

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name UNITED STATES POST OFFICE, CONNELLSVILLE, PA.  
other names/site number Connellsville Post Office

### 2. Location

street & number 115 North Arch Street  not for publication NA  
city, town Connellsville  vicinity N/A  
state Pennsylvania code PA county Fayette code 051 zip code 15425

### 3. Classification

#### Ownership of Property

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

#### Category of Property

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

#### Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	<u>      </u> buildings
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> sites
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> structures
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:  
NA

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

DR. BRENT D. GLASS  
Signature of certifying official  
PA HISTORICAL & MUSEUM COMMISSION

9/21/92  
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

### 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

## 6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

government/post office

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

government/post office

## 7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Classical Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation sandstone

walls brick

roof asphalt

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Connellsville Post Office is a two-story, neo classical revival, five-bay brick structure of stretcher bond coursings with stone trim and a sandstone foundation. The building, constructed between 1911 and 1913, is still in use as a post office. Built by W. H. Fissell Company of New York City, the Post Office is centrally located downtown on North Arch Street in Connellsville, Fayette County, Pennsylvania, on ground which fronts 159' on North Arch Street. The exterior length of the building is 99' along North Arch Street and a width of 54' with a work room extension of 10' to the rear. The face has a height of 34'4 $\frac{1}{2}$ " from the grade to the cornice. From the latter to the peak of the roof is 9'. These measurements have not changed since 1913. No major additions have been tacked on to the building. A minor change was made on the south side of the post office in 1965 to enlarge the driveway, mailing vestibule and mailing platform, to facilitate loading and unloading of mail. A macadamized driveway, curbed with concrete, extends along two sides of the building with 14' mouths on North Arch Street and West Apple Street. This enlargement project necessitated giving up a grassy plot of 13'x34' along Orchard Alley but a 59' iron hitching rail remains to which five hitching rings are attached.

Public thoroughfares exist on three sides of the ground, leaving no space for intrusions by other buildings or objects and making it highly visible and accessible. The main entrance on North Arch Street faces the Youghiogheny River and is approximately two blocks from the Chessie System (originally B & O RR) Railroad Station. Across the street, the ground is occupied by City Hall. The building has been well maintained (as though the local postal force took pride in it) so that it stands today in much the same condition as when built. The building is aesthetically pleasing; placement and size of windows and entrances contribute to a harmony that is graceful and restful to the eye.

The building is constructed of gray pressed bricks above a granite base on concrete. The walls are set in 6" from the concrete footing. Windows and cornices are trimmed with marble. There are two entrances to the Post Office, the main one on North Arch Street and the other on West Apple Street, both with marble semi-columns of Ionic architecture flanking the doors and extending the full height of the two stories. The entrances are accessible by granite steps from the 8' and 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ ' sidewalks. A bronze pedestal lamp of standard government design is installed on each side of each entrance--four in all. The entrance frames are metal and at the top of each is the inscription: "U. S. Post-office." The main facade, facing west, has four windows in the first story and five windows in the second story. On the north side are five windows, two on the first story and three on the second story. Three two-story windows are in the workroom extension in the rear. Eight other windows, two large and two small in each story light

See continuation sheet

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Connellsville Post Office

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rear rooms. Facing south there is one large window on the first story and one very small and three large windows in the second story. The original entrance on North Arch Street had sliding doors, carved to represent iron, the outside of which was of white pine and the inside of quartered oak. (These have been replaced with glass rimmed with metal.) Beyond were quartered oak revolving doors which have been removed though the turret housing them has not. The revolving doors turned into a 13' lobby. The Apple Street side doorway also had sliding doors of the same style as at the west entrance. Instead of a revolving door, hinged doors opened into the lobby. The outer doors on West Apple Street have also been replaced with glass and metal. Five of the west-facing windows in the center of the building surrounding the entrance have metal frames and the remaining four have wood frames. On the north side, only the window above the entrance has a metal frame and the rest wood. Carved in the cornerstone in the north-west corner of the building is: Franklin MacVeagh, Sec. of the Treas; James Knox Taylor, Supv Architect, MCMXI. In the south end of the building and to the rear is the mailing platform.

