

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

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 Robinson, Jesse, House

other names/site number Robinson, Jesse, Manor

2. Location

street & number 141 Main Street

not for publication N/A

city, town Wellsboro

vicinity N/A

state Pennsylvania

code PA

county Tioga

code 117

zip code 16901

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:

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

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.

Brent D. Glass

Brent D. Glass

Signature of certifying official

Date 1/9/91

Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission

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)
 Domestic-single dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
 Domestic - hotel

7. Description

Architectural Classification
 (enter categories from instructions)

Queen Anne

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Granite

walls Brick, Wood

roof Asphalt

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Jesse Robinson Manor, built in 1888, is of typical Queen Anne style. The dwelling is three stories in height, massive in design with a steeply pitched roof and specially cut wood shingle siding in the dormer areas. The exterior is primarily of red brick. The shape of the house is asymmetrical and except for minor modifications made in the early 1960's, it has been little changed since the time of its construction. The setting of the Robinson Manor is on a large corner lot facing the Borough's main street with its gas-lighted boulevard. It is an area that was predominant with many large homes and built in an era of gracious living. Many of these homes have since been removed. However, this section of the village has remained much the same in its appearance with the surviving older homes commanding the respect of their more modern cousins.

As you approach the front of the Robinson house you are impressed by the beautiful wrap-around, latticed trimmed porch. The entrance section of the porch is extended with a gabled roof to cover the front steps. The entry is set out about 30 inches from the main facade to afford more space to the interior vestibule. The entry itself is very imposing with a large double door containing art glass panels covered by a semi-elliptical arch of decorative wood and a brick lintel. To the left of the doorway as you face the main street is a large bay that extends from the cut stone foundation, three stories in height and capped with a gable roof. On the first floor is a large square window with a stained glass transom. The double window on the second floor has a stained glass transom with an arched stone lintel. In the gable area are three small stained glass windows surrounded by fan carved wood siding. Above the porch roof, to the right of the entry, is a large balcony extending from the second floor sitting room. To the left and in back of the large front bay is an arched balcony window extending from the attic and covered by a gabled roof. The face of the gable area is of wood made to represent basket weave.

The right side of the property, as you face the main street, is a continuation of the wrap-around porch. Another large three story bay extends beyond the porch. It contains a double window with stained glass transom, capped with a brick lintel on the first floor. The second floor boasts a beautiful double sash window, flanked on either side semi-arched windows of stained glass and capped with an arched stone lintel. The gable area of the bay is faced with specially cut wood shingles. Beyond the main side bay is the rear entrance to the manor. This was also the area of the servants entrance.

See continuation sheet

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Continuation Sheet**

Jesse Robinson Manor

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The rear of the house is unobstructed by bays. There are three windows on the first floor. Their frames are arched at the top with brick lintels. There are no windows in the second story. The roof in this area is sharply pitched on the left side and extends from the peak to the top of the first floor level. On the right side it extends only to the attic level, giving the appearance of salt box architecture. The left side of the second floor level along the steep pitch of the roof, is a triangular area of fancy cut wood shingles. The gable area contains two small windows and the siding is solid wood with cut-in diagonal lines. The chimney appears to emerge from the second floor level.

Beginning from the rear of the house, the left side has a dormer which extends out from the roof but is flat with the side of the house. This area has two windows on the first floor. One is narrow with a stone cap. The other is a three section casement window with diamond shape panes. This is one of the later changes made when the kitchen was remodeled. The second story has one double window with an arched wood carved cap and a lintel of brick and stone. Moving forward we find a large bay extending from the cut stone foundation, three stories to a gabled attic. In this area a new chimney was built in the 1960's. There are two windows flanking the chimney on the first floor and two on the second floor. In the gable area are two small half arc windows on either side of the chimney. The siding in the dormer area is simulated basket weave. Further toward the front of the house we find a wooden bay extending from half way up the first story to the edge of the roof line. This bay was built to hold the beautiful stained glass window that is on the landing of the inside open staircase. The final section of the left side contains another of the original chimneys that protrudes slightly from the side of the house. The front corner windows on the left side of the house on both the first and second floor have transoms of stained glass.

We shall see from the following description that the interior of the Robinson Manor, as was true of the exterior, reflects the workmanship and design of patient craftsmen of the era.

