Somerset County and became active in the public life of the newly-formed county (1806). He was elected second sheriff of Cambria County in 1810 at age twenty-six and from 1814 to 1816 served an appointment as the county's fourth Treasurer. In the meantime he had read law, become a practicing member of the bar, and in 1818 was elected to the Legislature.

In the struggle between Schultze and Gregg for the office of Governor of Pennsylvania in 1823, the last election under the old organization of parties, he warmly advocated the election of the former and by him was appointed Prothonotary, holding the office for 10 years till 1833. At that time the duties of Prothonotary were very broad and included the functions of Register of Wills, Recorder of Deeds, and Clerk of Orphans Court as well. In this office he was the principal county functionary and administrator for the conduct of its day-to-day business. These experiences led to his appointment by Governor Porter in 1843 as an Associate Judge of the county courts and he served until the December session 1851.

On February 19, 1822, he had been married to Ellen Lockett by Father Demetrius Gallitzin, the Russian Prince-Priest of the Alleghenies, and by 1826 had three daughters. In 1834 he was fifty years old, a man of station and of sufficient means to commission a major residence at the town's center, next to the Court House. Philip Noon's name was virtually synonymous with that of Cambria County during the first half-century of its history. His home is the only surviving building associated with a figure prominent in the founding and settlement of Cambria County.

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The Collins Period 1860-95. Judge Noon lived in the house until his death in 1860. It then became the home of Philip Collins, one of the nation's great railroading pioneers, who had married Margaret Noon, daughter of the judge. Although he had at least two other homes at various times (one in Philadelphia and, after 1887, the Yocum Farm near Bellefonte), the Ebensburg house was his principal residence from 1860 until his death therein in 1895.

Philip Collins, born 1 April 1821, was the oldest of the eleven children of Peter Collins who came to the United States in 1816 from County Donegal, Ireland, where he was born in 1792. The distinguished railroading story is essentially a family one as the immigrant father, Peter, immediately established himself near Lisbon, Ohio, as a builder of canals and railroads. In 1820 he moved to Munster, Pennsylvania (between Ebensburg and Cresson), married, began a family, and built railroads, including critical, instrumental experience in the construction of the old Allegheny Portage Railroad in 1832. Three of his six sons, Philip, Tom and Peter, grew up in the midst of the portage railroad adventure and learned their father's trade to the extent that they were awarded important contracts for the construction of the New Portage RR in 1849, an achievement characterized as "the first mountain railroad of any importance in the United States" and trailblazer for the Pennsylvania RR's conquest of the Front.

The senior son, Philip, formed with brother Tom the Philadelphia-based firm of P. & T. Collins, later to gain international renown. They came to fame by way of a long list of difficult RR building achievements during the third quarter of the 19th Century. A partial list -

On the Main Line of the Pennsylvania RR: the "Long Tunnel" at Gallitzin above the Horseshoe Curve (highest point of passage over the Alleghenies, first tunnel built to allow non-stop rail traffic from the east to the west side of the Allegheny Front, the world's longest tunnel at the time of its completion), the Clearfield and Indiana Branch, the Lewisburg and Tyrone Branch, the Ebensburg and Cresson Branch (the original contract for the acquisition of this road from Collins by the PRR in 1860 has just come to light and is in the Cambria County Historical Society).

Other Roads: the Philadelphia and Erie RR, large parts of the Lehigh Valley, the Jersey Central, the Western Pennsylvania, the Southern Pennsylvania (now part of the Pa. Turnpike), the Bellefonte Central, the Beech Creek.

Celebrated Special Projects: the Sand Patch Tunnel near Cumberland, Maryland, (a project which had been given up by other builders as impossible), the Peal Tunnel of the Beech Creek, the Laurel Hill Tunnel (now a well-known Pa. Turnpike tunnel), the Long Tunnel at Gallitzin (see above).