Upon entering the lobby from North Arch Street, one steps onto a terrazzo floor with marble borders into a 13' wide, L-shaped lobby which extends from the original registry window and then north, northwest to the Apple Street entrance. Inside the post office one faces a wall running the length of the lobby upon which are mail slots and rental boxes (or lock boxes as they were called). On its upper half are windows which provide light from the lobby to the work room beyond. An original writing desk sits on either side of the west entrance. At the south end of the lobby wall is the registry room and money order window. The registry window is 19'x24'. Also in the south end facing west are the delivery and stamp windows. All these windows have on the outside gratings burglar locks, worked by thumb latches concealed beneath. The glass sliding doors have small hinged windows set in for use when the larger windows need not be raised. At present, the delivery and stamp windows are unused; this function performed at the registry and money order window. Original wall lights in the lobby have been refurbished by the present postmaster.

At the north end of the first floor lobby is a marble staircase with iron stringed balustrade and quartered oak hand railing leading to the second floor. The postmaster's office is at the end of the lobby on the north side of the building. It is just inside the Apple Street entrance and to the left. It is 14½'x19' and is lighted by north and east windows. From the post master's office, a short passageway south connects to the workroom. On the left of the passageway is a closet and to the right an inspector's look-out shaft. On the east side is a small washroom.

The heart of the post office is the workroom on the east side of the building. It is parallel with the main entrance, separated by the lobby wall. The two-story high workroom occupies the greater portion of the first floor space, having an area of 2,164 sq. feet. It has a maple floor (original) on concrete above terra cotta; a 7'6" high wainscoting (originally pine-stained like oak, now painted white). Three two-story windows facing east and rows of windows at top of lobby wall, provide excellent lighting. There are six long radiators along the east side to heat the workroom. Near the carriers' window is a fire hose, long enough to reach any place on the first floor. Near the windows on the north side are two windows in the inspector's look-out shaft overlooking the workroom floor. (Inspectors used the look-out shafts to observe the workroom floor in cases of stealing or suspicion

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of stealing by carriers. Until the 1970's, two full-time inspectors were domiciled at the Connellsville Post Office.) Nine ceiling chandeliers and fourteen electric lamps above the boxes provided illumination at night. In the stack shaft in the south end are housed two ventilators arising from the furnace. A second inspector's look-out shaft with three windows is on the south side of the building. Also on the south side are doors to the mailing vestibule, light switches and a door to a women's toilet. A concrete, fire-proof vault with record closet above, both with steel doors, is also on the south side.

The registry room can be entered through a door between the vault and the delivery/stamp windows. It is lighted by windows in the west and south exposures and ceiling and desk lamps. Two radiators provide heat. In the northeast corner of the registry room is access to the look-out shaft. Between the registry and workroom is a door with two sections, the lower half having a table where carriers can receive and deliver registered packages and letters.

The mailing vestibule leads south from the workroom to the loading dock. It is 7'x24' with a cement floor and base with wood wainscoting. A door on its left opens into a rear hall with a stairway to the second floor. A door on its right opens into a cement stairway to the basement. On the right of the doors to the mailing platform is a door to another look-out shaft. The mailing platform doors are of heavy wood with plate glass, iron grating and sheet metal covering.

On the second floor in the northeast corner is the Postoffice Inspector's Room, similar to the Postmaster's Room one floor below. On the top landing of the second floor can be found a door to another look-out shaft and a fire hose. On the right is a granite and steel stairway to the attic. On the northwest side of the second floor is a second Postoffice Inspector's Room, three unassigned rooms and the Internal Revenue Room. Two large windows are in the corner rooms, and Rooms 3, 4 and 5 have triple front windows facing west. The rooms are finished with baseboards and picture molds on white plastered walls. The unassigned rooms were used later by Armed Service Recruiters, the Red Cross and the Selective Service.

The attic is unfinished. The roof has six round dormer windows (the eyebrows) with metal frames, square stack shaft at the south end and a flagpole on the north end. The flagpole, in 1913, was accessible only through a trap door. It was moved later to the front lawn on North Arch Street.

