

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

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

For HCERS use only

received

date entered

1. Name

historic Bradford County Courthouse

and/or common

N/A

2. Location

street & number 301 Main Street (U.S. Route 6) N/A not for publication

city, town Towanda N/A vicinity of congressional district 10th Congressional District

state Pennsylvania code 42 county Bradford code 015

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<u>N/A</u> district	<u>X</u> public	<u>X</u> occupied	<u>N/A</u> agriculture
<u>X</u> building(s)	<u>N/A</u> private	<u>N/A</u> unoccupied	<u>N/A</u> commercial
<u>N/A</u> structure	<u>N/A</u> both	<u>N/A</u> work in progress	<u>N/A</u> educational
<u>N/A</u> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<u>N/A</u> entertainment
<u>N/A</u> object	<u>N/A</u> in process	<u>N/A</u> yes: restricted	<u>X</u> government
	<u>N/A</u> being considered	<u>X</u> yes: unrestricted	<u>N/A</u> industrial
		<u>N/A</u> no	<u>N/A</u> military
			<u>N/A</u> museum
			<u>N/A</u> park
			<u>N/A</u> private residence
			<u>N/A</u> religious
			<u>N/A</u> scientific
			<u>N/A</u> transportation
			<u>N/A</u> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Bradford County Board of Commissioners

street & number Courthouse

city, town Towanda N/A vicinity of state Pennsylvania

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Bradford County Courthouse

street & number 301 Main Street (U.S. Route 6)

city, town Towanda state Pennsylvania

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Court Facilities Study of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes X no

date February 1980 - January 1981 ___ federal X state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts

city, town Philadelphia state Pennsylvania

7. Description

Condition
 excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one
 unaltered
 altered

Check one
 original site
 moved date N/A

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Bradford County Courthouse of Towanda, Pennsylvania is a detached four story building of cruciform shape, with rusticated stonework and large dome atop. This structure embodies several prominent architectural styles characteristic of this period. The facade of the west entrance exhibits strong neo-Classical features, the rear and side arms of the cross were done in the Early Renaissance Revival style, while the interior reflects late Victorian and also included Beaux-Arts use of space to create monumental effects in a relatively small building. The Courthouse stands upon a 4.67 acre lot which gradually slopes to the west bank of the majestic Susquehanna River. A modest two story annex constructed of native brick stands adjacent to the Courthouse upon the same finely manicured and professionally landscaped lot. This acreage is also highlighted by a large soldiers' monument, purchased by the County Commissioners in the early 1900's.

The exterior Courthouse walls consist of native sandstone, quarried and cut in Bradford County. All floors have large, square, single light sash windows. Two keystone arched doorways provide entrance from the north and south facade to the ground floor. The main entrance on the west facade enters to the first floor and is supported by two Tuscan columns. Twelve more Tuscan columns border six pillars which support the double portico. The second floor portico of the west facade is separated by three large arched windows and two smaller windows with hood molding and a balustrade below. Each window is separated by pilasters which run to the pediment. Upon the pediment an anthemion declares "Justice, Law, Mercy" within a circlet of olive branches in relief. Raking cornices adorn the pediment roof. The octagonal drum is accentuated by 32 narrow arcaded windows. The drum supports the octagonal dome which resembles the dome of the Cathedral in Florence, Italy (1296-1462). The dome has a diameter of 50 feet and is shingled with green glazed terra-cotta pantiles. A cupola supports a 10 foot silver plated statue of "Justice".

The interior Beaux-Art features are extremely unusual for this locale. Throughout the Courthouse, all window casings, doors, baseboards, chair-rails and exposed woodwork are made of a highly finished native (Bradford County) hand carved or moulded white oak.

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Bradford County Courthouse

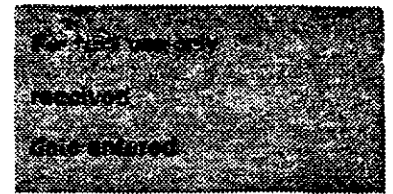
For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet	Description	Item number 7	Page 2
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The ground floor is entered through either the north or south arch. The flooring is of terrazzo with a border of black and white patterned marble mosaic. The walls are plaster painted in a white rough coat. Oak chair-rails and ceiling moulding highlight the walls. The office space of the ground floor adheres to the original floor plan and has only been altered in function.