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Extensive railroad building in the United States was practically suspended by the financial panic of 1873 and large numbers of skilled workers and engineers were left unemployed. This domestic misfortune ironically catapulted Philip Collins and his brother to international prominence in 1876 when a London financial group chose them to build a railroad in the depths of the Amazon jungle. Laborers by the thousands thronged Walnut Place, Philadelphia, in front of P. & T. Collins' offices which had received some eighty thousand applications for positions on the expedition and it "was more difficult to secure an interview with Messrs. Collins than with the President of the United States".

When the expedition was finally mounted there was no doubt in contemporary minds that history was being made and the prestigious New York Herald said on January 2, 1878: "A national interest centers in the voyage of this ship /the "Mercedita carrying the Collins party to Brazil / for the reason that it is the "first time in the history of this country that an expedition has been sent from "the United States, equipped with American money, material and brains, for the "execution of a great public work in a foreign country. The /Collins / party "of engineers, fifty-four in number, is said to be the ablest body of men of this "profession ever united in a single expedition". When finished the Brazilian project was meant to be the "only railroad outside the United States constructed "from end to end by Americans and ironed and stocked with American rails and "rolling stock"(Philadelphia Times, December 6, 1877), and the first proud presentation of American railroading know-how to the outside world.

The sequel is less exhilarating. After incredible hardships, shipwreck, and successful cutting and surveying of 320 miles of lines through the rain forest, Collins was unable to obtain amounts due him by his London backers and was forced to abandon work with losses of \$ 800,000.00. But the question of a fluvial outlet for the fabled riches of landlocked Bolivia had been pending for three centuries and was not to be given up easily. Within five years Brazil sent another expedition to validate and resume Collins' pioneering work and the Madeira and Mamoré RR was eventually completed in 1907-12. In 1972 when the line was being dismantled after sixty years' service, the Associated Press dispatch from Sao Paolo referred to the road so ably initiated by Collins as "an engineering challenge ranking with the Panama Canal".

P. & T. Collins emerged undiminished from the jungle venture. Their professional reputation was intact and they continued to be awarded contracts for "impossible" projects, half the profits from which were regularly used to pay obligations remaining from the Amazon bankruptcy. By 1884 the "P" was younger brother, Peter, and P & T undertook the Laurel Hill Tunnel of the South Pennsylvania, later converted to Turnpike use. Tom became a legend in his own time with a popular "Tom Collins" drink named for him, and Philip, the original "P", died at his home in Ebsenburg on February 23, 1895.

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Cambria County was a linchpin in the hard road west over the Alleghenies in the Republic's pre-Civil War years, a role already recognized in its Allegheny Portage Railroad National Historic Site and the world famous Horseshoe Curve of the Pennsylvania Railroad. Here the grand engineering problems which made transcontinental railroading possible were solved by enterprising "can-do" builders like Philip Collins who undertook tasks given up by others. His house is the only residence of a pioneer railroad builder extant in the area and, as such, is historically linked to and compliments in an important way the National Park Service's present holdings here which commemorate the nation's unique Allegheny railroading experience.

The Community Period (1907-). Philip Collins' widow lived in the house after his death but eventually the house was sold in 1905 to a Pittsburgh philanthropist, D. E. Park, who was a summer resident of Ebensburg. He made the purchase with the intention of creating a Y.M.C.A. for the community and immediately invested another \$ 10,000 (beyond the \$ 10,000 price of the house) in the construction of an attached gymnasium at the rear. The gymnasium provided spectator space on two levels and a bowling alley with locker room facilities in the basement. The project was dedicated in 1907 and conveyed to the Ebensburg YMCA "so long as it was used for the youth of the community".