There are two stairways to the basement--one in the southeast corner of the building and the other beneath the marble stairs on the north side accessible through a door inside the north entrance. To the left of the southeast corner stairway is a room with showerbaths, toilet and washstands. On the right is a look-out window and a short hallway to the carriers' rest room, occupying the basement space beneath the registry room in the southwest corner. This room (18'x27') is known as the "swing room" where the carriers await the hours for deliveries. From the rest room are a door to a look-out shaft and a door to the furnace room. The latter occupies most of the basement in the southeast corner and contains the big steam heating plant. A door from this room opens to an outside concrete stairway. The coal room is at the northeast corner and a stairway to the Apple Street entrance is in the northwest corner. Remaining space is used for

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maintenance equipment and supplies. Brick pillars and walls support the rooms above.  
All basement windows are protected by gratings.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture  
Politics/government

Period of Significance

From 1913 to 1942

Significant Dates

1913

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Taylor, James Knox, Supv. Arch., Washington, D. C.

Fissell, W. R. Co., New York, N.Y., contractor

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The solid stately appearance of the Connellsville Post Office is a fine example of early 20th Century, Classical Revival Style, institutional architecture. The graceful fluted Ionic columns flanking both the entrance on North Arch Street and the one on West Apple Street are a mark of the classical style denoting a bygone period of architecture. The post office was built during the tenure of Supervising Architect of the Treasury, James Knox Taylor (1897-1912) who promoted the government's concept that government buildings should be monumental and beautiful and epitomize the ideals of democracy and high standards of architecture in the community. (A beautiful example of the neo-classical style already existed in the community in the Colonial Bank Building, built in 1906). Taylor's preference for the neo-classical or early American styles and superior materials and workmanship insured durability and long use. Taylor also insisted that the government buildings be individually designed. This philosophy was certainly manifested in the Connellsville Post office, begun in 1911 and finished in 1913.

The drive for the Post Office building began in 1902 and was initiated by Henry P. Snyder, editor and publisher of The Courier. The movement was considered "democracy at work," having begun at the local level, and announcement of plans for a new Post Office was hailed by The Courier as "the persistent pounding that broke the pork barrel." Mr. Snyder personally requested Congressman Ernest G. Acheson in 1902 to introduce a bill in the 57th Congress. This bill failed. He repeated his request to Congressman Allen F. Cooper who introduced a bill to the 58th Congress. This bill failed also. Congressman Cooper introduced the bill again--to the 59th Congress--and this time it received a preliminary appropriation of \$20,000.00 to acquire a site. Finally by June 25, 1910, appropriations in the aggregate of \$115,000.00 were approved and the project was on the move. Treasury officials came to Connellsville and consulted with leading citizens regarding the selection of a site which was purchased subsequently from B. F. Wallace and P. S. Newmyer.

Work was begun on the post office on November 24, 1911 and completed and occupied on January 25, 1913. During the previous 115 years of postal service in Connellsville, rental property was used for this function. Approximate cost for the project was \$115,000.00. The first postmaster was Benjamin Wells (who figured in the Whiskey Rebellion), appointed 1-1-1798. He was followed by 21 others. Mr. Arthur Kurtz was the incumbent postmaster and moved into the new Federal Building. It was finished just in time to begin handling parcel post in January 1912

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The Connellsville Post Office had to be one of the last to be built during the era of "monumental and beautiful buildings," for this philosophy was changed drastically in 1913 with the Public Buildings Act which specified that post office buildings for small cities would henceforth "conform to standards specifying an "ordinary class of building, such as any businessman would consider a reasonable investment." Post Offices would no longer be designed individually but would use the same design and floor plan whenever possible, supplied by the Supervising Architect." No other post offices in Fayette County exist in the neo-classical style.

The Connellsville post office combines beauty and utility, neither of which is sacrificed for the other. As recently as late 1977/early 1978, under a local redevelopment plan, a proposal was made to relocate post office operations. A letter from John Briecck, Postal Operations Special Services for Allegheny District, Pittsburgh, Pa., states: "No facility will be required at old location since new location is within two city blocks or .1 of a mile." Though the redevelopment plan was not carried out, the threat remains as the Postal Service continues to close or relocate post offices, "a decision that is made more than 600 times a year." The community would be impoverished if the post office was ever abandoned.