Passage from the ground floor to the first floor is limited to a large cast iron staircase with slate steps and oak handrails. Upon arriving on the first floor, immediately noticeable is the white marble mosaic flooring with red, black and gold marble border. A one inch thick Italian marble wainscoting stands five feet high on the walls of the first floor rotunda, the Prothonotary's office and the Commissioner's office. The walls above the wainscoting are highlighted by eight baroque scroll shaped consoles adorned by molded plaster heads of Pan, the Greek God of forests and fields. These eight consoles also aid in support of the cast iron second floor balcony. The abundance of oak woodwork is again overwhelming. The various offices of the first floor include the Register and Recorder, Prothonotary, Sheriff, Commissioners, Treasurer, Veterans Affairs and the Personnel Office. These offices remain much as planned experiencing only minor changes.

A large Italian marble staircase rises from the first floor to a mid-story landing and separates in two directions to the second floor rotunda. Elaborate iron grillwork supports the oak handrail which encompasses the entire stairway and second floor balcony. Once to the second floor, the marble mosaic flooring and white marble wainscoting remain an outstanding feature. Double oak doors with vented overhead fan-lights provide entrance to Courtroom #1, Courtroom #2, and the Law Library. Other single doors with arcaded transomed windows above, lead to the remaining second floor offices of Probation, Public Defender, District Attorney and the two Judge's offices. Courtroom #1 exhibits some of the more distinctive features found in the Courthouse. A group of four arcaded cut glass windows add detail to the light passing into Courtroom #1 from the skylights above. This courtroom is unique by having large canvas sheeted walls for accoustical purposes, an afterthought of the original contractor to dampen noise of passing locomotives. The high beamed ceilings and canvas walls are painted in a geometric motif found throughout the Courthouse. Four copper finished chandeliers fitted for both gas and electric operation hang from the ceiling.

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Continuation sheet Bradford County Courthouse
Description Item number 7 Page 3

Two large oak Corinthian columns support the entablature under which the Judge's bench resides. The beauty of the intricate wood-work surrounding the bench is unequalled throughout the entire building.

Access to the third floor is limited to a narrow spiral staircase located between the Law Library and the Probation office. Octagonal in shape and arcuated on all sides, the third floor is very ornate in both architectural design and artistic impression. Four ornamental lamps are suspended from the scroll shaped acanthus leaf keystones of the four balcony arches. Coffered panels with dart and oval gilded molding adorn each arch. Baroque paintings cover the spandrels of all eight sides. Use of the third floor is limited to the office of the Hearing Master. The remaining rooms and attic are used for storage of documents and courtroom evidence.

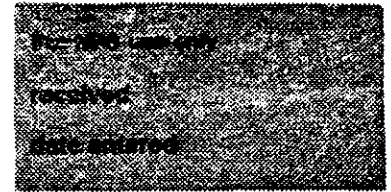
The octagonal drum has been done in white plaster highlighted with gilded dart and oval molding. The Drum is bracketed mid-way in support of the drum balcony from where one may view the surrounding area through the arcaded skylights. Light passes through these windows to the rotunda ceiling which has been painted to depict clouds opening into a blue sky.

Suspended from the center of the rotunda ceiling is a magnificent copper-finished chandelier with a diameter of 10 feet which rises 54 feet above the first floor level. Five grape-like clusters sport sixty tear drop shaped lights that illuminate the entire rotunda area.

The grounds surrounding the Courthouse are beautifully landscaped with various species of trees and finely manicured shrubs. A large granite soldiers monument stands in the west lawn between two large spruce trees. The monument depicts four Civil War clad men surrounding a cupola with a fifth man atop. This monument was purchased by the County Commissioners in the early 1900's to commemorate the soldiers and sailors from Bradford County lost during the Civil War. A two story, three bay by four bay brick Courthouse annex is also found upon this lot. The annex was constructed between 1847-1848 and has served along with all three Bradford County Courthouses, thus providing a visual link to the past.

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Bradford County Courthouse

Continuation sheet

Description

Item number

7

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The Courthouse and the Annex possess excellent integrity. They remain the same in appearance as they did when first constructed. Only minor changes have been made to the buildings. These changes have been closely monitored by county employees and historians intent on preserving the buildings' integrity. In accordance with this monitoring, changes have conformed to the materials specifications made by the original architects.

NPS counting purposes: The nominated property contains two contributing buildings and one contributing object.

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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> 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 type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1847-1848, **Builder/Architect** Thomas Bradley/Lehman & Schmitt

1896-1898, c.1905
Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Bradford County Courthouse is an architecturally prominent building in Pennsylvania's Northern Tier Region owing to its large scale, elegant design, costly materials and combination of Neo-Classical, Early Renaissance Revival and Beaux Arts styles. The building's architecture reflects the pride and concern of county residents who selected the Courthouse design on the basis of an architectural competition. The building's designers, Lehman and Schmitt, were an Ohio firm noted for monumental buildings. Since its construction the Courthouse has served as the seat of county government. The adjacent Courthouse Annex building (1847-1848) provides a reference to an earlier period of Bradford County's history.