The center served the community actively for seventy years. The gymnasium addition was used for concerts, theatrical productions and dances as well as for athletic events. The house provided game rooms and meeting places for youth groups and civic organizations; at various times it was the home of the town's Boy and Girl Scout Troops, the Ebensburg Women's Club, the Justice of the Peace, a summer theater, the Ebensburg Jaycees and a teenage "Swing In" social group. The main living room of the house had a special role as the Ebensburg Free Public Library from 1923 until 1949 (now housed in the New Municipal Building) and afterward as home of the Cambria County Historical Society and Museum from 1951 to 1964.

The community service years are less glamorous and of more parochial interest than the years as a residence of distinguished men. Historically, however, they are important years since the building was the sole source of needed social and recreational facilities to the town and its youth in an era when the public school system, churches, and the municipality were unable to provide adequately. The halls of the Noon House echoed to the running feet of thousands of children for seventy years and touched the life of almost everyone who lived in the county seat from 1907 to 1977.

The role of the Noon House was gradually assumed by the municipal building, the school plants and other locales and from 1977 on no suitable use was found for it. It is unoccupied and resources for its maintenance are wanting. Decisions relative to its use and disposition have been hampered by the restrictive provisions of the bequest which required that the property revert to the Park family heirs when it ceased to be used for the benefit of the youth of the community. Since the heirs were numerous, widely dispersed and disinterested, legal action
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was taken to quiet the title and have it vested in the Borough of Ebensburg. The borough has offered the property for public sale subject to guarantee by the prospective buyer to restore, maintain, and put to dignified fitting use the historic premises (March 1984).

Architecturally, the Noon-Collins house is one of only a handful of Federal style structures remaining in Cambria County. Architectural features on the house include Georgian, Adamesque, Neo-Classicism and Romantic Classicism. The overall composition of the Noon-Collins House remains intact.

9. Major Bibliographical References

- 1 - Craig, Neville B. Recollections of an Ill-Fated Expedition to the Headwaters of the Madeira River in Brazil. Philadelphia and London (J.B. Lippincott), 1907.

(This book is a primary source for the history of initial efforts to build the Madeira & Mamoré RR and for the national and international (cont'd))

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property One (1)

Quadrangle name Ebensburg Quadrangle
UTM References Pennsylvania-Cambria Co. 7.5 minute series

Quadrangle scale 1 : 24,000

A

1	7	6	9	2	8	6	6	4	4	8	3	8	3	2
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

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Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification The Noon House fronts 66 feet on the middle of the 100 block (south side) of East High Street, Ebensburg, Pa., and runs completely through the block 264 feet south to Lloyd Street. (A USGS quadrangle and a plat are inclosed)

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries n/a

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title WALTER R. DAVIS -Assc Prof of Romance Lang & Linguistics, St Francis College
-Director, Cambria County Historical Society

organization Saint Francis College

date 31 March 1984

street & number Loretto, Pa. 15940

Off: 814-472-7000
telephone Home: 814-472-9715

city or town

state Pennsylvania

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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title _____ date _____

For NPS 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

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reputation of the Collins as railroad builders. Unless otherwise specifically attributed in the text of the Significance statement, it is the source of the particulars of the Amazon adventure.)

2 - Swetnam, G. & Smith, H. A Guidebook to Historic Western Pennsylvania.
Pittsburg (University of Pittsburg Press). Pitt Paperback # 114.