Connellsville's affluence in the early nineteen hundreds was due to the thriving coal and coke industry. It was the coke capital of the world; all records having been broken in coke production in 1912 with over 20,000,000 tons produced at an average price of \$1.92, according to the 1-2-13 edition of The Courier. A decline in the coal and coke industry really began in 1907 and continued until 1914 when it was provided a temporary boom through 1918 with a secondary peak in 1916, said peaks resulting from war needs. Apparently 1912 was a peak. Meanwhile, to serve the richest and largest coke production in the world, Connellsville had seven banks plus other financial institutions such as building & loan associations, two daily newspapers--The Courier and The News--both with first-class facilities, enterprising merchants, churches, a Carnegie Library since April 1903, two movies and one vaudeville house and plans for a new high school in the neo-classical style. Of the banks, The Colonial, of white marble in neo-classical style, was built in 1906. Yough Bank, built in 1910, was also neo-classical in style. In the renaissance style was the First National Bank (1901-1903) of six stories. All these buildings were within a block and a half of the post office site, as was a building with a metal facade of 3 stories built in 1893. The Colonial Bank is an especially good example of the neo-classical style, enduring and solid of white marble and a pink Milford granite base with an interior finished with marble and mahogany. None of these buildings except the Library (National Register 10-8-81) are used today for the purposes for which they were built. To take its place among the other buildings in downtown Connellsville at this period of industrial supremacy, it is fitting that the Post Office should be architecturally beautiful, enduring and stylish.

Accompanying photocopies are of the post office shortly after opening as shown by the 7-8-13 postmark and other buildings mentioned above.

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

The Courier, Connellsville, Pa., 1-25-13 (microfilm at Carnegie Free Library)  
 Post Office Files, Connellsville, Pa., (Dennis Young, PM and N.R. Manzella, Foreman)  
 Swank, James M., Progressive Pennsylvania: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1908, p 226  
 Hickory, W. O. IV. & Moyer, F. T., Geology and Mineral Resources of Fayette County, Pa.;  
 Harrisburg, Pa.; Dept. of Internal Affairs, 1940, p 351, 353  
 Keister, Kim, "Wait a Minute, Mr. Postman:" Historic Preservation, VOL 43, #5,  
 September/October 1991, p 53  
 McClenathan, J. C., etal, Centennial History of the Borough of Connellsville, 1806-1906,  
 reprinted 1974 by Connellsville Area Historical Society, pp 229, 238, 246, 250  
 PHR Survey Form, California State College, Fayette County Historical Resource Survey

See continuation sheet

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of property Less than 1 acre

**UTM References**

A 1 7 6 2 0 3 6 0 4 4 3 0 2 9 0  
 Zone Easting Northing

C \_\_\_\_\_

B \_\_\_\_\_  
 Zone Easting Northing

D \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

Beginning at the southeast corner of West Apple St. and North Arch St., then proceeding south 159' along North Arch St. to the north side of Orchard Alley, then 120' east, then 159' north to the south side of West Apple St., then 120' west to the point of beginning.

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**Boundary Justification**

The boundary includes the lots 148 and 156 which have been historically associated with this property.