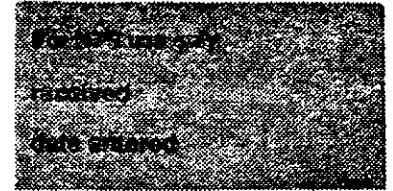
The Courthouse Annex building was completed in 1848 as Bradford County's second courthouse (on the nominated courthouse site) was being constructed. The second courthouse lasted until 1896 when it was deemed unfit for use and condemned by a Bradford County grand jury. As plans were made to build a new courthouse, the citizens of Bradford County were so intent upon construction of an outstanding structure that a Citizens Advisory Group was created by the County Commissioners. In a unanimous decision by the Commissioners and the Citizens Advisory Group, it was decided that an open competition would be held among many interested architectural firms throughout the East to determine the design that would best fulfill the needs of the county. A group of fifteen competing architects gathered in Towanda representing firms from all over the East. Exhibition of the different plans began on Friday, November 15, 1895. It wasn't until November 29, 1895, after careful consideration, that a final decision was made by the Commissioners and the Advisory Group, approving the plans of Israel Lehman and Theodore Schmitt, a very reputable firm from Cleveland, Ohio (1885-1939).

Lehman and Schmitt were responsible for the designs of many architecturally significant buildings in the Cleveland area. Important achievements of the firm include the Sheriff Street Market, the Central Armory, Euclid Avenue Temple, and notably the Cuyahoga County Courthouse which is included in the National Register of Historic Places under the Cleveland Group Plan Historic District. Further works of Lehman and Schmitt include the Temple of the Tifereth Israel Congregation built in 1894 for the local Cleveland Jewish population. This large temple was done in the Renaissance Revival idiom, with rusticated stone work, fenestrated drum and large four sided medieval dome. All these features bear strong resemblance to those of the Bradford County Courthouse and perhaps set the basis for its design.

Construction of the Bradford County Courthouse began in May of 1896. The contractor responsible for construction was Thomas Bradley of Corning, New York. Bradley received the contract April 16, 1896 after his low bid of \$113,866.00 was approved by the Commissioners. The builder was to strictly adhere to the plans of the architect by using native sandstone in construction of all exterior stonework, excluding the granite columns supporting the double portico. Construction proceeded much as planned and the building was completed and occupied in the fall of 1898. The soldiers monument was added to the grounds in the early 1900s.

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Continuation sheet Bradford Co. Courthouse Item number 8 Page 2

The design of the Bradford County Courthouse is unique to the Northern Tier Region. No other monumental building in the surrounding area possesses the combination of architectural styles found in the courthouse. The nearby monumental Christ Episcopal Church in Towanda does utilize the same sandstone construction in a similar rusticated fashion, but the style is purely Gothic. The courthouses of the surrounding counties have architectural styles different from those of the Bradford County Courthouse. The Wyoming County Courthouse was redone during 1869 in the Italianate style. The Sullivan County Courthouse in Laporte was completed in 1894 and is in the simple Romanesque Revival style. The Tioga County Courthouse in Wellsboro was built of native sandstone in 1931 using the Greek Revival style and elements of the Federal style. The Susquehanna County Courthouse was completed in 1855 and is termed an excellent example of the Classical Revival style.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property 4.67 acres

Quadrangle name Towanda

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	8	3	8	0	3	6	8	4	6	2	4	6	2	6
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification The above said property is bounded on the North by Park Street, South by Court Street, East by River Street and the Susquehanna River and to the West by North Main Street (U.S. Route 6). The nominated property contains the contributing resources and all historically associated land.

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

state	N/A	code	N/A	county	N/A	code	N/A
state	N/A	code	N/A	county	N/A	code	N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Michael J. Hufnagle, Intern/William Sisson

organization Bradford County Planning Comm./PHMC date _____

street & number 301 Main Street (U.S. Route 6)/ State Museum telephone (717)265-5700/(717)783-8946

city or town Towanda/Harrisburg 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 LARRY E. TISE, State Historic Preservation Officer date _____

For NPS use only
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register
date _____

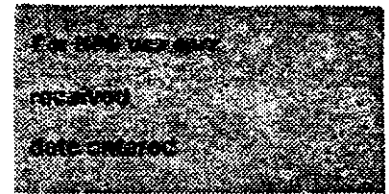
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

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

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Continuation sheet Bradford Co. Courthouse Item number 9 Page 2

Inventory of the Count Archives of Pennsylvania: Bradford County.