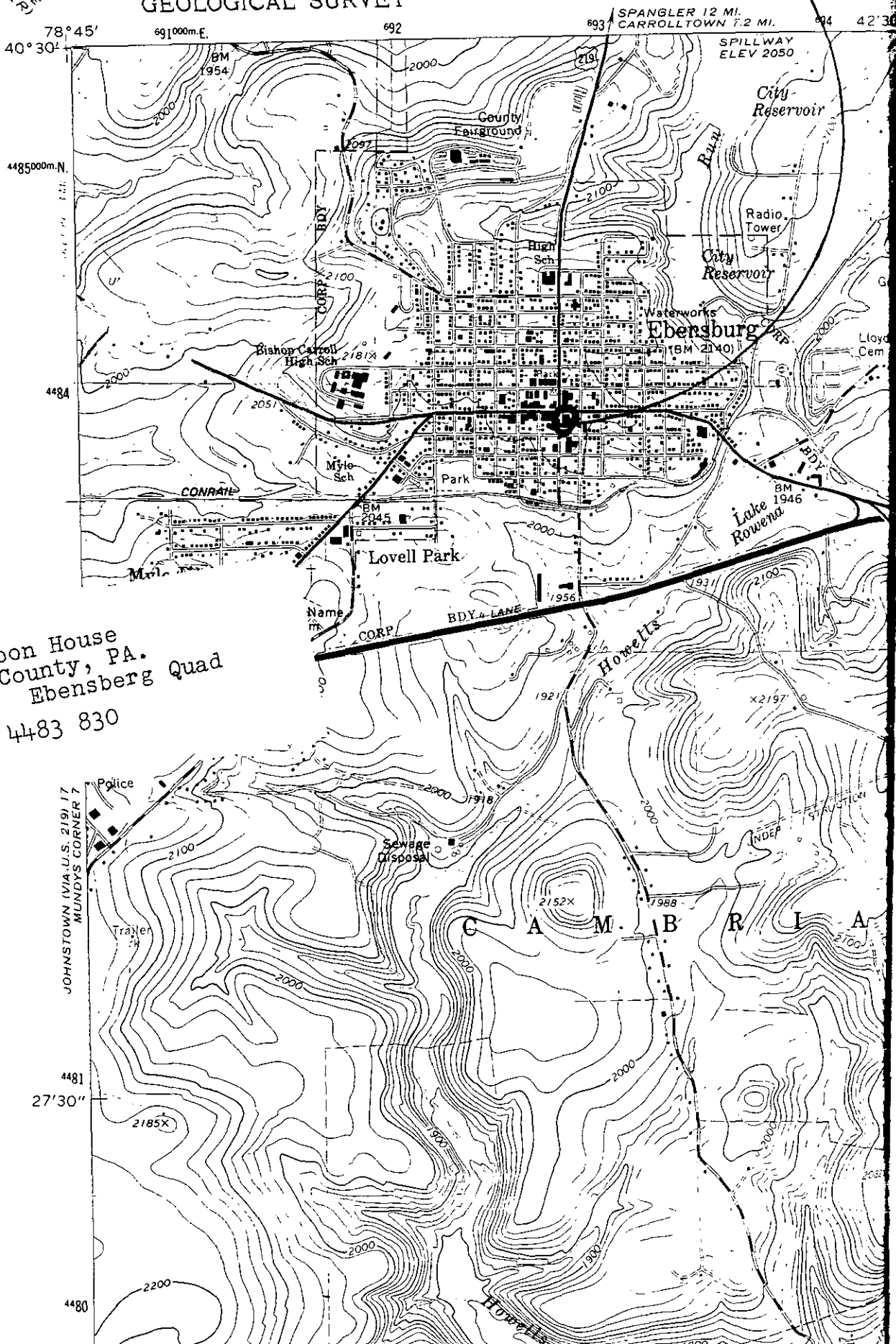
3 - Shoemaker, Philip. The Collins Brothers - World Builders of Railroads.
An Address to the Centre County Historical Society (Pa), 29 March 1974.
Archives of the Centre Co. Historical Society, Bellefonte, Pa.

Other Documentation:

Archives of the Cambria County Historical Society. The Society maintains extensive files on Philip Noon, the Collins family, and the property itself. These files contain photos, newspaper clippings, personal notes and materials used in preparing the nomination.

PHILIP NOON HOUSE

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY



Philip Noon House
Cambria County, PA.
zone 17, Ebensburg Quad
692 860 4483 830

JOHNSTOWN (VIA U.S. 219) 17
MUNDYS CORNER 7

Police

Trailer

Sewage Disposal

C A M B R I A

4481

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