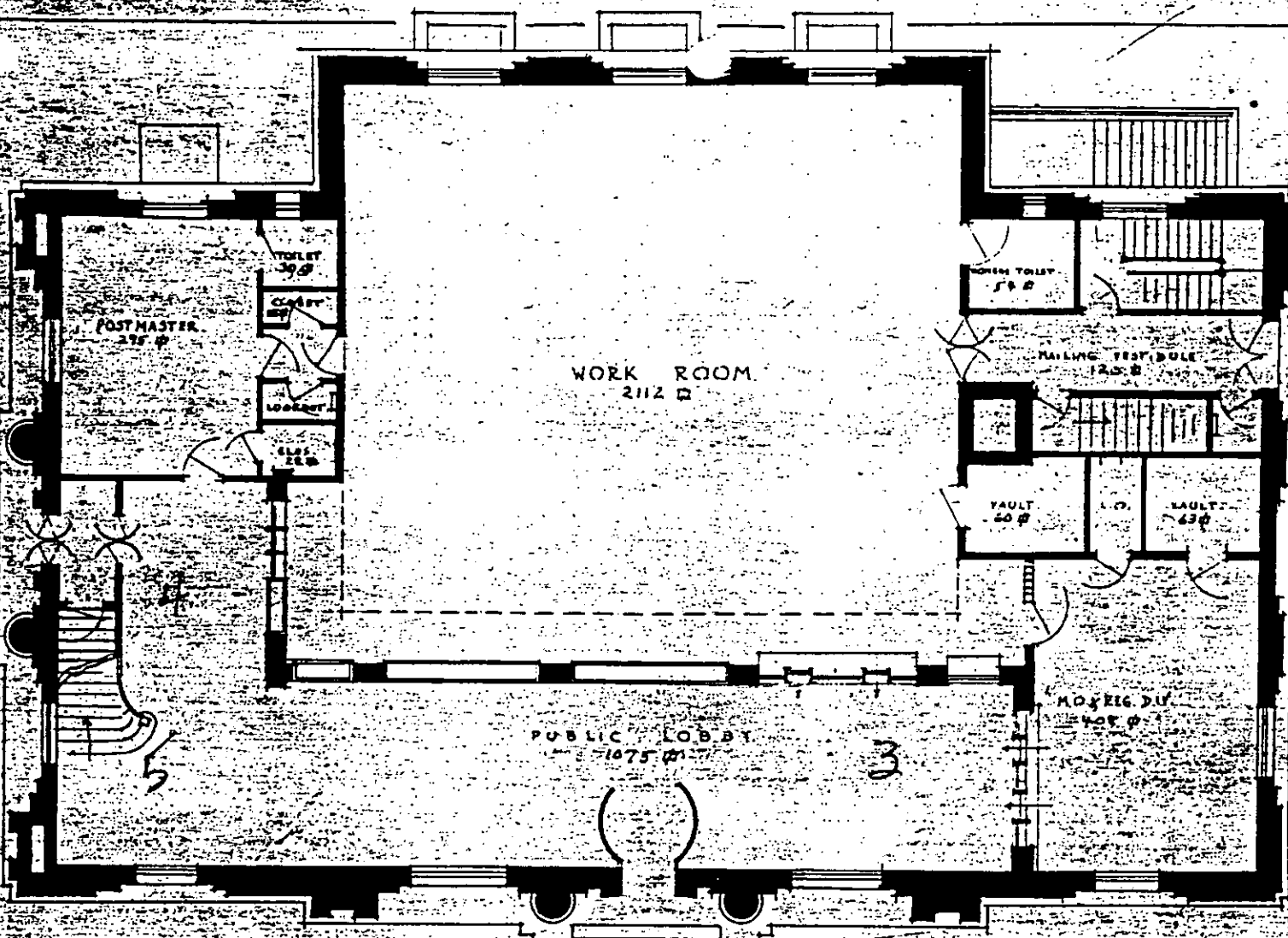
See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Miss Carmel Caller  
 organization Connellsville Area Historical Society date April 10, 1992  
 street & number 511 West Gibson Avenue telephone (412) 628-4262  
 city or town Connellsville state PA. zip code 15425