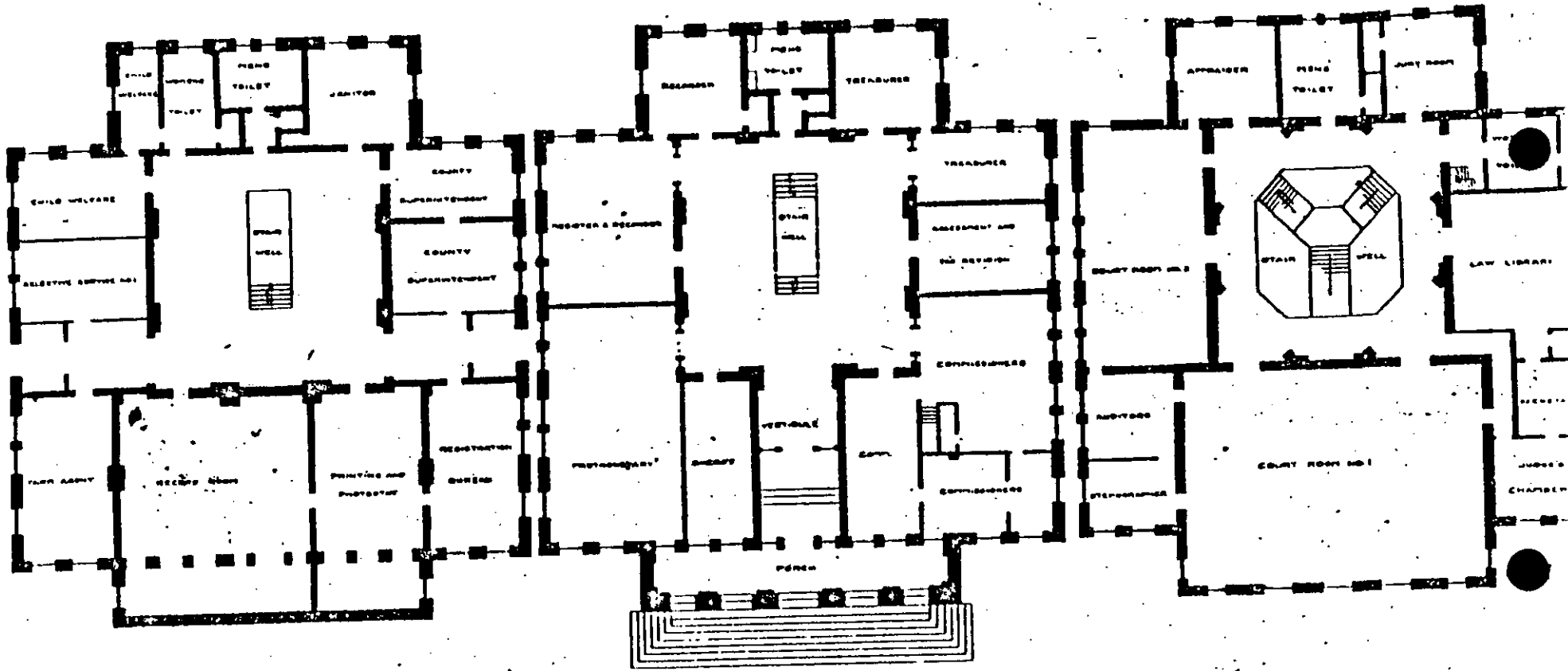
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Craft, David, History of Bradford County, Pennsylvania. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania:
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Haverly, Clement F., History and Geography of Bradford County, Pennsylvania 1615-1924).
Towanda, Pennsylvania: Bradford County Historical Society, 1924.

Lehman, Isreal J. and Schmitt, Theodore,
Specifications for Materials and Labor Required for the Construction of a
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Johannessen, Eric, Cleveland, Ohio Architecture. Cleveland, Ohio Western Reserve
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BRADFORD COUNTY COURT HOUSE,
BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN
W.M. LEE
1962

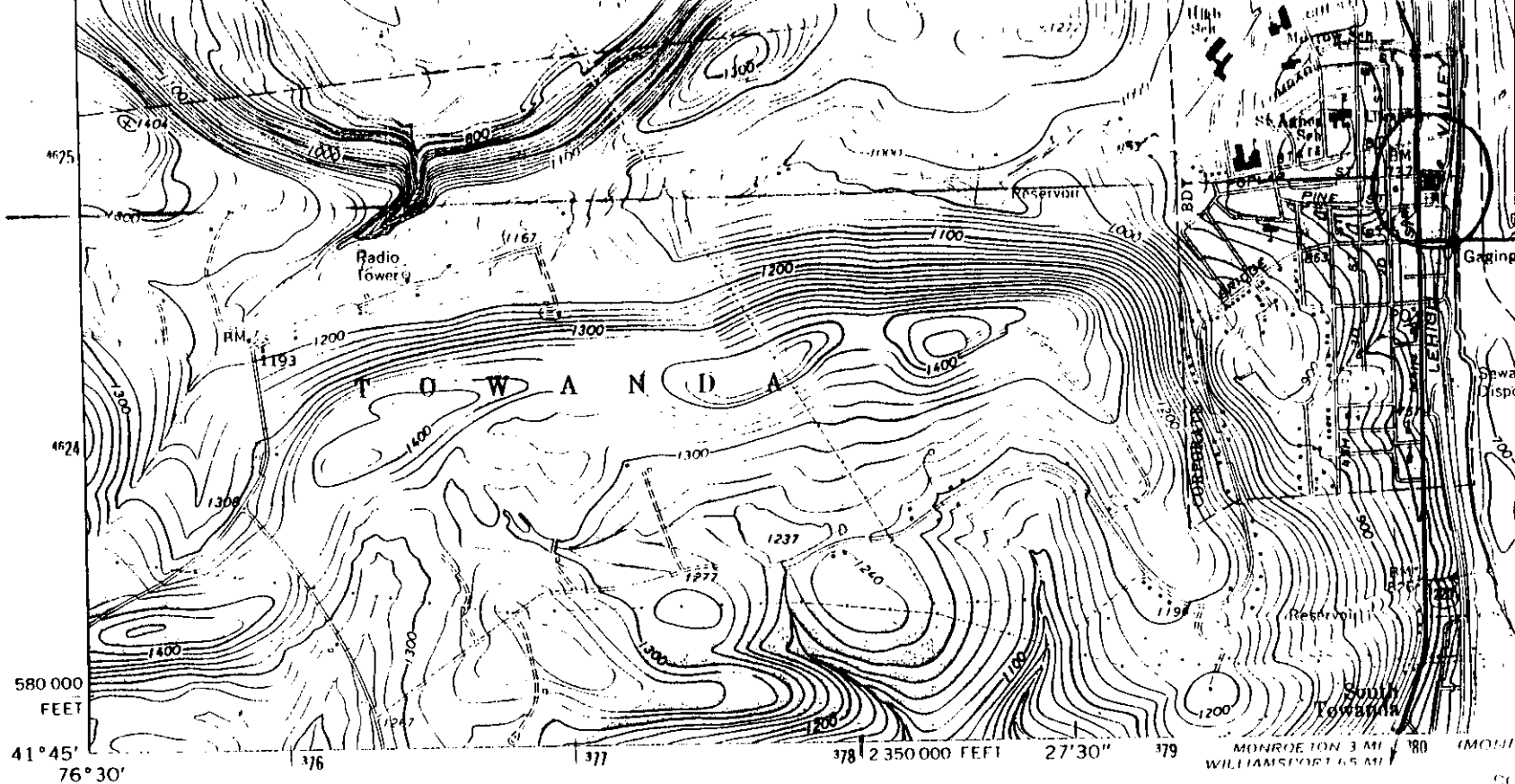
BRADFORD COUNTY COURT HOUSE
FIRST FLOOR PLAN
W.M. LEE
1962

BRADFORD COUNTY COURT HOUSE
SECOND FLOOR PLAN
W.M. LEE
1962

Bradford County

BRADFORD COUNTY COURTHOUSE
 Bradford County
 Towanda Quadrangle
 Zone 18
 E380368 N4624626

(POWELL 1:62 500)
 5867 II



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

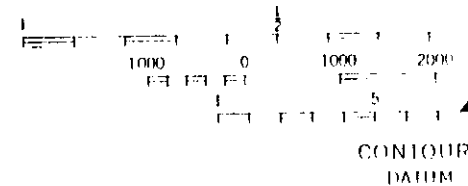
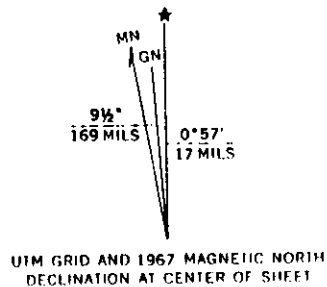
Control by USGS and USC&GS

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1966. Field checked 1967

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
 10,000-foot grid based on Pennsylvania coordinate system, north zone
 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 18, 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 area in which only landmark buildings are shown



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