The wood in this home is native cherry, oak and pine. The woodwork was crafted by a local carpenter, Mr. A. G. Sturrock, who apprenticed under his father, David Sturrock, a master carpenter from Forfarshire, Scotland who moved to Wellsboro in 1834.

As you enter the front vestibule you will notice the original English made minton tile on the floor and a marble threshold leading into the central foyer. The vestibule features two sets of double doors. The front doors featuring etched glass panels and the inner doors with stained glass panels.

Upon entering the foyer you notice the double pocket doors on either side. To your right is the Robinson sitting room, (it is used today as the dining room) Most of the wood downstairs is native cherry. This room features a lighter stain than the parlor or foyer. The woodwork on the main floor has never been treated or refinished from the original stain. Only lemon oil has been used which accounts for the warm appearance. The sitting room fireplace is faced with minton tiles from

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Stoke on Trent, England. The back of each tile is dated with the month and year it was produced. Apparently the Robinsons purchased the tiles for the homes five fireplaces while they were in England on their honeymoon and brought them back when they returned to Wellsboro. Today three of the original five fireplaces remain. The top center section of this fireplace features the symbol of England, a woman with seahorses in her hair. This room has one full length window which could be opened and used as a door to enter the front porch without returning through the foyer and vestibule.

Directly across the foyer through another set of pocket doors was the original parlor. To the rear of this room was the library. When the Christian Science church owned this property a wall that featured a pocket door was removed and between 1940 - 1960 the weekly services were held in this area. The original pocket doors are stored in the attic today. In the parlor section there is a beautiful cherry fireplace. It is the most elaborate and unusual of the remaining fireplaces. The flue is divided so that stained glass could be placed above the fireplace and angled, beveled mirrors placed on either side of the stained glass gives the appearance of four stained glass panels. At one time there were apparently curved glass doors on either side above the mantel to form a display case. The minton tiles on this fireplace look like Greek mythological Gods and Goddesses. Both the parlor area and the library featured the full length windows that open on to the wraparound porch. The large windows in the library area were of clear glass to provide better light for reading. The door at the end of the library led to a half bath. An unusual feature for 1888 and considered quite modern.

Leaving the library area and crossing the foyer there is a pocket door to your left at the foot of the open stairs. This door is actually made of cherry but on the inside, of what was then the dining room, the door is faced with an oak veneer to match the oak paneling in this room. You will notice that the wainscoating features carved areas that look like sunflowers. This room and the kitchen have undergone the most extensive remodeling. There was an oak ornate fireplace where the modern brick fireplace stands today. The works of the original fireplace are housed in the attic. The tile and stained glass have since disappeared. The flue in this fireplace was also divided to provide space for the stained glass panels.

Today's kitchen was actually formed from three rooms. The first part located just off the dining room was a walk through pantry. Beyond the pantry was a small gally kitchen, typical for Victorian times. Behind the kitchen was a small room where the cook slept. The Downeys had a door cut through so they could get to what was originally the servants entrance. Near that entrance, to the right, were the servants quarters. Today this area serves as the laundry room. In this section of the house, within a twelve foot space, there are eleven doors. There was also another door in this area that divided the servants entrance from the main entrance to the rear of the house. The back stairway is in this section and what is now a large closet was actually a passageway for the servants, so they could travel from the rear of the house to answer the front door without disturbing either family members or guests.

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One of the dominating features of the main foyer is the solid cherry grand staircase. The lighting fixtures at the base of this stairway are the only original ones that remain in the house. The lights were wired for electricity when the house was built but remained lighted by gas. They were rewired for electric when Mrs. Davis purchased the home from the Downey's in 1984. As you ascend the stairs, notice that the banister is constructed so that your thumb fits into a groove on one side and your fingers have a special place on the other for ease of use. At the top of the landing is the largest stained glass window in the home. The light from the afternoon sun illuminates the whole area. All of the stained glass in this home is original, but its origin is not known. It is believed that the glass was imported from Europe and not American Tiffany since the company was just in its infancy at the time the Robinson home was built.

Beginning at the top of the staircase, to your left was the master bedroom (Jesse's). The closet in the master bedroom today was at one time an open passageway to the upstairs sitting room. The sitting room also had a doorway connecting it to Hattie's bedroom. The sitting room has a plain fireplace featuring minton tile. There are two full length windows in this room through which you may enter the balcony. When you go out on the balcony you can see some of the decorative tile that is located along the upper edge of the house. This was one of the first houses in Wellsboro to have closets.

The central bedroom was renovated by the Downey's, who had a fireplace installed. This bedroom features two doorways. A front door that leads to the stairs and a side door that leads to the bathroom across the hall.

The woodwork in all of the bedrooms is of oak and the doors are made of cherry with an oak veneer on the inside of each room.

There are two bathrooms on the second floor today. However, when the Robinsons occupied the home, the bathroom in the rear of the house served as a nanny's room which is adjacent to the back bedroom. This room was the Robinson family nursery.

The Jesse Robinson Manor has very good integrity. No major alterations have been made to the exterior of the building. The interior has experienced a number of changes, most of them made by the Downeys in order to update conveniences such as bathrooms and the kitchen. On the first floor the walls between the original kitchen and the cook's room and pantry have been removed in order to expand the kitchen. New kitchen cabinets, counters and appliances were also installed by the Downeys. The servant's quarters were converted into a laundry room. The wall between the parlor and library was also removed by the Christian Science Church in order to create a larger meeting room. On the second floor a passageway between the original master bedroom and sitting room was divided into two closets serving these rooms. The nanny's room was also converted by the Downeys into a second bathroom. In addition, a fireplace was installed in the central bedroom on the second floor. Despite these changes to the interior, much of the interior's original appearance remains, particularly impressive woodwork and stained glass windows. The original opulent character of the interior still clearly remains.

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 _____

Period of Significance
 1888 _____

Significant Dates
 1888 _____

Cultural Affiliation
 n/a _____

Significant Person
 N/A _____

Architect/Builder
 Pierce, Joseph
 Dockstader, Otis _____

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

The Jesse Robinson Manor is significant as an example of late nineteenth century domestic architecture in Wellsboro. This house was built during a period when Wellsboro was prospering from the flourishing lumber industry. The Jesse Robinson Manor is an outstanding and well preserved example of the high-style homes erected during this prosperity. This house is also a fine example of the work of Joseph Pierce and Otis Dockstader, architects who had one of the leading firms in south central New York and northern Pennsylvania.

As Wellsboro began to prosper, the trend was toward the grandiose living of larger homes, thus creating a status symbol for the more prominent families. These homes had an excellent setting along the upper main street with it's broad avenue and close proximity to the business district.

Other homes of comparable size and style built in the late nineteenth century still remain as a reminder of a time when Wellsboro was prospering from the lumber industry.

The Chester place, as it was known, of 134 main street was built in 1855 and remodeled in 1898. While originally Victorian in style the home was remodeled in the Colonial Revival architecture. This house is now the town's public library.

The Waldo Miller estate of 139 main street, was built in 1879. It is of Queen Anne Style, comparative in size with the Robinson home and of wood construction. The present use of the Miller estate is a funeral home.

The Virginia O. Williams estate, of 126 main street, was built in 1886. It is another example of Queen Anne style in Wellsboro. The house is very similar to the Robinson home but does not contain the lavish stained glass windows. The house is well preserved and is used today as a law office.

All of these homes are comparable to the Robinson Manor in size and period of construction, but some have gone through physical changes and while like most large homes of this period, they have been put to more practical uses. Only the Robinson Manor remains today as a residential structure.

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Jesse Robinson Manor

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It is not possible to express the historical significance of the Robinson house without referencing the background of the original owner, Mr. Jesse Morse Robinson. Jesse was the son of John L. Robinson, founder of the First National Bank of Wellsboro. Jesse was well educated and became the cashier of the bank in 1876. During the latter years of his father's life, much of the responsibility in the management of the bank fell to Jesse. Upon the death of his father in 1893, Jesse became president of that institution. Jesse was not active in the state or national politics but he was a strong Republican and served as treasurer for the borough of Wellsboro and the local school board. He also served as a director of many local businesses.

Jesse built the manor for his second wife, Hattie M. Willis. They were married on April 19, 1887. Jesse and Hattie had two daughters. Jesse had two sons by his first wife. He died suddenly at home at the age of 43 on August 6, 1896. Jesse's will stated that Hattie was allowed to remain in the home for the rest of her life but if she chose to re-marry or move from the area, the house and its contents were to be given to his children. Instead, after a year and one half, Hattie was successful in breaking the will and sold the manor to Judge Howard Marsh who lived in the home until his death on May 22, 1945.

The historic and current functions of the manor are indicative of how many of these beautiful old homes evolved from the 19th to the 20th century. The Robinson manor, originally built as a private home for Mr. Robinson and his family, has seen a variety of uses. Although, due to the untimely death of Mr. Robinson, his family lived in the manor for only eight years, it remained a private residence for the next 47 years. In the mid 1940's it became the property of the area's Christian Science Church and was used as a house of worship for approximately 20 years. In 1964 the manor was purchased by Dr. William Downey, a dentist, who converted the basement area into dental offices and restored the main floors for private living quarters. It was he who added the few modern changes to the kitchen, baths, heating and electrical systems. Dr. Downey maintained his office and residence in the Robinson manor for another 20 years. In 1984 the manor was sold to Mrs. Patricia Davis, who shortly thereafter began the operation of a Bed and Breakfast at the manor. In November 1987 the manor was again sold to Tall Pines Realty Inc. a subsidiary of Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Corp. and an affiliate of the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Hospital. Since that time it has continued to operate as a Bed and Breakfast.

The Robinson manor is a product of the design created by architects Pierce and Dockstader. Both are well known for their work in the Elmira, NY area. Joseph Pierce, born in 1855, was the son of Herschal W. Pierce a leading builder in southern Yates county, NY. Joseph Pierce worked for his father as a carpenter and intermittently attended nearby Starkey Seminary where he took courses in drafting. After graduating in 1879, Pierce went to work for architect Warren H. Hayes who may be best remembered as the first graduate of the school of architecture at Cornell University. Pierce managed the Elmira, NY office for Mr. Hayes from 1881 to 1883 when he purchased the Elmira practice and went into partnership with Otis Dockstader.

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Jesse Robinson Manor

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Mr. Dockstader had previously worked as a draftsman for the Hayes firm in 1877 and 1881. Otis Dockstader was born in Tioga County Pennsylvania in 1851 and had trained as a civil engineer at the Cook Academy in Montour Falls, NY. Dockstader practiced as a civil engineer building bridges for the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western railroad until joining Pierce as a partner in 1883.

The firm of Pierce and Dockstader specialized in domestic and church architecture. At first their designs were for moderate priced homes, however as the firm obtained larger commissions, their residential work grew more sophisticated. A sampling of their work is evidenced in the west-side historical section of Elmira NY, the First Baptist Church of Dundee, NY, the First Baptist Church of Elmira, NY and the home of Alanson B. Houghton of Corning, NY. (Great-grandson of the founder of Corning Glassworks.)

In 1890 the practice of Joseph Pierce and Otis Dockstader was dissolved and they went into private practice.

9. Major Bibliographical References

1. History of Tioga County, PA 1897, R.C. Brown & Co.--Reproduction by Unigraphic Inc. Evansville Ind. 1976. Volume I page 335, Volume II page 669.
2. The Wellsboro Agitator - 1888
3. The Wellsboro Gazette - 1888
4. The archives of the First National Bank (now, Citizens and Northern Bank of Wellsboro).
5. The Tioga County Historical Society, Wellsboro, PA.
6. Living descendants of the Robinson family.
7. Chemung County Historical Society - file on Pierce and Dockstader.

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

Acreage of property Approximately 1/2 acre.

UTM References

A

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

C

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B

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Zone Easting Northing

D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at the south corner of the intersection of King Street and Main Street then proceeding south 38° 58' east 176'. Then following a line south 51° west 119.3'. Then proceeding north 39° 01' west 176.75'. Then north 51° 08' east to the point of beginning.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

Boundary reflects the legally recorded deed of survey recorded August 27, 1980 by Michael J. Fisher R.S., under the direction of boyer Kantz R.S.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Curtis D. Mosher, Volunteer Historian
organization Tall Pines Realty, Inc. date 1990
street & number P.O. Box 194 telephone (717) 724-1631 ext. 298
city or town Wellsboro state PA zip code 16901

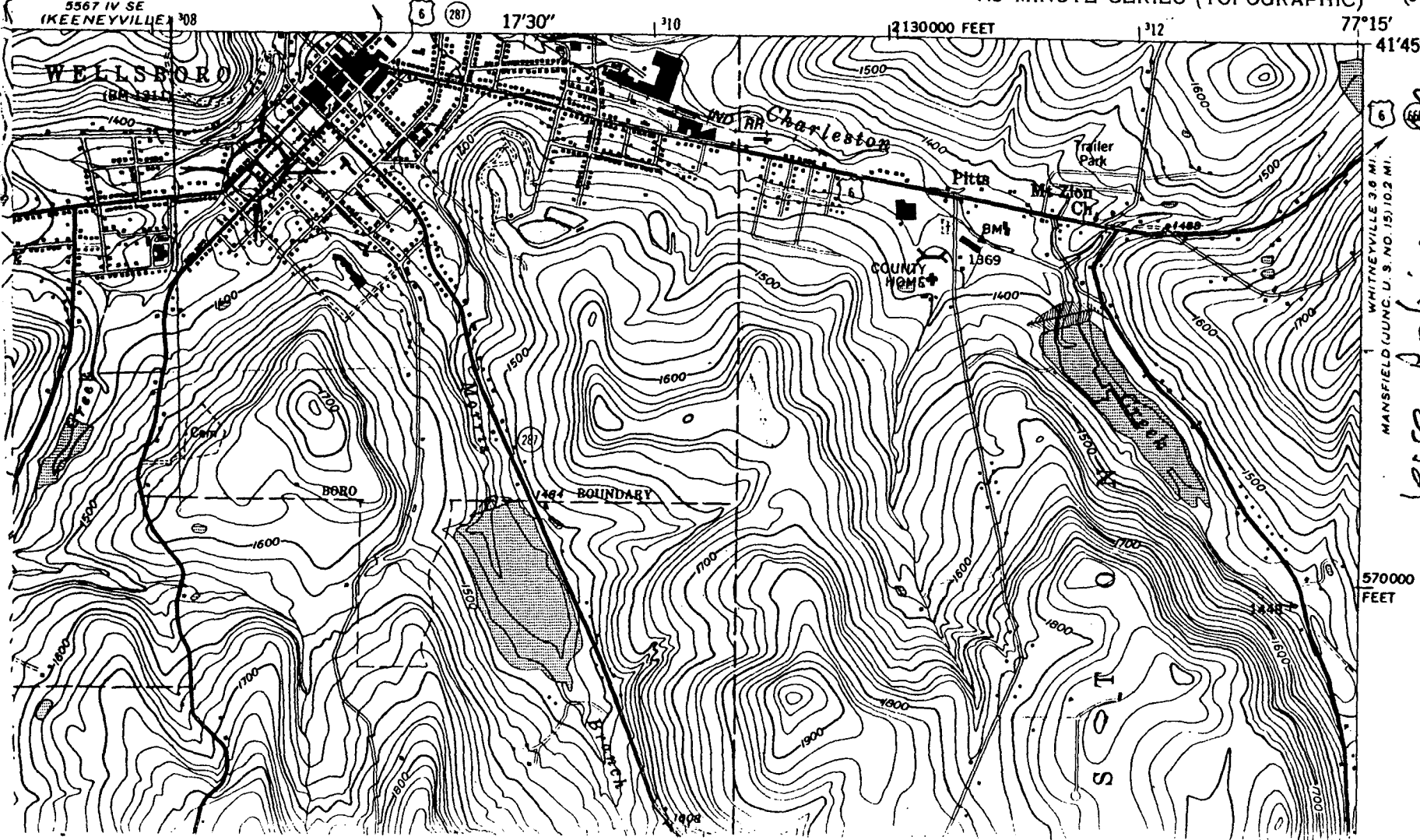
DEPARTMENT OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES
TOPOGRAPHIC AND GEOLOGIC SURVEY

5567 IV SE
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COUDERSPORT 47 MI.
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FEET

Jesse Robinson *Map of*
Tioga County zone 18
Antrim quad
E 308380 N 4623830
5567 IV SE
(CROOKED CREEK)