W. APPLE ST.

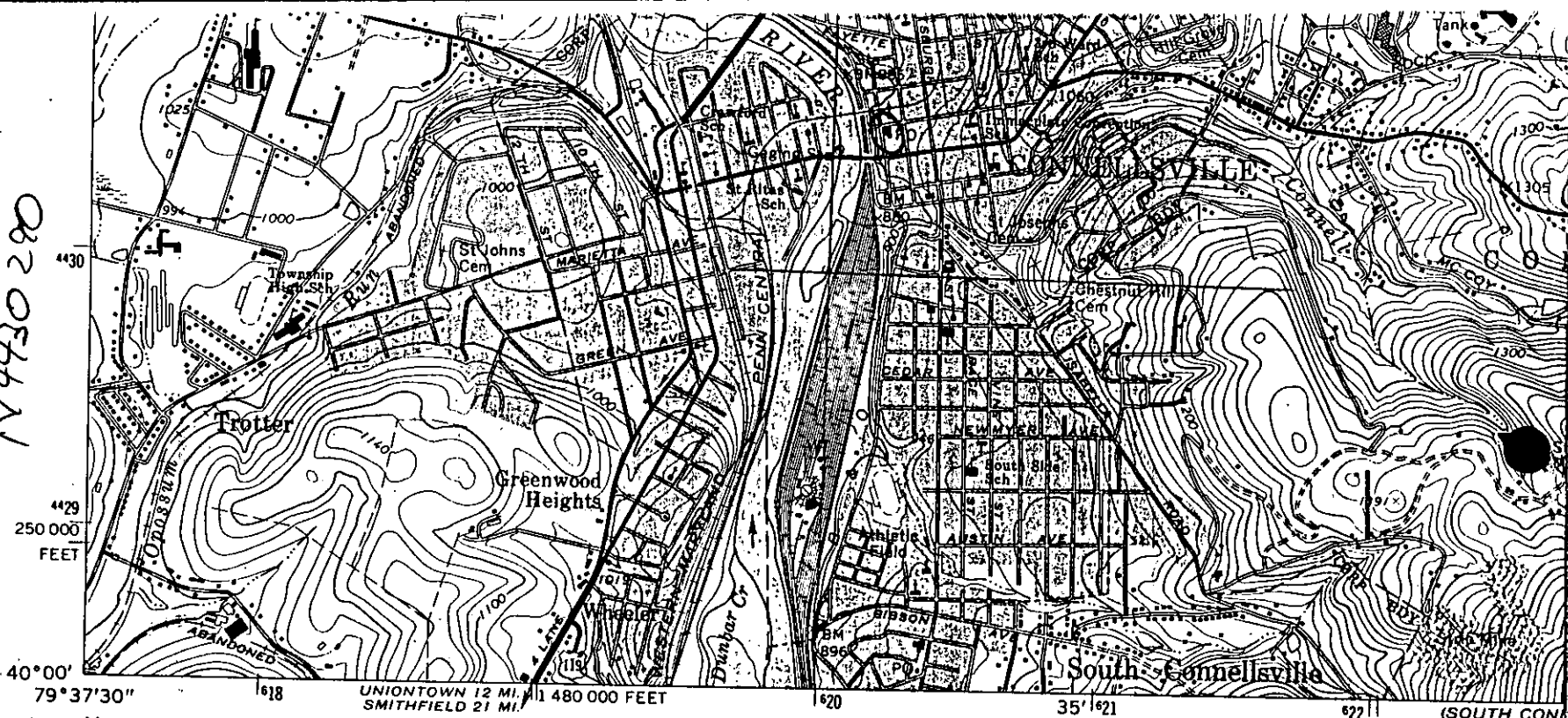


ASSIGNMENT  
FIRST FLOOR PLAN  
1/8" SCALE

U.S.P.O.  
CONNELLSVILLE, PA.  
DWG. 65  
DWN BY M.Y. G. 22-22

NORTH ARCH ST.

U.S. Post Office, Coarse  
 Fayette County  
 Connelville Quad - 200  
 F 620360  
 NV 4430 280



(UNIONTOWN)  
 5063 NW

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and USC&GS

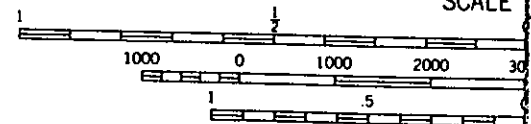
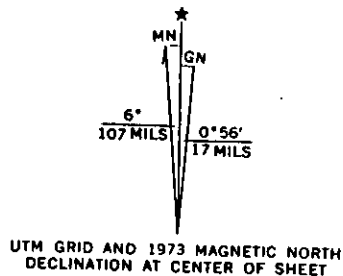
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1962. Field checked 1964

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
 10,000-foot grid based on Pennsylvania coordinate system, south zone  
 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 17, shown in blue

Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked

Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown

Revisions shown in purple compiled in cooperation with State of Pennsylvania agencies from aerial photographs taken 1973. This information not field checked



CONTOUR INTERVAL IS METERS

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACT  
 FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY  
 A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS