

**NOMINATION OF HISTORIC BUILDING, STRUCTURE, SITE, OR OBJECT
PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

SUBMIT ALL ATTACHED MATERIALS ON PAPER AND IN ELECTRONIC FORM ON CD (MS WORD FORMAT)

1. ADDRESS OF HISTORIC RESOURCE (must comply with an Office of Property Assessment address)

Street address: **3514–30 Lancaster Avenue**

Postal code: **19104**

Councilmanic District: **3**

2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

Historic Name: **Greenville; The Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church; and The Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men** Common Name: **Old Quaker Building**

3. TYPE OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

Building

Structure

Site

Object

4. PROPERTY INFORMATION

Condition: excellent good fair poor ruins

Occupancy: occupied vacant under construction unknown

Current use: **Apartment House**

5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Please attach a plot plan and written description of the boundary. **SEE ATTACHED SHEET.**

6. DESCRIPTION

SEE ATTACHED SHEET.

Please attach a description of the historic resource and supplement with current photographs.

7. SIGNIFICANCE

Please attach the Statement of Significance.

[See Attached Sheet]

Period of Significance (from year to year): from

1799 to 1968

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration:

1799; Post-1841; 1890-1892; 1892-1895

Architect, engineer, and/or designer:

John Ord (Factory Building)

Builder, contractor, and/or artisan:

Lawrence Harmstad (Greenville)

Original owner:

Samuel Blodget, Jr. and Rebecca Smith

Other significant persons:

Samuel Blodget, Jr. and Rebecca Smith

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION:

The historic resource satisfies the following criteria for designation (check all that apply):

- X (a) **Has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth or Nation or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past; or,**
- (b) Is associated with an event of importance to the history of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; or
- (c) Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style; or,
- X (d) **Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen; or,**
- X (e) **Is the work of a designer, architect, landscape architect or designer, or engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; or,**
- (f) Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation; or,
- (g) Is part of or related to a square, park or other distinctive area which should be preserved according to an historic, cultural or architectural motif; or,
- (h) Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or City; or,
- (i) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history; or
- X (j) **Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.**

8. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Please attach a bibliography.

SEE ATTACHED SHEET.

9. NOMINATOR: POWELTON VILLAGE CIVIC ASSOCIATION

Name with Title: **Oscar Beisert, Author**

Email: **Oscar.Beisert@gmail.com**

Date: **25 July 2016.**

Street Address: **P.O. Box 7616**

Telephone: **(717) 602-5002**

City, State, and Postal Code: **Philadelphia, PA 19101**

Nominators are not the property owners.

PHC USE ONLY

Date of Receipt: 7/25/2016

Correct-Complete Incorrect-Incomplete

Date: 8/30/2016

Date of Notice Issuance: 8/30/2016

Property Owner at Time of Notice

Name: JAR Old Quaker Property LP

Address: 117 N 15th St

City: Philadelphia State: PA Postal Code: 19104

Date(s) Reviewed by the Committee on Historic Designation: _____

Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission: _____

Date of Final Action: _____

Designated Rejected

Proposed for Historic Designation in the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places



The Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men, ca. 1900. Courtesy the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

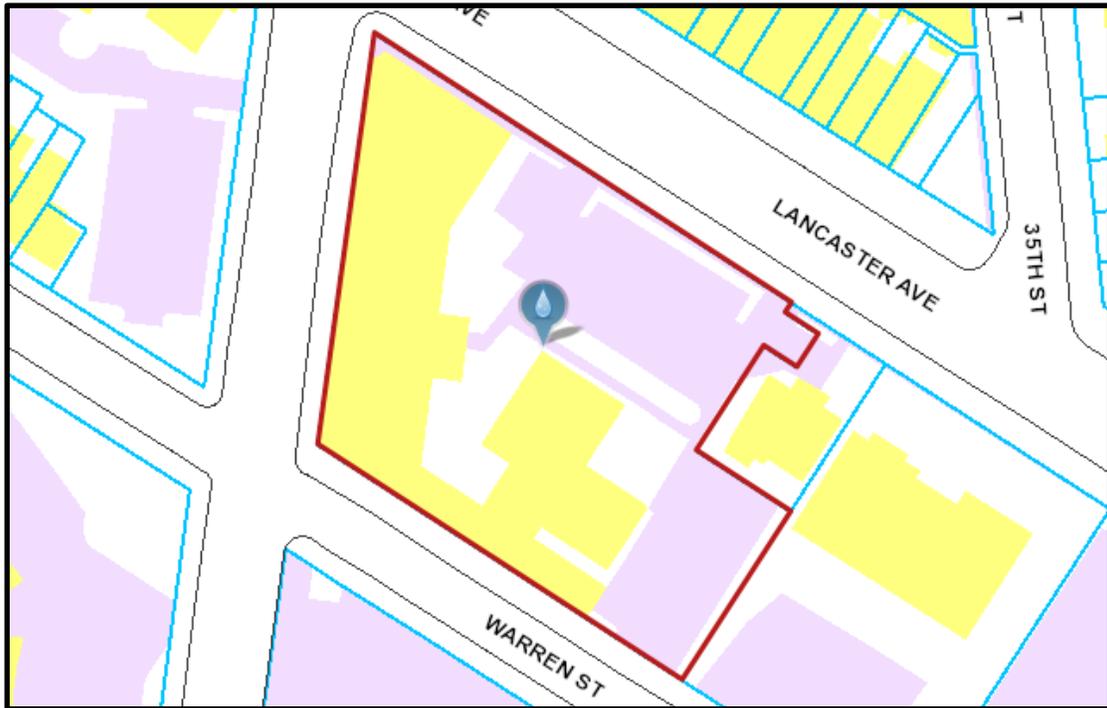
Greenville
The Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church
The Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men
3514-3530 Lancaster Avenue, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



The Former Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men. Photo by Oscar Beisert.

5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

BEGINNING at the point of intersection of the Southeasterly side of N. 36th Street (60 feet wide) with the Southwesterly side of Lancaster Avenue (80 feet wide); thence from said point of beginning extending the following ten (10) courses and distances: 1. along the said side of Lancaster Avenue South 53 degrees 59 minutes 54 seconds East 250 feet 10 1/4 inches to a point; 2. South 36 degrees 00 minutes 06 seconds West 5 feet 11 3/4 inches to a point; 3. South 53 degrees 59 minutes 54 seconds East 19 feet 11 3/8 inches to a point; 4. South 36 degrees 00 minutes 06 seconds West 19 feet 11 3/8 inches to a point; 5. North 53 degrees 59 minutes 54 seconds West 19 feet 11 3/8 inches to a point; 6. South 36 degrees 00 minutes 06 seconds West 62 feet 10 1/4 inches to a point; 7. South 53 degrees 59 minutes 54 seconds East 56 feet 10 1/4 inches to a point; 8. South 36 degrees 00 minutes 06 seconds West 101 feet 2 5/8 inches to a point on the Northeasterly side of Warren Street (50 feet wide); 9. along the said side of Warren Street North 53 degrees 59 minutes 54 seconds West 219 feet 2 inches to a point on the Southeasterly side of 36th Street; 10. along the said side of 36th Street North 11 degrees 01 minute 00 seconds East 209 feet 7 3/8 inches to the first mentioned point and place of beginning.

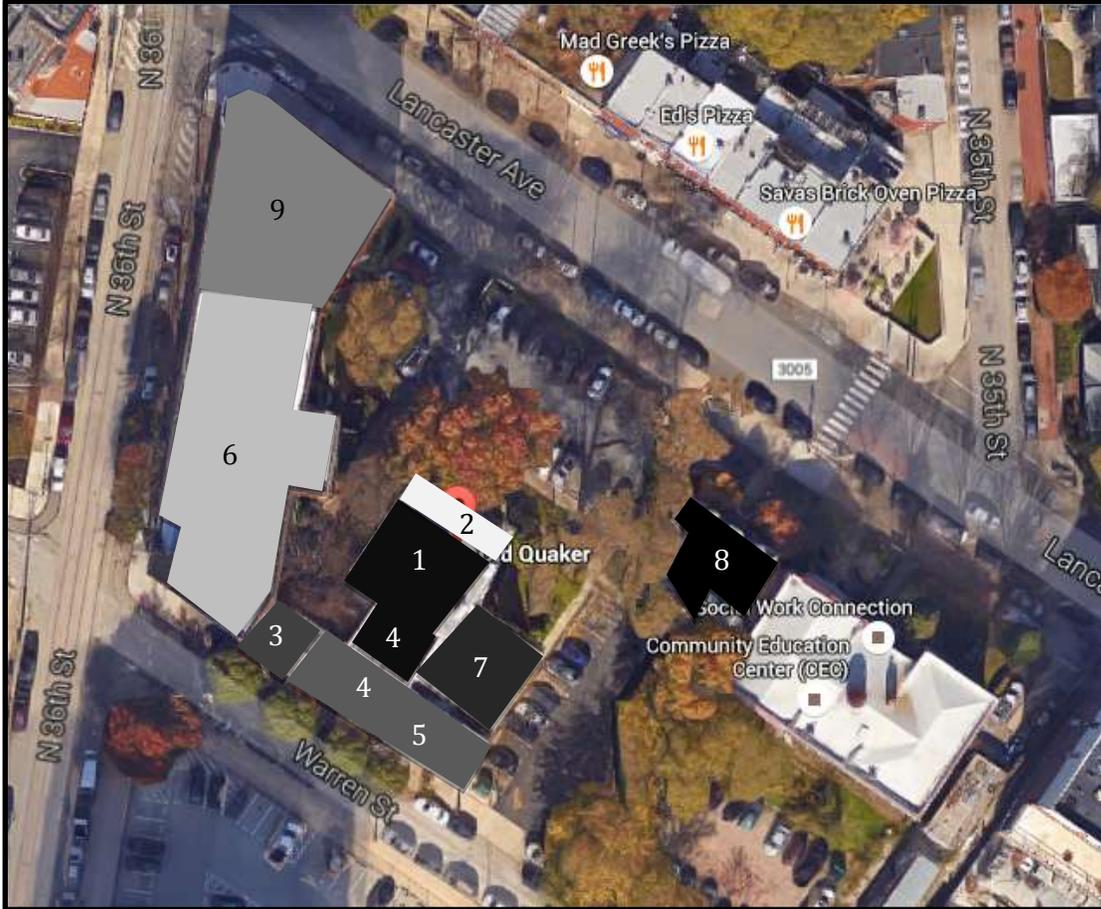


Boundary of the subject designation in red. Courtesy Philadelphia Water Department.

6. PREFACE: PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Brief Explanation of the Buildings of the Nomination: the complex of buildings known most commonly, historically as the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men (PWHBM) includes the following buildings:

1. **Greenville:** Sometimes referred to as the “Mansion House” of the Greenville Estate, it is the oldest building on the site and its initial construction appears to date to 1799 in its earliest phase of construction. Originally constructed by Samuel Blodget, Jr., the habitable, but unfinished Greenville was eventually completed in 1814–1815, after which it was bought at sheriff’s sale and held in trust for Rebecca “Becky” Smith Blodget and passed on to her daughter, Julia Ann Allen Blodget Britton. Greenville was enlarged between 1841 and 1866; however, it is less likely that the Brittons enlarged the building. The enlargement and re-stylization of Greenville was more likely completed by its subsequent owners (to be named later in the document) between 1850 and 1866. From 1866 to 1876, Greenville was used by the Protestant Episcopal Church as the “Mission House.” In 1876 the house was sold to the PWHBM and used by that entity until its removal from the site in 1979.
2. **Workshop:** prior to the use of the site as the PWHBM, a small four-room, two-story brick stable stood at the rear of the property on Warren Street. This building was likely constructed between 1841 and 1876. The Workshop was first enlarged in 1876, at which time it appears to have been connected to Greenville. The Workshop was again enlarged in 1880.
3. **Factory:** the southerly portion of the Factory of the PWHBM was designed and constructed between 1890 and 1891. The northerly section of the Factory was constructed between 1892 and 1895.
4. **Administration Building and Caretaker’s House (3512 Lancaster Avenue):** The Caretaker’s House was designed and constructed between 1892 and 1893. This building is not subject to this nomination, but is included in the discussion to fully define the built context.



Aerial photograph of the subject site. Courtesy Google Earth.

The following list represents the known phases of construction that created the current make-up of the subject site:

1. Greenville (1799)
2. Greenville, North Addition (Post-1841)
3. Stable (Post-1841)
4. Stable, Workshop Addition (1876)
5. Stable, Workshop Addition (1880)
6. Factory, Phase One (1890-1892)
7. Greenville, East Addition (1891)
8. Administration Building and Caretaker's House (1892-1893) (3512 Lancaster Ave, not subject to this nomination)
9. Factory, Phase Two (1892-1895)

6. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

With portions of the building dating to 1799, Greenville is the oldest building of the PWHBM. The building's current iteration is an Italianate mansion at the center of a complex of nineteenth century buildings that comprise a multi-unit apartment house known today as the Old Quaker Apartments. The complex is known historically as the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men and includes the following buildings: 1. Greenville, a circa 1799 house 2. the original Workshop of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men, which dates to 1876 (1876 Workshop), as a workshop; 3. the Factory of the PWHBM, which dates to 1890–1891 (Factory), being substantially enlarged between 1892 and 1895; and 4. the Administration Building and Caretaker's House (Caretaker's House), which dates to 1891-1892 (and which is not subject to this nomination).



Looking southwest. Photograph by Oscar Beisert.



Looking southwest. Photograph by Oscar Beisert.



Looking southwest. Photograph by Oscar Beisert.

*Greenville; The Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church; and
Buildings of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men
3514-30 Lancaster Avenue, West Philadelphia
Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, Summer 2016 – Page 6*



Looking south. Photograph by Oscar Beisert.



Looking south. Photograph by Oscar Beisert.

*Greenville; The Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church; and
Buildings of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men
3514-30 Lancaster Avenue, West Philadelphia
Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, Summer 2016 – Page 7*

Greenville

Greenville is a large, three-story building of brick and stone masonry construction that features a roughcast finish. As it appears today, Greenville was constructed in several phases, which are best divided into two sections: Greenville and its 1891 Addition. Greenville is the three-story component, while the 1891 Addition is a two-story (with an exposed basement level) component appending to the east.

Greenville features a low-slung hipped roof at the center of which stands a cupola. The large cupola appears to be clad in wooden clapboards or a faux synthetic of such and features two like windows at each elevation. The three-story, load-bearing portion of Greenville is separated from the roof by a fully articulated cornice of dentil molding, the material composition of which is unknown.

The fenestration of the primary elevation of Greenville contains a semblance of basic symmetry, which errs through a variation between the fenestration of the first floor and the aligned fenestrations of the second and third floors. Symmetrically arranged fenestrations are typical of the Italianate style, although the variation between floors may relate to the original, two-story Georgian and/or Greek Revival shell of the building and its phased construction. The first floor is articulated with a fenestration of five apertures—a central, double door entrance flanked by large, nearly floor-length windows, two per side. The first floor fenestration is shaded by a projecting porch supported by six Doric columns that features a hipped, standing-seam metal roof. The double door entrance features narrow, glazed wooden doors set beneath a simple, single-slight transom. The lintel, described later with its like-lintels, is partly obscured by the porch roof. All of the windows within the primary elevation of the Main Block are new, but architecturally correct, replacement double-hung, four-over-four sash units of decreasing height from the first to the third floors. The apertures feature original wooden architraves and stone sills. Perhaps the most interesting architectural detail within the overall Italianate façade are the lintels. Above each aperture within the primary elevation are crowns of cresting decorative details—a stylistic feature with a strong Greek Revival overtone. Appearing to be made of stone at the first floor, the crowns appear to feature a design similar in appearance to the anthenium or honeysuckle leaf, also a design characteristic usually associated with Grecian architecture. As said, the perfect symmetry achieved in the like-fenestrations of the second and third floors are not in perfect harmony with the arrangement at the first floor, but have a general semblance that achieves overall order. The second and third floors feature six windows at each level, the uppermost story featuring shorter apertures, as is typical in upper floors of that period.

The east elevation is largely consumed by the appending 1891 Addition. The fenestration includes three sets of two paired windows per floor, which are between the primary elevations of Greenville and the windows. The south and west elevations of Greenville have been altered over time to appease the range of uses applied to the building. The west elevation likely retains scars of its original apertures beneath the roughcast matter. Only one of the windows in this elevation is extant.

Recessed from Greenville by roughly two bays, the 1891 Addition is a two-story-and-basement brick building featuring three floors of windows at the primary elevation, the basement level of which is exposed. The 1891 Addition is four bays wide. All of these windows are replacement versions that are set within arched apertures with stone sills and original-appearing architraves. The 1891 Addition features a side gable roof that appends from the Main Block of Greenville.

The south elevation of Greenville is primarily consumed by an addition to the building that allowed access between it and the 1876 Workshop. Above the addition at the rear and within the south wall is a large Georgian or Federal style Fanlight, which dates to the original completion of Greenville and is one of the physical features that exists from the Federal period.

While not subject to this nomination, the interior of Greenville also contains features that date to all periods of its construction. The first floor contains the original configuration of the early house and the additions with period details that date to the Post-1841 “improvements”. A Victorian-period newel post, woodwork and trim are featured on the first and second floor. However, the configuration of rooms on both the second and third floors relate to the original configuration of the house during the Blodget period of ownership. Furthermore, beginning on the second floor are period details such as the balustrade and balusters that date the house to the Federal period, when it was completed.



Looking south. Photograph by Oscar Beisert.



Looking southwest. Photograph by Oscar Beisert.



Looking southeast. Photograph by Oscar Beisert.



Looking south at the details of the cornice and the third floor windows of Greenville. Photograph by Oscar Beisert.



Looking southeast. Photograph by Oscar Beisert.

*Greenville; The Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church; and
Buildings of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men
3514-30 Lancaster Avenue, West Philadelphia
Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, Summer 2016 – Page 11*



Looking south at the primary entrance of Greenville. Photograph by Oscar Beisert.

*Greenville; The Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church; and
Buildings of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men
3514-30 Lancaster Avenue, West Philadelphia
Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, Summer 2016 – Page 12*



Looking south at the window details of Greenville. Photograph by Oscar Beisert.

*Greenville; The Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church; and
Buildings of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men
3514-30 Lancaster Avenue, West Philadelphia
Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, Summer 2016 – Page 13*



Looking west. Photograph by Oscar Beisert.



Looking west. Note that the Workshop is on the far left, followed by the addition to Greenville at center.
Photograph by Oscar Beisert.

*Greenville; The Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church; and
Buildings of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men
3514-30 Lancaster Avenue, West Philadelphia
Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, Summer 2016 – Page 14*



Looking west. Photograph by Oscar Beisert.



Looking northeast at the west facing elevation of Greenville. Photograph by Oscar Beisert.

*Greenville; The Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church; and
Buildings of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men
3514-30 Lancaster Avenue, West Philadelphia
Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, Summer 2016 – Page 15*



Looking East. Photograph by Oscar Beisert.

*Greenville; The Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church; and
Buildings of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men
3514-30 Lancaster Avenue, West Philadelphia
Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, Summer 2016 – Page 16*



Looking north. The original front wall of the house was likely where this door at center is located. Photograph by Oscar Beisert.



Looking south. The original fanlight and rear wall of Greenville. Photograph by Oscar Beisert.

*Greenville; The Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church; and
Buildings of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men
3514-30 Lancaster Avenue, West Philadelphia
Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, Summer 2016 – Page 17*



Looking south. The original Federal period fanlight opening. Photograph by Oscar Beisert.



Looking northeast. The Federal period banister leading from the second to the third floor. Photograph by Oscar Beisert.



Looking northwest. The Federal period newel post and banister on the third floor. Photograph by Oscar Beisert.



Looking east. The Federal period newel post and banister on the third floor. Photograph by Oscar Beisert.



Looking southeast. The Federal period newel post and banister between the first and second floors. Photograph by Oscar Beisert.

*Greenville; The Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church; and
Buildings of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men
3514-30 Lancaster Avenue, West Philadelphia
Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, Summer 2016 – Page 20*

1876 Workshop

Appending Greenville at the south and featuring its greatest elevation along Warren Street, the 1876 Workshop is a four-story load bearing masonry building that was constructed in several phases. The building is characterized by its red brick façade, which, in several places, features a running bond. The south, primary elevation of the 1876 Workshop is ten bays wide, featuring a symmetrical façade of ten windows per floor. All of the apertures are modest size, featuring original wooden architraves and architecturally correct, replacement windows with a six-over-six light configuration. Beneath the windows at the first floor, the façade is rough cast, creating a base course at Warren Street. The building features a low-slung, side-gabled roof. The east elevation of the 1876 Workshop is a blind, rough cast brick wall. The portion of the 1876 Workshop that is not attached to the rear of Greenville is exposed at the east end and faces the addition's south elevation. These buildings form a court, featuring numerous apertures per floor to allow light to enter nearly every interior space.



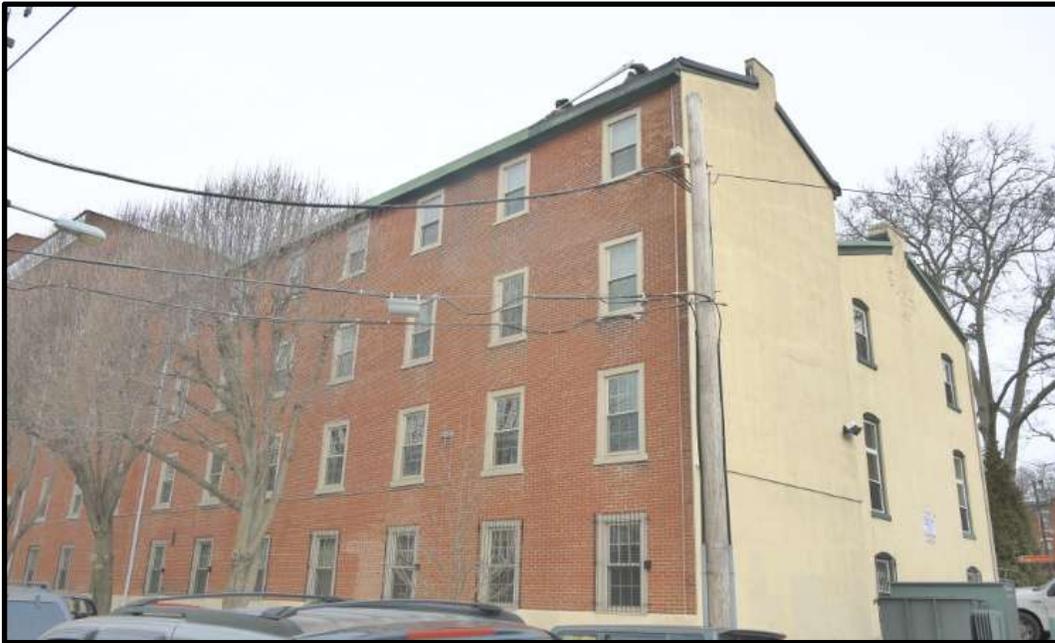
Looking northeast. Photograph by Oscar Beisert.



Looking northeast. Photograph by Oscar Beisert.



Looking northwest. Photograph by Oscar Beisert.



Looking northwest. Photograph by Oscar Beisert.



Looking north. Photograph by Oscar Beisert.



Looking north. Photograph by Oscar Beisert.



Looking west. Photograph by Oscar Beisert.

*Greenville; The Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church; and
Buildings of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men
3514-30 Lancaster Avenue, West Philadelphia
Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, Summer 2016 – Page 24*



Looking west. Photograph by Oscar Beisert.

*Greenville; The Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church; and
Buildings of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men
3514-30 Lancaster Avenue, West Philadelphia
Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, Summer 2016 – Page 25*



Looking south with Greenville (at left), an addition, the north elevation of the Workshop, and the Factory (on right). Photograph by Oscar Beisert.



Looking east. Photograph by Oscar Beisert.

*Greenville; The Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church; and
Buildings of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men
3514-30 Lancaster Avenue, West Philadelphia
Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, Summer 2016 – Page 26*



Looking northeast. Photograph by Oscar Beisert.

*Greenville; The Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church; and
Buildings of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men
3514-30 Lancaster Avenue, West Philadelphia
Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, Summer 2016 – Page 27*

Factory

Set immediately upon the street in a standard urban format at the southeast corner of Lancaster Avenue and 36th Street, the Factory is a massive brick and stone pile of load bearing and structural steel frame construction. Stylistically, the building features elements of style that combine the Queen Anne, Renaissance, and Romanesque Revivals, as applied to eclectic, Victorian-era buildings in America.

The most impressive elevations are at the north and west main street fronts, featuring architectural details that culminate at the prominent corner in a curved arrangement that forms the five-story architectural effect of a tower that is set within the urban format of the building. This feature is completed by a projecting, “fifth-story” tower with a domed roof, which stands above the otherwise flat surface atop the fourth floor. This portion of the building is three bays wide with three symmetrically placed windows per floor that form the curve, which joins the north and west elevations. The first floor of the tower features three windows that are set within a rusticated, smooth face stone façade that forms a narrow expanse of a base course at the ground floor. Atop the rusticated base course is an entablature of the same stone, forming an entablature that terminates at the base of the second floor. The second floor fenestration within the tower-like component of the façade contains a repeated window configuration set between brick piers. Set within each aperture are double-hung, single-light wooden sash windows with curved glass set beneath simple lintels that create a low, single-light transom above. This arrangement is thrice multiplied beneath an entablature of smooth-faced stone that form the capitals of the brick piers. This entire configuration is repeated at the third and fourth floors. A simple brick expanse extends to the roofline, as a parapet wall. Defining the tower-like corner of the building, a fifth floor is achieved through the projection of the tower structure above the main roofline. The curved wall of this structure features large panels beneath a decorative cornice, all of which is topped by a curved roof that forms a point and features a twisted spire that is raised from the roof by a thimble-like plinth.

The tower-like corner of the building is the culmination of like-decorative, -complex elevations at the north and west. The north elevation is five bays, while the west elevation is thirteen bays between Lancaster Avenue and Warren Street. These bays are articulated in four floors of symmetrically placed apertures and window configurations. The bays are separated and punctuated by brick and stone corbelling. The north elevation and its five bays alternate between bay window projections and single, central widow features. The first, second and third floors feature bay windows in the first and third bays from the east. The bay windows are articulated in a three-part mullion window that is separated by pilasters as mullions and spandrels of paneling between the first, second, and third floors, the top level of which features decorative swags of garland. The second, third, and fifth bays of the north elevation feature single, arched windows at center. Each aperture is finished with stone sills, wooden architraves and arched lintels formed by brick and stone corbeling. The sills at the second and third floors are joined by bands of brick corbelling that also span the pilasters that separate the second, third, and fifth bays. The third floor bays terminate via a horizontal band of brick and stone corbeling that forms a cornice. The fourth floor features one widow per floor with Romanesque arch tops that are

*Greenville; The Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church; and
Buildings of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men
3514-30 Lancaster Avenue, West Philadelphia*

defined further by three vertical bands of brick and stone corbeling that join each aperture. Rising above three bands of coursing, a decorative, protecting cornice forms at the termination of the fourth floor. A simple brick parapet wall rises above the roofline with stone coping.

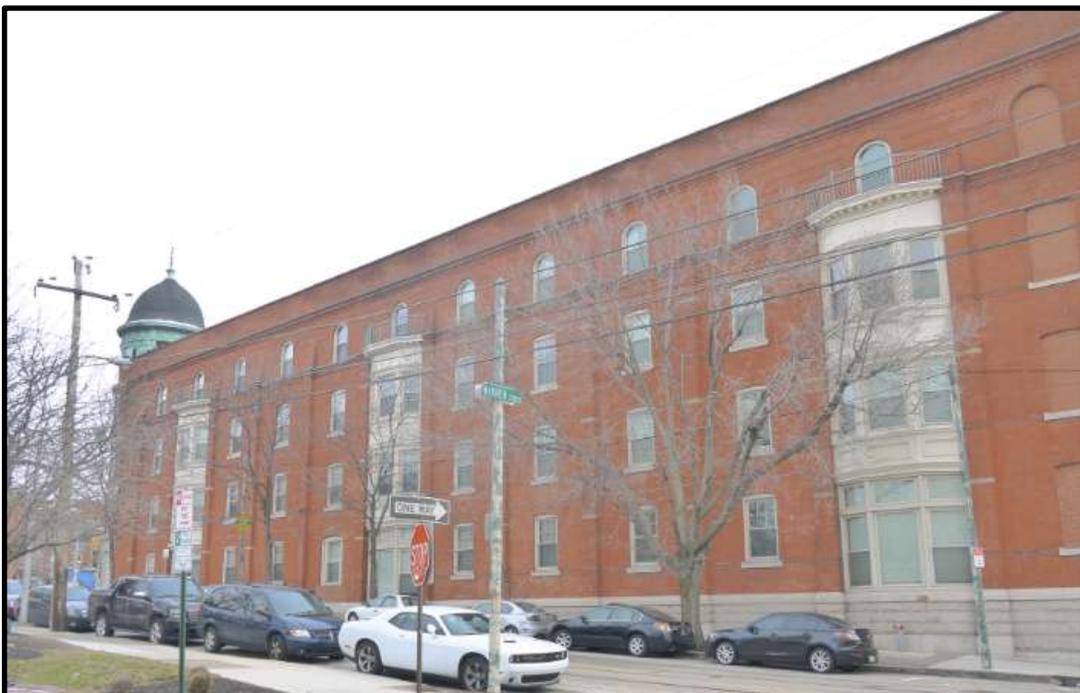
The west elevation is thirteen bays wide. Like the north elevation, the west elevation features repeated bay window configurations at the third, seventh, and twelfth bays within the first, second, and third floors. All but one of the remaining ten bays feature single apertures and repeated brick and stone details. The first bay is a blind wall limited to vehicle bands of brick and stone coursing. The thirteenth bay features single apertures that have been filled with brick that are within repeated brick and stone coursing. The second, fourth, fifth, sixth, eighth, ninth, tenth, and eleventh bays all include single window apertures as previously described at the first, second, and third floors. The fourth floor features single windows defined by Romanesque arched tops. The remaining details within this elevation mimic that of the north elevation.

The south elevation of the Factory features a continued, but simplified version of the primary, north and east elevations. Each floor is divided into two bays, each of which features a single, original aperture. The first floor contains a single aperture at the center of each bay. At the westernmost bay is a single window at center. This portion of the first floor is interrupted by a modern, double-door entrance that is off-center at the street level. At the center of the westernmost bay is a vehicle entrance that features a modern roll top door. The header of this entrance is a cast iron beam featuring five floriated ties. The centered window is repeated in each bay within the second, third, and fourth floors. The stylistic details of the aforesaid elevations are repeated.

The east elevation of the Factory is utilitarian in nature, but features the same fenestration set within bays of single apertures, including windows and doors at the center of each bay. The windows are repeated in style and form, as is the brick and stone corbeling in both vertical and horizontal articulations. Projecting from various sections of the building are iron I-beams, which formerly held balconies and staircases that were included in sections of the building to provide access from each floor from the ground. These features were used every day by the inhabitants of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men. While upon any other building, these access points would be limited to fire escape purposes, for the blind men, daily use ensured an accurate and timely escape in the case of a fire.



Looking southeast. Photograph by Oscar Beisert.



Looking northeast. Photograph by Oscar Beisert.

*Greenville; The Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church; and
Buildings of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men
3514-30 Lancaster Avenue, West Philadelphia
Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, Summer 2016 – Page 30*



Looking east. Photograph by Oscar Beisert.

*Greenville; The Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church; and
Buildings of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men
3514-30 Lancaster Avenue, West Philadelphia
Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, Summer 2016 – Page 31*



Looking east. Photograph by Oscar Beisert.



Looking east. Photograph by Oscar Beisert.

*Greenville; The Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church; and
Buildings of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men
3514-30 Lancaster Avenue, West Philadelphia
Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, Summer 2016 – Page 32*



Looking northeast. Photograph by Oscar Beisert.



Looking northeast. Photograph by Oscar Beisert.

*Greenville; The Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church; and
Buildings of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men
3514-30 Lancaster Avenue, West Philadelphia
Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, Summer 2016 – Page 33*



Looking north. Photograph by Oscar Beisert.

*Greenville; The Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church; and
Buildings of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men
3514-30 Lancaster Avenue, West Philadelphia
Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, Summer 2016 – Page 34*



Looking north. Photograph by Oscar Beisert.



Looking northeast. Photograph by Oscar Beisert.



Looking northwest. Photograph by Oscar Beisert.



Looking south. Photograph by Oscar Beisert.

*Greenville; The Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church; and
Buildings of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men
3514-30 Lancaster Avenue, West Philadelphia
Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, Summer 2016 – Page 36*



Looking northwest. Photograph by Oscar Beisert.

*Greenville; The Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church; and
Buildings of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men
3514-30 Lancaster Avenue, West Philadelphia
Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, Summer 2016 – Page 37*



Looking southwest. Photograph by Oscar Beisert.

*Greenville; The Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church; and
Buildings of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men
3514-30 Lancaster Avenue, West Philadelphia
Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, Summer 2016 – Page 38*



Looking west. Photograph by Oscar Beisert.



Looking south. Photograph by Oscar Beisert.

*Greenville; The Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church; and
Buildings of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men
3514-30 Lancaster Avenue, West Philadelphia
Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, Summer 2016 – Page 39*

Physical Integrity. For the purpose of evaluating integrity, the nominator has employed the seven aspects of integrity as per the U.S. Secretary of the Interior Standards.

Location: the buildings retain integrity of location.

Setting: the buildings retain integrity as related to their late period of significance.

Design: the buildings retain integrity of design.

Workmanship: the buildings retain integrity of workmanship.

Materials: the buildings retain integrity of setting.

Feeling: the buildings retain integrity of feeling.

Association: the buildings retain integrity of association.

Overall, the buildings described appear to retain sufficient integrity to convey historical significance.

7. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The buildings that form the former Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men (PWHBM) at 3514–3530 Lancaster Avenue comprise a significant historic resource that merits designation by the Philadelphia Historical Commission and inclusion on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The former PWHBM satisfies Criteria for Designation a, d, e, and j of Section 14–1004 of the Philadelphia Code. At the center of the PWHBM is the oldest building on the site, which will be known throughout this document as Greenville. Each of the buildings that comprise the PWHBM and Greenville, individually:

- (a) *Has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth or Nation or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past;*
- (d) *Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen;*
- (e) *Is the work of a designer, architect, landscape architect or designer, or engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; and*
- (j) *Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social, or historical heritage of the community.*

Among the buildings that comprise the former PWHBM, Greenville is the oldest. Within the extant Italianate villa is the original Greenville constructed between 1795 and 1799, as the residence of the Greenville Estate by Samuel Blodget, Jr. and his wife Rebecca Smith Blodget. Due to their mounding financial problems, Greenville stood habitable, but unfinished from the time of its initial construction until after Blodget’s death in 1814. Despite its unfinished state, it appears that Samuel Blodget, Jr. lived in Greenville at various times, including 1801–1803 and 1812–1814. After construction was completed by Blodget’s trustees—McEwen, Hale, and Davidson, Greenville and its immediate grounds were purchased at Sheriff’s Sale and held in trust for Rebecca Smith Blodget, who retained sole interest in the property until the time of her death in 1837. During this time, she too lived in Greenville for several years, but ultimately it was let to tenants. After her death, the property was eventually transferred to Julia Ann Allen Blodget Britton, who owned Greenville until 1853. While Greenville has been changed to reflect an Italianate residence, the two floors of the primary elevation appear to have retained the same width and the opening at the façade when the house was enlarged and restyled. Greenville *has significant character, interest or value as part of the development and heritage of the City of Philadelphia* and, specifically, the development of West Philadelphia. Furthermore, Greenville is likely the only surviving building related to Samuel Blodget, Jr. and Rebecca Smith Blodget, both significant personages in the New Republic. Samuel Blodget, Jr. was a significant economist, gentleman architect, merchant, and real estate developer and speculator, as well as significant person in the

development of the early Federal City, as well as West Philadelphia in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The daughter of Rev. Dr. William Smith, D.D., Rebecca “Becky” Smith Blodget was an important personage of the New Republic, having considerable notoriety and renown as a woman of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century in Philadelphia.

Brought to its present state by subsequent owners, Greenville was later purchased by the Protestant Episcopal Church and, between 1866 and 1876, served as the “Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States.” The use of Greenville as one of the first foreign mission training schools of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America *exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social, or historical heritage* of the Protestant Episcopal Church in West Philadelphia and Philadelphia at-large during this brief period of the nineteenth century.

The Protestant Episcopal Mission House ceased ownership of Greenville in 1873, at which time it was sold to the Trustees of the PWHBM. From 1873 to 1891, Greenville served as the primary building of the PWHBM, serving administrative, domestic/dormitory, educational, and other purposes. Over time, Greenville was enlarged, including a four-story addition at the rear, south elevation in 1876 as well other improvements about 1880. To the east of Greenville is a three-story addition, which was completed in 1891. When the property was purchased in 1876, it included a two-story brick building at the rear of the property, fronting Warren Street. This building was immediately used as the Workshop. The Workshop appears to have been constructed between 1841 and 1876, although the precise date is unknown, its original purpose likely as an outbuilding. The Workshop was enlarged to a four-story building with a four-story addition in 1876, being expanded and connected to the rear of Greenville in 1880. The Factory is the largest and most impressive building on the site. Construction of this building took place between 1890 and 1892. This building was designed to serve almost all of the production operations of the PWHBM. The Factory was enlarged between 1892 and 1895. The Administration Building was constructed between 1892 and 1895, serving as administrative offices of the PWHBM, as well as the Superintendent’s Residence. Most of the buildings underwent very few physical changes for the duration of the PWHBM and continue to retain a strong degree of integrity to-date. Representing perhaps the earliest institutions of its kind in Philadelphia and perhaps within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the extant buildings of the PWHBM *have significant character, interest, and value, as part of the development and heritage* of educational and/or vocational training, as well as the practical application of a trade, for blind men. The “working home” enabled both resident and non-resident blind men to earn a living and, more importantly, make a contribution to society through the industrial mechanisms of the age, *exemplifying the cultural, political, economic, social, or historical heritage* of West Philadelphia and Philadelphia at-large, as well as the progress of services to the blind community.

The Factory embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural and engineering specimen, as its design was specific to the use of the blind men who occupied the

*Greenville; The Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church; and
Buildings of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men
3514-30 Lancaster Avenue, West Philadelphia*

building. The fire escapes, the structure of which is still intact on the exterior, are integral to the design as a fire safety measure for blind men, who used the building. The design of the structure itself was one specific to its use by blind men and this is a significant feature that the National Park Service and the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission ensured to preserve when the building was converted into apartments and received historic tax credits nearly three decades ago. The Factory of the PWHBM is the work of architect John Ord, whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City of Philadelphia.

The Period of Significance for aforementioned Criteria as related to the subject site is 1795/1799–1968.



1802 Idealized “Plan” for West Philadelphia, by Charles P. Varle.
 Courtesy the Atwater Kent Museum of Philadelphia.

CRITERION A & J

One of the oldest houses in West Philadelphia, Greenville represents the early development of West Philadelphia and the subdivision of the Greenville Estate. Greenville has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth or Nation. Greenville and its grounds were home to Samuel Blodget, Jr. and his wife, Rebecca Smith Blodget, who was the not only the daughter of Rev. William Smith, but also the alleged lover of Aaron Burr. Greenville has significant character, interest or value as being associated with the life of persons significant in the past.

Greenville—Home of Samuel Blodget, Jr. & Rebecca Smith

On January 1, 1795, Tench Francis (1730–1800) and his son, Thomas Willing Francis (1767–1815), brother-in-law and nephew, respectively, both President of the First Bank of the United States, sold a 50¼-acre, 15-perch parcel at the corner of the Great Road to Lancaster and Marshall’s Road, to “Samuel Blodget the Younger” for £1,500.¹ The unimproved parcel (the subject property) was located on the southwest side of present day Lancaster Avenue in Blockley Township, now West Philadelphia, and became known as the Greenville Estate. The Philadelphia County tax records suggest that the land was unimproved in the first few years of his ownership. From 1795 to 1802, the

¹ Deed: Tench Francis, esquire, and Anne, his wife, and Thomas Willing Francis and Dorothy, his wife, to Samuel Blodget, 1 January 1795, recorded in Philadelphia Deed Book D., No. 67, p. 467, City Archives of Philadelphia (hereafter CAP).

land is valued at £306 (in 1795) and \$1,018 (from 1796 and later).² The 1798 Direct Tax corroborates this with no buildings assessed on this property. It is likely that construction may not have commenced or been sufficiently far enough along for taxation purposes by October 1798.³

In response to mounting financial difficulties, Samuel Blodget conveyed the Greenville Estate in trust to Thomas McEwen, Thomas Hale, and William Davidson, of the merchant banking house of McEwen, Hale & Davidson, on July 22, 1799.⁴ Though the sale price recorded in the deed was \$10,000, no money actually conveyed.⁵ The transaction was intended to protect the property for Blodget's wife and children as well as generate income to pay off some of his debts.⁶ Though the deed does not have a reference to structures, 1830 court records state that "buildings were commenced by him [Blodget] before the trust arose" – a critical fact that had a direct bearing on the decision in the case.⁷ The accounts of the trust filed at that time record:

Rent of house [Mansion House] & buildings from 1799 to 1814 at \$25.00
per quarter equal to fifteen years at \$100.00 per annual⁸

The work on Greenville had progressed sufficiently to make the house taxable for county tax purposes in 1802. The Blockley Township list records "1 Dwelling" and "45 Acres of Land" for "Thomas McEwens Est." and under his name, Samuel Blodget is recorded as living on the property.⁹ This is the first indication that Greenville was habitable. Despite the progress made on the construction of Greenville, numerous later records indicate that while taxable, its interior was unfinished.

The House was occupied by Mr. Blodget and his family before it was finished. I recollect having visited Mr. Blodget there. He was sitting in a

² Philadelphia County Tax, Blockley Township lists, 1795–1801, CAP. The lists ownership as: 1795–1797, "Willing & Francis's Est."; 1798, "Blodget's Est."; 1800–1801, "Samuel Blodgett Est."

³ Blodget's property appears on the Blockley Township schedules for vacant land and in his entry on Schedule B (buildings valued under \$100) is blank in the 1798 Direct Tax.

⁴ Deed: Samuel Blodget, the younger, of the City of Philadelphia, and Rebecca, his wife, to Thomas McEwen, Thomas Hale, and William Davidson, of the city, merchants, 22 July 1799, Philadelphia Deed Book D., No. 77, p. 198, CAP.

⁵ Burr v. McEwen, Hale and Davidson, 1 Baldwin 154 (3rd Cir.1830). Burr vs. McEuen et al, Case Papers, Equity Records, Case # 3 April Sessions 1818, Records of the U.S. Circuit Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, Record Group 21, National Archives and Records Administration (hereafter NARA).

⁶ The primary debt was to Boston merchant, Nicholas Gillman, who was a former business partner of Samuel Blodget, Sr.

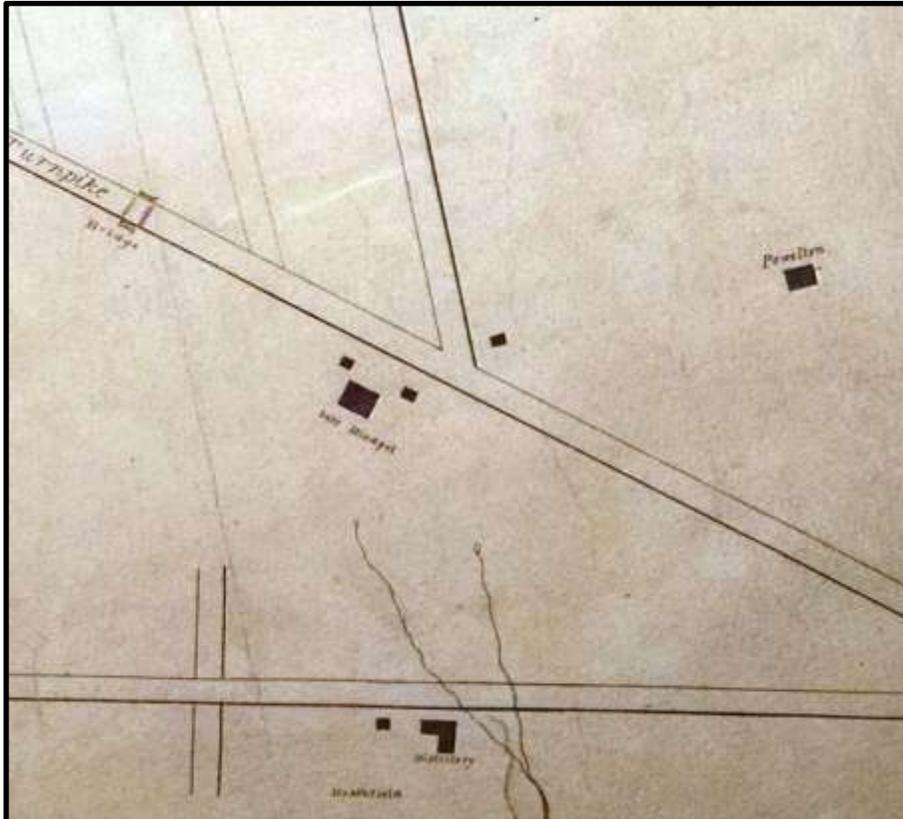
⁷ Establishing that the house was started before the 1799 deed of trust allowed the trustees to claim that their expenses for completing Greenville after Blodget died was consistent with finishing the work which he had started and was not something new that they decided to do own their own and therefore not chargeable to the trust.

⁸ "The Estate in Blockley in a/c with McEuen Hale & Davidson," ca. 1819. Burr, 1 Baldwin at 162 within the case files of Burr vs. McEuen et al, Case Papers, Equity Records, Case # 3 April Sessions 1818, Records of the U.S. Circuit Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, Record Group 21, National Archives and Records Administration (hereafter NARA).

⁹ Deed: Samuel Blodget, the younger, of the City of Philadelphia, and Rebecca, his wife, to Thomas McEwen, Thomas Hale, and William Davidson, of the city, merchants, 22 July 1799, Philadelphia Deed Book D., No. 77, p. 198, CAP.

room that was not plaisterd [sic].”¹⁰

The earliest maps showing buildings on the Greenville Estate show Greenville in its present location with detached flanking dependencies to the east and west of the house set back from the Lancaster Avenue at a lesser depth than Greenville, which was common in the design and construction of Georgian-inspired mansions of the period.¹¹ The plan for the buildings was likely based upon Blodjet’s own designs.¹² Any work done on Greenville and the other buildings during this period appears to have been financed directly by Blodjet during his lifetime.¹³



Ca. 1830 plan by Samuel Heins for Mantua and vicinity showing Greenville near the intersection of Lancaster Avenue and N. 35th Street. Courtesy the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

¹⁰ Deposition of John Britton, sworn 10 January 1826. Found in Burr vs. McEuen et al, Case Papers, Equity Records, Case # 3 April Sessions 1818, Records of the U.S. Circuit Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, Record Group 21, NARA.

¹¹ Samuel Hains, surveyor, *Mantua and the Roads in its Vicinity, situated 3 miles from the old Court house of Philadelphia in Blockley, W. side of Schuylkill on lands of Richard Peters Esqr* (Philadelphia: ca. 1830), Historical Society of Pennsylvania (hereinafter HSP)..

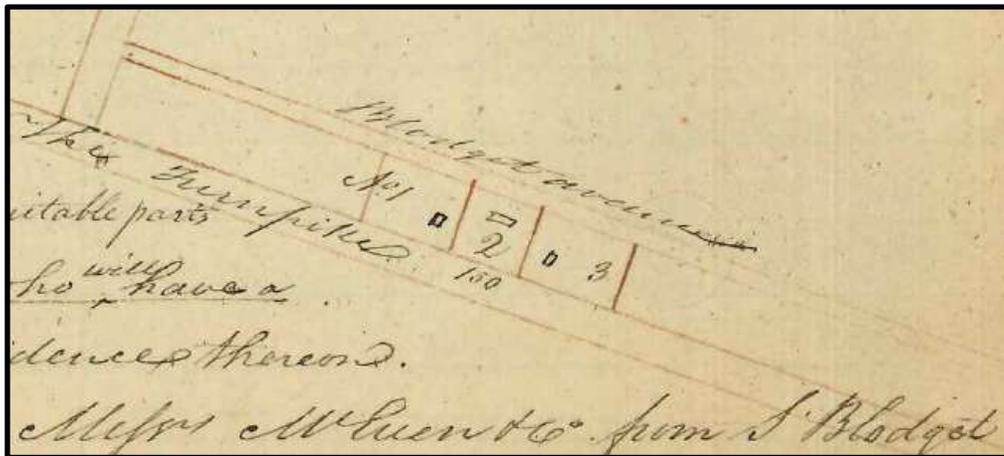
¹² As court case states: “Blodjet [sic] furnished plans of improvements, which were executed ... partly in his lifetime, and partly after his death, but pursuant to direction he had given” (*Burr*, 1 Baldwin at 155).

¹³ The only building expense McEwen, Hale and Davidson record in their accounts of the trust for the period prior to 1814 is “Carpenters work in 1810 [\$]266.67” (“The Estate in Blockley in a/c with McEuen Hale & Davidson,” ca. 1819. Found in Burr vs. McEuen et al, Case Papers, Equity Records, Case # 3 April Sessions 1818, Records of the U.S. Circuit Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, Record Group 21, NARA.).

In addition to building a mansion house on the property, Samuel Blodget, Jr. envisioned Greenville to be part of new real estate development that would take advantage of its close proximity to the new “Permanent Bridge” of Market Street over the Schuylkill River, which opened in 1805. Sometime around 1802, Blodget employed realtor Charles P. Heath to assist him in drawing up a subdivision plan for the Greenville Estate. In an 1826 deposition, Heath stated:

[I was] engaged in selling lots on Commission in Hamilton Village ... for Mr. Hamilton. Sold Lots pretty rapidly – I began to sell about the year 1804 – at first they went slow. Knew Mr. Blodget well and helped him to lay off lots of the Greenville Estate – but this was on paper only – No Conveyances – was nothing done – no sales as I understood on account of a difficulty as to Title – This was before sales at Hamilton Village.¹⁴

The basic plan likely included many extant streets such as Warren Street (originally called Blodget Avenue) and Filbert Street (originally called Green Street). Blodget made no further efforts to lay out the Greenville Estate after his removal to Washington, D.C. in 1803.¹⁵ McEwen, Hale, and Davidson paid the taxes and maintained the property at a basic level but there were no major improvements.¹⁶



Excerpt from “Copy of a Letter from S. Blodget to Messrs. McEwen, Hale, & Davidson, Philadelphia, dated Washington, 26th Oct. 1810” showing how Blodget intended to divide up the property for children. Greenville is No. 2 and dependencies Nos. 1 & 3. Found in Burr vs. McEuen et al, Case Papers, Equity Records, Case # 3 April Sessions 1818, Records of the U.S. Circuit Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, Record Group 21, NARA.

¹⁴ Deposition of Charles P. Heath, 8 April 1826. Found in Burr vs. McEuen et al, Case Papers, Equity Records, Case # 3 April Sessions 1818, Records of the U.S. Circuit Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, Record Group 21, NARA.

¹⁵ Deposition of Jane Burns, 8 April 1826. Found in Burr vs. McEuen et al, Case Papers, Equity Records, Case # 3 April Sessions 1818, Records of the U.S. Circuit Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, Record Group 21, NARA. Blodget is not in the Philadelphia city directories or the Blockley Township tax lists after 1803.

¹⁶ Blockley Township Tax List, 1804. p. 24; Blockley Township Tax List, 1805. p. 11; Blockley Township Tax List, 1806. p. 9; Blockley Township Tax List, 1807. p. 24; Blockley Township Tax List, 1808. p. 26; Blockley Township Tax List, 1809. p. 18; Blockley Township Tax List, 1810. p. 12; Blockley Township Tax List, 1811. p. 18; and Blockley Township Tax List, 1812. p. 25.

In March 1812, Jane Burns, likely a former servant of Blodget, and her family moved into Greenville on the Greenville estate, which Burns claimed was “rent free.” At this time there were two families living in “each of the kitchens” (i.e. the flanking dependencies to the east and west of Greenville) on the Greenville Estate. One of the families had resided on the estate since about 1808 and a schoolmaster was “occupying one room.” The Burns family resided in Greenville until the fall of 1812, when Blodget returned. Blodget’s name reappears in the Blockley Township tax list in 1813. While Blodget appears to have lived in Greenville, his estranged wife Becky lived in the stable, between 1812 and 1817.¹⁷

Several major changes occurred on the Greenville Estate in 1814. The value of the property began to rise after the opening of the Upper Ferry or Colossus Bridge (now Spring Garden Street) in 1813. New developments, such as Mantua Village (1809) and the Village of Hamilton (1803), were well underway and drawing real estate speculators west of the Schuylkill.¹⁸ Blodget and McEwen, Hale, and Davidson saw that the time was ripe to start subdividing the Greenville Estate. On March 26, 1814, an advertisement was placed in the newspaper for an auction of “Thirty-eight Lots of Land, On the south side of Green [now Filbert] Street” to be held in April.¹⁹ Another auction was held in May.²⁰ Twenty-one lots were sold and roughly \$16,100 realized as result.²¹ Blodget’s admission into Pennsylvania Hospital on April 1st and death on the 11th did not stop the auction and in fact accelerated some other changes.

¹⁷ Deposition of Thomas Boyd, 10 January 1826. Found in Burr vs. McEuen et al, Case Papers, Equity Records, Case # 3 April Sessions 1818, Records of the U.S. Circuit Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, Record Group 21, NARA.; and Deposition of Lawrence Harmstad, 8 April 1826. Found in Burr vs. McEuen et al, Case Papers, Equity Records, Case # 3 April Sessions 1818, Records of the U.S. Circuit Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, Record Group 21, NARA.

¹⁸ “Mantua Village,” *Poulson’s American Daily Advertiser*. (Philadelphia: 6 March 1809), p. 1.; “Building Lots for Sale In the Village of Hamilton,” *Gazette of the United States*. (Philadelphia: 19 September 1803), p. 1.

¹⁹ “To Be Sold, In the Village of Hamilton,” *Poulson’s American Daily Advertiser*. (Philadelphia: 24 March 1814), p.1.; and “Lots in Hamilton Village,” *Poulson’s American Daily Advertiser*. (Philadelphia: 13 April 1814), p. 1.

²⁰ On May 3 for 20 lots (“Hamilton Village Lots,” *Poulson’s American Daily Advertiser*, May 3, 1814.

²¹ Plan and list of lots [n.d.]. Found in Burr vs. McEuen et al, Case Papers, Equity Records, Case # 3 April Sessions 1818, Records of the U.S. Circuit Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, Record Group 21, NARA.

march 26 d1A
TO BE SOLD,
 In the Village of Hamilton, at Lewis' Tavern, sign
 of William Penn,
ON TUESDAY, 12th of April, 1814,
 At 10 o'clock, A. M.
Thirty-eight Lots of Land,
 On the south side of Green street,
WHICH runs parallel to Washington street, at
 the distance of 200 feet northerly—and lying
 between William, Mary, Parks, Margaret and
 Moore streets—each Lot containing 50 feet front
 on Green street, and extending southerly to the late
 "Marshall's Road"—in depth, according to their
 position, from 20 feet 4 inches, to 134 feet 9 in-
 ches, be the same more or less—with the privilege
 of the said Green street (which is 50 feet wide)
 and also of Mary and Moore streets (each 60 feet
 wide) continued, agreeable to their courses, to the
 Lancaster Turnpike road.
McEwen, Hale & Davidson,
 N. B. In case of bad weather, the sale will be
 continued on the next fair day, Sunday excepted.
 march 26 d1A

Lots in Hamilton Village.
A CARD.
 Peter Kuhn and Son, Auctioneer, T. B. Free-
 man, Commission Merchant, Respectfully an-
 nounce to the public, that the following lots, in-
 tended for public sale this day, is postponed till
 Saturday the 16th instant, at 10 o'clock in the
 morning.
TO BE SOLD,
 In the Village of Hamilton, at Lewis' Tavern, sign
 of William Penn,
ON SATURDAY, 16th of April, 1814,*
 At 10 o'clock, A. M.
Thirty-eight Lots of Land,
ON the south side of Green street, (which
 runs parallel to Washington street, at the
 distance of two hundred feet northerly)—and lying
 between William, Mary, Parks, Margaret and
 Moore streets—each Lot containing 50 feet front
 on Green street and extending southerly to the late
 "Marshall's Road"—in depth, according to their
 position, from 20 feet 4 inches, to 134 feet 9 in-
 ches, be the same more or less—with the privilege
 of the said Green street (which is 50 feet wide)
 and also of Mary and Moore streets (each 60 feet
 wide) continued, agreeable to their courses, to the
 Lancaster Turnpike road.
McEwen, Hale & Davidson,
 * N. B. In case of bad weather, the sale will be
 continued on the next fair day, Sunday excepted.
Peter Kuhn & Son, Auc'rs.
T. B. Freeman,
 Commission Merchant.

Advertisement for sales of Greenville Estate lots in 1814, which appeared in *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*. Courtesy of ProQuest.

In the late summer of 1814, McEwen, Hale, and Davidson commissioned the completion of the Greenville. They hired Lawrence Harmstad as a contractor to finish Greenville. Davidson took Harmstad to see the property before the work began:

I found it was not fenced in in any respect and was In a manner a wilderness at the time – the first work that was done was to inclose the premises, from the stables to the back of the House – As to the House we found the Floors laid in the first and second story. There was one flight of stairs up from the first floor to the second – not finished – no handrail – there were four Doors to the Rooms upstairs and downstairs made with a temporary casing – just so there the Doors would hang – no Closets – no finish inside the House at all – not even plaistered – There was a kind of temporary floor in the Garret. I think I laid a new floor all over it. The House was not then occupied by any one – Mrs. Blodget lived in the Southern Stable.²²

Harmstad served as the general contractor to McEwen, Hale, and Davidson and employed sub-contractors to finish much of the work.

Great part of the work at Blodget's was circular and profitable – some

²² Deposition of Lawrence Harmstad, 8 April 1826. Found in Burr vs. McEuen et al, Case Papers, Equity Records, Case # 3 April Sessions 1818, Records of the U.S. Circuit Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, Record Group 21, NARA.

large sash. I had two men and a boy there. I paid them six dollars each per week for subsistence money and when the work was measured there was One hundred and eighty Dollars coming to them. Besides them I and my men did a good deal of work.²³

Hired by Harmstad, Thomas Boyd served as the carpenter to assist with the completion of Greenville and found:

When I went there to work the House was without any thing like regular finish inside. Temporary Doors. There was Wash Board and Surbase [i.e. a chair rail] in some places – in others not. It was not plastered [sic] generally – some places one Coat. I should suppose it not fit for the habitation of a family according to the grade of the House.²⁴

A number of people in the building trades were involved with the project (for a full list see Appendix). Work on the house progressed quickly and appears to have been completed by December 1814. The total cost of finishing Greenville, which may have included the dependencies, was \$3,010.47. The largest expenses were for carpentry work (\$1,118), lumber (\$576) and plastering (\$476).²⁵

Though Blodget's death relieved the trustees from any more of his potential debts and the 1814 sales raised enough money to pay off the original debts from the 1790s, the trustees lacked a clear path to settle the Greenville Estate. The fact that "Blodjet's [sic] affairs were wholly deranged" and the original terms of the trust vague left McEwen, Hale, and Davidson reluctant to do any more with the property until the heirs asked them.

Samuel's widow, Rebecca Smith Blodget, who had always had misgivings about the trust, started the process to get Greenville back into her hands in the summer of 1814. She turned to an old friend, Aaron Burr, whom she had known prior to her marriage.²⁶ As she described to him:

I live – exist I mean, in the barn – on the right hand side of the middle house on

²³ Deposition of Lawrence Harmstad, 8 April 1826. Found in Burr vs. McEuen et al, Case Papers, Equity Records, Case # 3 April Sessions 1818, Records of the U.S. Circuit Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, Record Group 21, NARA.

²⁴ Deposition of Thomas Boyd, 10 January 1826. Found in Burr vs. McEuen et al, Case Papers, Equity Records, Case # 3 April Sessions 1818, Records of the U.S. Circuit Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, Record Group 21, NARA.

²⁵ "Account A of McEuen, Hale and Davidson," Auditors' Report, April 11, 1828. Found in Burr vs. McEuen et al, Case Papers, Equity Records, Case # 3 April Sessions 1818, Records of the U.S. Circuit Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, Record Group 21, NARA. An insurance policy costing \$46 was taken out on the house from the American Fire Insurance Company.

²⁶ At this time Burr was primarily assisting Rebecca with claims to land in New York that trustees for Rebecca received in a deed from her father. Rebecca was a long-time supporter of Burr and even provided shelter to Burr when he was hiding from prosecution in 1808. As she once described it, she "owe[d] to him, whatever is valuable in myself" (see Rebecca Blodget to James Madison, New York, ca. 11 March 1809, *The Papers of James Madison Digital Edition*, J. C. A. Stagg, editor [Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2010]).

the Lancaster turnpike – but perhaps you know nothing of the middle house! – I may be traced to my splendid abode by inquiry of the people at the bridge toll house – Why, you will wonder, do I live in the barn – it is a long story, and I am too ill to enter on it now – I shall only say that I have not been living with the unfortunate Mr. B[lodget]. as I believe you have supposed I did – I came to this place because I firmly believed that I had been cheated out of it – I was led to believe fifteen years ago, that I signed a paper which gave away this property to a friend who took it merely to preserve it from creditors – & who cou’d faithfully return it to the family – viz Madam B. & her children – I had a nice conscience in those days – & objected to the measure – but I was told that it wou’d not sell for 10 000 dollars & that it might be claimed by at least fifty people to all of whom he owed more than half that sum – & that the property wou’d one day be worth at least 300 000 dollars – I tried to think it right – I cast an eye on my darlings – & signed the paper – at that time I believe Mr. B. meant only to save the property for me & mine – McEuen Hale & Davidson call it theirs – Mr. B. is not here to contradict them – I think there was a secret agreement between McEuen & Mr. B. to cheat me (a toll Agreement) – but Hale McEuen will go still further & cheat the person whom Mr B intended to benefit fifteen years ago the firm was McEuen & Co – I do not believe that Hale & Davidson are acquainted with what past [sic] privately between McEuen & B[lodget] – I think Hale honest & wou’d stake my soul on the integrity of Davidson – so much for the barn – I can lay my commands on you, who are too polite to say no more, to disobey me, to be careful of this letter – to read attentively the above trusts – learn that I mean to remain in the barn till I can speak more plainly – when I can speak to the purpose I may desire you to come here – but this I shall not do till two learned Judges [Tilghman and Smith] tell me I am on sure ground – this I shall not do till there is a certainty that I can give my attorney almost 1000 dollars for his trouble – I live in hope – I have been cheated in Washington – I am going to write to Key to look after matters there – Mr B. died as he lived – you know how he lived – & will spare myself the pain of saying how he died – I gave him a tear – yet I bent in gratitude to Heaven – & thanked it’s [sic] ruler – why then did I weep? – why am I still melancholy? Burr ought to know why for he ought to know my head – N.B. This property is worth nearly 400 000 dollars – part has been sold for 6000 dollars per acre!²⁷

After consulting with Rebecca and the trustees her father provided for her – Bishop William White and Pennsylvania Chief Justice William Tilghman – Burr decided to take up the case for Rebecca. In December 1815, Burr was granted Letters of Administration on Samuel Blodget, Jr.’s estate.²⁸ Burr’s first action was to establish a means to get Rebecca a clear undisputed claim for and possession of Greenville. Working with her brothers who were the executors of her father’s will, the Smith brothers brought a suit against the estate of Samuel Blodget, Jr. which it could not pay. The sheriff of Philadelphia seized the Greenville estate and sold it at auction in May 1817 to John

²⁷ Letter: Rebecca Smith Blodget to Aaron Burr, Philadelphia: 17 June 1814. Papers of Aaron Burr (1756–1836), the New-York Historical Society (NYHS).

²⁸ Letters of Administration Bond, 21 December 1815, Administration No. 315 of 1815, Philadelphia Register of Wills. The sureties for the bond were Aaron Burr of the City of New York, attorney at law, Robert Waistcoat (signed “Westcott”), of the same, gentleman, Richard Roe, and Rebecca Blodget, widow.

Britton, Jr. and James H. Dundas.²⁹ Britton, Rebecca's son-in-law, and Dundas were acting as trustees for Rebecca. By coming to an agreement prior to the sale with William Fennell, another creditor of Samuel Blodget, Rebecca's trustees were able secure a solid equitable claim on the property which allowed her to move into Greenville.³⁰ Rebecca acted quickly and reported to Burr:

I am now lady of the manor of Greene Ville! Moses Levy, my able counsellor, active attorney & good friend, has evinced all the military capacity which I have often told you was necessary in my counsel – for I hate plodders – Your friend Commodore Truxtun is Sheriff of Philadelphia County – & has entered most affectionately into my interests, & has done everything he cou'd do for me consistently with the strict discharge of his official duty – ... Pray write to our brave friend & thank him for me – for tho' he does not love me quite as well as you do, I feel that I am a favorite³¹

Rebecca Smith Blodget only occupied the house for a few years. By the mid-1820s she rented Greenville and its outbuilding for \$150 per annum.

The Mansion House of Mrs. Blodget was not let until quite lately. It is now occupied by a Lady Mrs. Dobell and before that Mrs. Blodget lived there.³²

Once possession of Greenville was obtained, Burr, as administrator of Blodget's estate, filed an equity suit against McEwen, Hale, and Davidson in the U.S. Circuit Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania during the April 1818 session. Burr asked for a full accounting of the management of the Greenville Estate and the property to be turned over to Britton and Dundas, Rebecca's trustees. The suit reached almost Dickensian proportions – dragging on for 18 years. It took a year for McEwen, Hale, and Davidson to respond with an accounting, which was inadequate, eight years before depositions were sworn. The court rendered a decision in April 1830 and the final master's report was filed six years later.³³ In September 1836, the title finally passed to Britton and

²⁹ Deed Poll: Thomas Truxtun, sheriff, to John Britton, Jr., of the County of Philadelphia, gentleman, and James H. Dundas, of the city of Philadelphia, esquire, for \$24,800, Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas Sheriff Deed Book G., p. 140, CAP. The suit against Burr as administrator of Blodget's estate was filed in Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania, where Rebecca's brother lived, and was based upon a debt that Blodget owed to his father-in-law, Rev. William Smith.

³⁰ Articles of Agreement between Rebecca Blodget, widow of Samuel Blodget, merchant, deceased, and William Fennell, of the City of Philadelphia, merchant, 14 May 1817, Philadelphia Deed Book I.W., No. 5, p. 417, CAP.

³¹ Letter: Rebecca Smith Blodget to Aaron Burr, 25 May 1817. Papers of Aaron Burr, 1756–1836., the NYHS.

³² Deposition of Joseph S. Keen, 10 January 1826. Found in Burr vs. McEuen et al, Case Papers, Equity Records, Case # 3 April Sessions 1818, Records of the U.S. Circuit Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, Record Group 21, NARA.

³³ "Balance per Auditors Report," ca. 1834, Burr vs. McEuen et al, Case Papers, NARA. The main points of dispute were over the charges of McEwen, Hale, and Davidson for finishing the work on Greenville, for covering legal costs in the suit, and for commission fees for their work (*Burr*, 1 Baldwin at 162–165).

Dundas and Rebecca Smith Blodget gained full control over the Greenville Estate.³⁴ The victory was not one Rebecca or her children could enjoy for long. She died in March 1837.³⁵ Only two of her four children were still living at the time of her death and her son-in-law, one of the trustees, died in January 1838.³⁶

Rebecca's daughter, Julia Ann Allen Blodget Britton, began the process of settling the Greenville Estate in 1839. She and her brother, John Adams Blodget, petitioned the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas in February to have another trustee appointed in her husband's place. In September, the trustees hired Nathan Supplee to survey and prepare a partition plan of the remaining part of the Greenville Estate. Supplee divided the estate into 94 lots.³⁷ The trustees came to an agreement with the William Fennell heirs regarding the debt still owed them and settled on putting the lots up for sale.³⁸ The lots were staked out and an auction held on May 28, 1840.³⁹

The Greenville, the "Mansion House," and the two flanking dependencies along with several other lots were purchased by Benjamin Orne who was acting as an agent for the Britton family. The deed for the properties was executed in July 1841.⁴⁰ Orne turned over Greenville and several lots to Julia's son, John Blodget Britton, in September and John deeded Greenville and the adjacent lot to the northwest to his mother on September 30.⁴¹

³⁴ Deed: Thomas Hale and William Davidson, of the City of Philadelphia, to John Britton, Jr., of the City of Philadelphia, gentleman, and James Dundas, of the City of Philadelphia, esquire, 26 September 1836, Philadelphia Deed Book S.H.F., No. 3, p. 552, CAP.

³⁵ "Mrs. Rebecca Blodget, March 10, 1837," Record of Burials, Episcopal Church of the Epiphany, Philadelphia.

³⁶ Thomas Smith Blodget died in 1836, Elinor Matilda Smith (wife of her cousin Richard Penn Smith) died in 1833 (Horace Wemyss Smith, *Life and Correspondence of the Rev. William Smith, D.D.* (Philadelphia: Ferguson Bros. & Co., 1880), p. 2:544, 549).

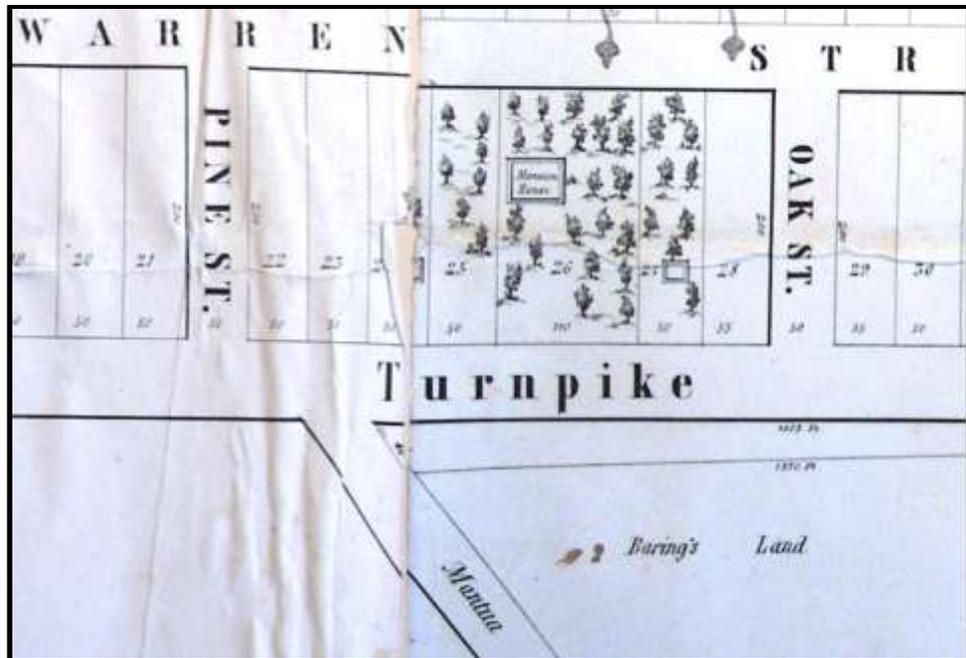
³⁷ Nathan Supplee, *Plan of Greenville Situate on the west side of the River Schuylkill in the Borough of West Philadelphia, about 3/4 of a mile from Market St. Bridge*, 1839, HSP.

³⁸ For information on Fennell see Philadelphia Historical Commission Staff, "Nomination of Historic Building, Structure, Site, or Object for 3600–30 Lancaster Avenue," Philadelphia Historical Commission, 2015, 24.

³⁹ "Positive Sale of Valuable Building Lots In West Philadelphia," *North American and Daily Advertiser*. (Philadelphia: May 27, 1840), p. 1.

⁴⁰ Deed: James Dundas and Andrew D. Cash, both of city, trustees, to Benjamin Orne, city, merchant, for lots 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21 (\$800), 25 (\$1,250), 26 with Greenville (\$3,000), 27 (\$1,200), 32 (\$750), 36, 37, 38, 45, 47, 49, 50, 52, 53, 55, 57, 59, 60, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 76, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 92, 92, and 94, Philadelphia Deed Book G.S., No. 39, p. 72, CAP.

⁴¹ Deed: Benjamin Orne, city, merchant, to John Blodget Britton, city, gentleman, for lots 21, 25, 26, 49, 52, 57, 61, 62, 76, 84, 93, 94, for \$8,000, 27 September 1841, Philadelphia Deed Book G.S., No. 33, p. 307; Deed: John Blodgett Britton, city, gentleman, to Julia A. Britton, late of city now of Mantua, widow, for lots 25 & 26, 30 September 1841, for \$7,000, Philadelphia Deed Book G.S., No.31, p. 527, CAP.



Detail from Nathan Supplee's 1839 *Plan of Greenville* showing Greenville on lot 26 of the division. Courtesy of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Julia Anna Allen Blodget Britton's acquisition in September 1841 marked the end of 42 years of the family's struggle over Greenville. The original Mansion House and one of its flanking dependencies were firmly in the family's hands. This followed both her father's and mother's wishes to see Greenville as a home for their children. She immediately took measures to make this home secure. On October 21, 1841, the Franklin Fire Insurance Company surveyed Greenville, located "on the South Side of the Lancaster Turnpike Road on Lot No. 26 in a plan of Greenville, Borough of West Philadelphia, Philadelphia County."⁴²

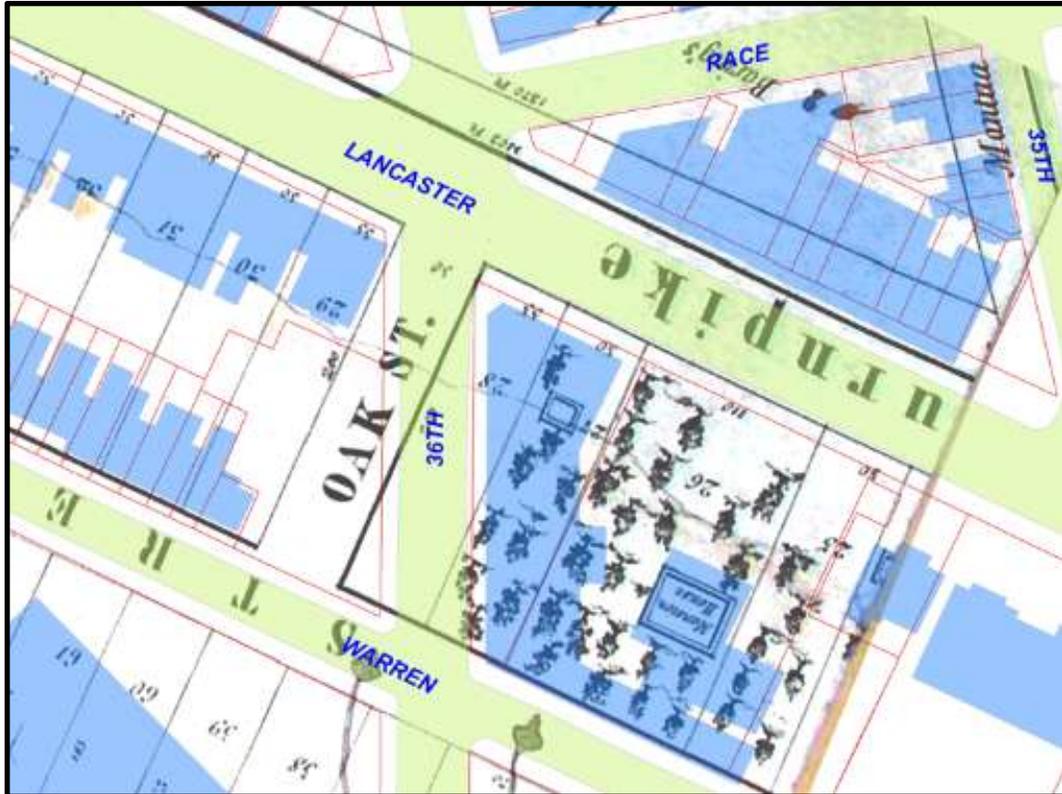
All language in the survey indicates that this building was extant at the time of the survey and had been brought into excellent repair, being without question the same Mansion House that Samuel Blodget, Jr. had initially built, and had remained long unfinished on the site. Greenville would leave the Blodget family in 1853 when Julia Anna Allen Blodget Britton sold the property to James McCloskey, a curbsetter of the Spring Garden District.⁴³ After nearly a decade, James McCloskey sold the property for \$8,500 on August 18, 1862 to Samuel Arnold of Haddam, Connecticut, a quarry man and business associate of McCloskey as well as a former member of Congress.⁴⁴ Samuel Arnold and

⁴² Survey No. 3746 for Julia A. Britton, October 17, 1841, Franklin Fire Insurance Company of Philadelphia Records, HSP.

⁴³ Deed: Julia A. Britton, District of West Philadelphia, widow, to James McCloskey, District of Spring Garden, curb setter, for \$8,000, 15 March 1853, Recorded in Philadelphia Deed Book T.H., No. 75, p. 60, CAP.

⁴⁴ Deed: James McCloskey, city, curb setter, to Samuel Arnold, Haddam, Connecticut, quarry man, for \$8,500, 18 August 1862, Recorded in Philadelphia Deed Book A.C.H., No. 58, p. 255, CAP; *Biographical directory of the United States Congress, 1774-1989: the Continental Congress, September 5, 1774, to October 21, 1788, and the Congress of the United States, From the First Through the One Hundredth Congresses, March 4, 1789, to January 3, 1989, Inclusive* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. G.P.O., 1989), p. 547).

his wife Matilda Ann sold the property to the Trustees of the Episcopal Mission on June 12, 1866.⁴⁵ Greenville was enlarged between 1862 and 1873, more than doubling the size of the building with a third story and an additional eighteen feet to the south. Greenville's period appearance was no doubt an easy transition to the Italianate style of the period.



Georeferenced copy of Nathan Supplee's 1839 *Plan of Greenville* showing Greenville in relation to the current streets (Lancaster Avenue was widened) and buildings (in blue). Courtesy of J.M. Duffin.

Greenville v. the Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church

By the time the Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church opened in 1866, it was a three-story Italianate Mansion with a roughcast exterior finish.

The house contained seventeen or eighteen large rooms, the building being fifty feet square...⁴⁶

In a 1985 site plan, Greenville's primary elevation measured forty-six feet in width and about forty-four feet in depth.⁴⁷ While this description claims that the building was fifty

⁴⁵ Deed: Samuel Arnold and Matilda Ann, his wife, to Charles B. Durborow, Jay Cooke, Andrew Wheeler and Nathaniel B. Browne, trustees, for \$4,500 (also subject to mortgage debt), 12 June 1866, Recorded in L.R.B., No. 192, p. 310, CAP.

⁴⁶ Charles or Samuel??? B. Durborow, *History of the Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States* (Philadelphia: A.C. Bryson & Company, 1869).

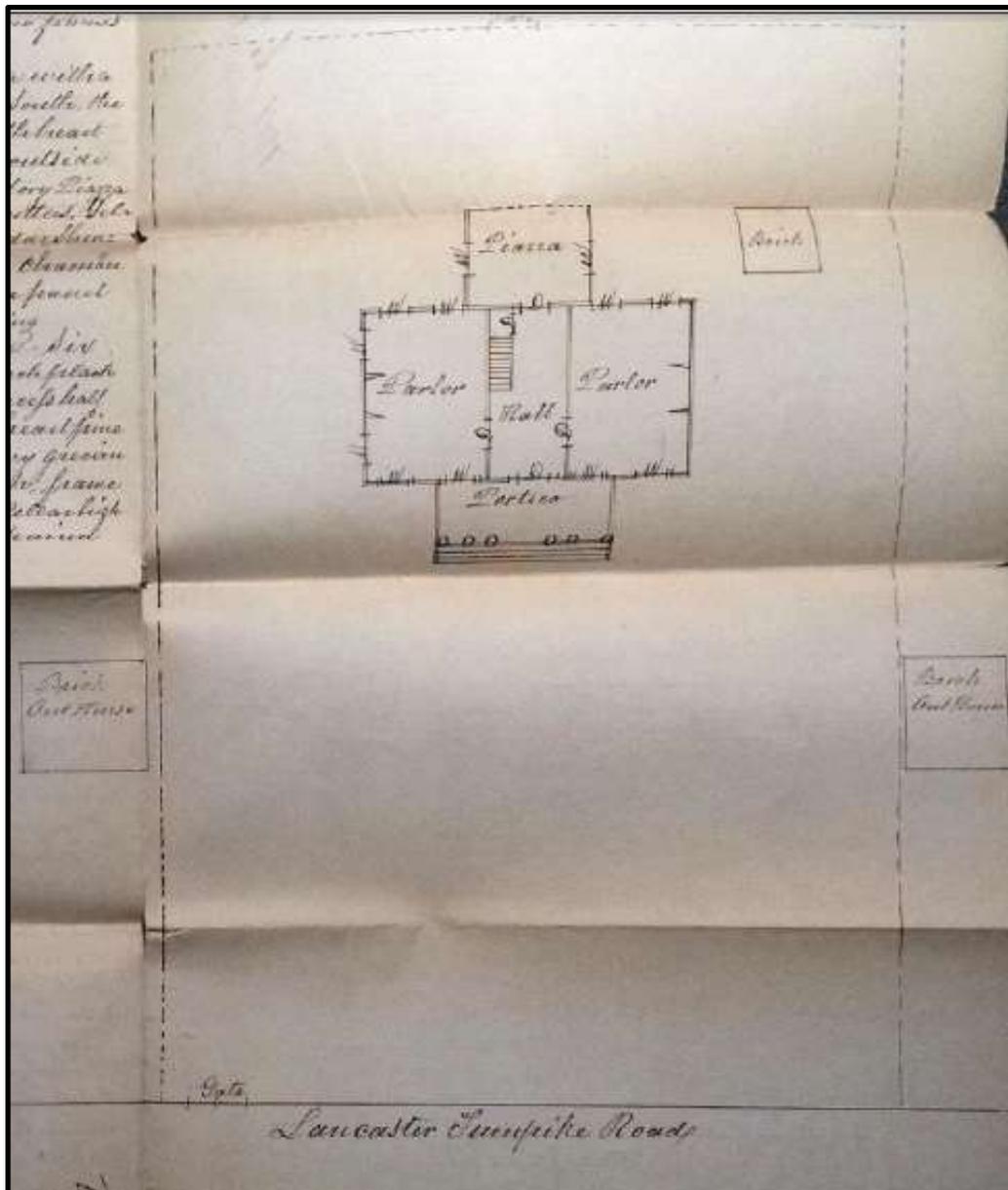
⁴⁷ Site Plan, C. 1985. Courtesy CAP.

feet square, Greenville was never more than forty-six feet front by forty-four feet deep, as the main portion stands to-date. While this is a much larger house than that built by Samuel Blodget, Jr. and later surveyed by his daughter Julia Anna Allen Blodget Britton, it does have a very important extant feature, which includes the original dimensions:

Dimensions.—The Dwelling is 46 feet front from Cut to Cut and 24 feet deep.⁴⁸

Taken from the 1841 Franklin Fire Insurance survey, this verifies that Greenville built by Samuel Blodget, Jr. and later owned by his daughter is the precise width of the current building. The survey also revealed that in 1841 there were four large windows and a central doublewide entrance at the primary, north elevation at the ground floor of Greenville, as well as the fact that there were six windows on the second floor. This leaves very little doubt that the extant Mansion House is that of Samuel Blodget, Jr., Rebecca Smith Blodget, and their heirs.

⁴⁸ Survey No. 3746, Julia A. Britton. Perpetual October 7, 1841. Franklin Fire Insurance Company of Philadelphia.
*Greenville; The Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church; and
Buildings of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men
3514-30 Lancaster Avenue, West Philadelphia
Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, Summer 2016 – Page 56*



1841 Franklin Fire Insurance survey of Greenville and flanking dependencies.
 Courtesy of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Survey of the property appears to have taken place at various times during Samuel Blodget, Jr.'s ownership. In the first decade of the nineteenth century, Blodget's trustees recorded that the Greenville Estate was surveyed, making reference to the costs incurred. Additional survey occurred over the years for the subdivision of the property with updates that appear to have occurred after Blodget's death in 1814 and later after the death of Mrs. Blodget in 1837. "Plan of Greenville, Situate on the west side of the River Schuylkill in the Borough of West Philadelphia" was printed in 1839, which indicates further subdivision by Julia Ann Allen Blodget Britton and her trustees. This map also shows Greenville in the same location. Completed in 1814–1815, Greenville would have

*Greenville; The Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church; and
 Buildings of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men
 3514-30 Lancaster Avenue, West Philadelphia
 Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, Summer 2016 - Page 57*

been fairly new when it was transferred to Julia Ann Allen Blodget Britton in 1841. The period dimensions of the how were as follows:

Dimensions.—The Dwelling is 46 feet front from Cut to Cut and 24 feet deep.⁴⁹

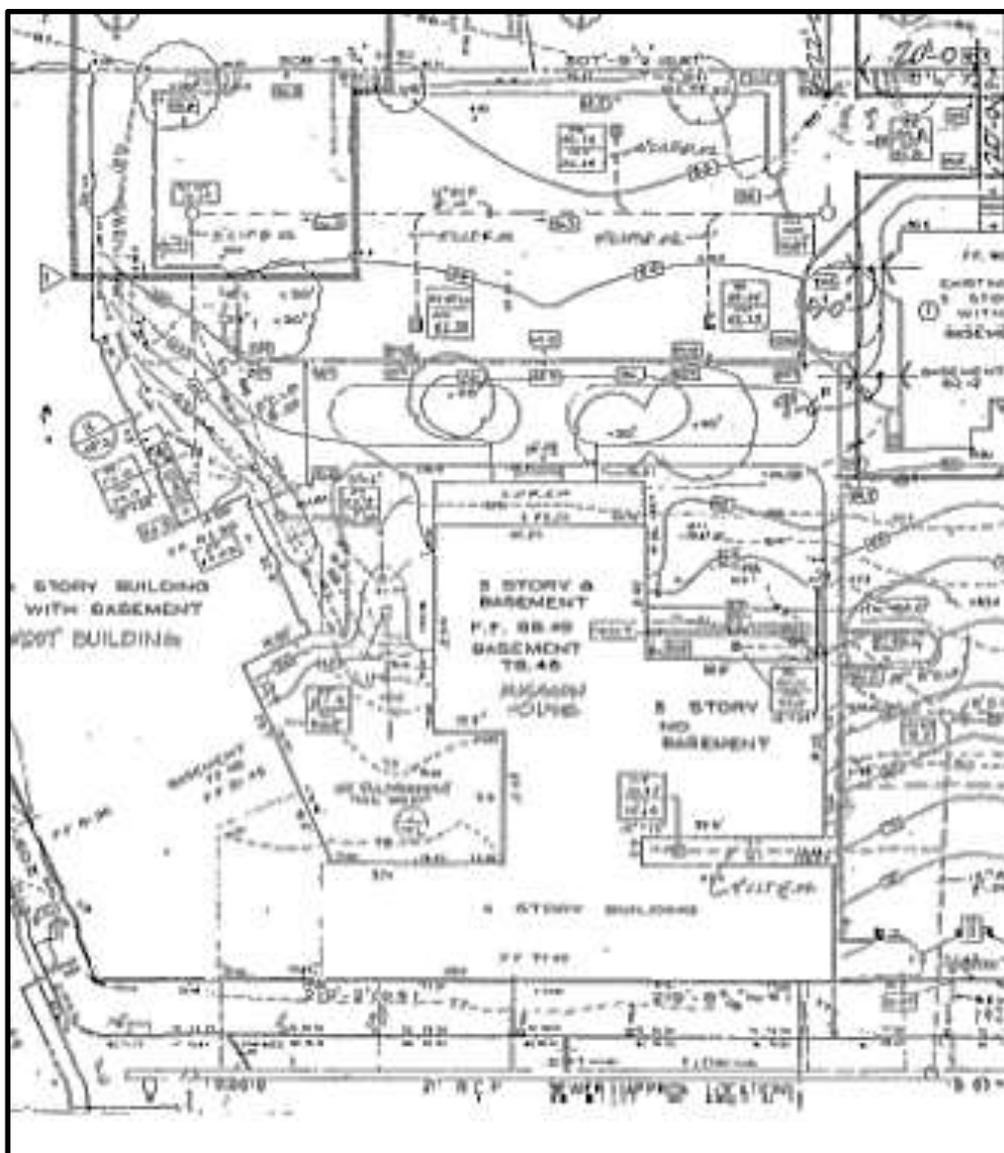
As stated above, the Franklin Fire Insurance Company recorded that the building width was forty-six feet and that the fenestration included a primary entrance flanked by two large windows on each side with six windows on the second floor. The width of the primary elevation and the placement of the apertures are congruous to the extant Mansion House. The main block of Greenville was enlarged and styled to the present size and appearance between 1841 and 1866. The main block of Greenville is described in its present state by the Protestant Episcopal Church in reference to its new “Mission House” in 1866.

The house contained seventeen or eighteen large rooms, the building being fifty feet square...⁵⁰

Additions and alterations occurred to the east and south of Greenville through the late nineteenth century; however, the Main Block has? remained unchanged from its appearance in 1866.

⁴⁹ Survey No. 3746, Julia A. Britton. Perpetual October 7, 1841. Franklin Fire Insurance Company of Philadelphia.

⁵⁰ Samuel Durborow. History of the Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church.



1981 site plan showing Greenville (labeled as “mansion house”).
 Courtesy of the City Archives of Philadelphia.

In the 1981 site plan shown above, Greenville’s primary elevation measured forty-six feet in width and about forty-four feet in depth.⁵¹ While some descriptions claim that the building was fifty feet square, the Greenville was never more than forty-six feet in width by forty-eight feet in depth. This is the current description of the main block to-date. All evidence available indicates that the subject Mansion House contains the building constructed by Blodget in the late eighteenth century.

⁵¹ Site Plan, ca. 1985. Courtesy CAP.



Samuel Blodget, c. 1784. By John Trumbull. Courtesy the National Portrait Gallery.

CRITERION A

Samuel Blodget, Jr. (1757–1814)

Greenville is likely the only surviving building that served as a residence of Samuel Blodget, Jr., a significant economist, gentleman architect, merchant, and real estate developer and speculator, as well as playing a significant role in the early development of the Federal City, as well as West Philadelphia in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Greenville was also the home of Samuel Blodget's estranged wife, Rebecca "Becky" Smith Blodget. The daughter of Rev. Dr. William Smith, D.D. and the wife of Samuel Blodget, Jr., Becky was an important personage in her own right of the New Republic, having considerable notoriety and renown as an independent woman of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century in Philadelphia. Greenville *has significant character, interest or value as being associated with the lives of persons significant in the past.*

Economist, gentleman architect, merchant, and real estate developer and speculator, among other notable accomplished and unsuccessful endeavors, Samuel Blodget, Jr. was

*Greenville; The Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church; and
Buildings of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men
3514-30 Lancaster Avenue, West Philadelphia
Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, Summer 2016 – Page 60*

without question a renaissance man of his day whom George Washington described as a “projecting genius.”⁵² Like the incredible Robert Morris, financier of the American Revolution, Blodget’s vision proved successful in his early years, but was, clearly, ahead of its time.

The son of Samuel Blodget, Sr. and Hannah White, Samuel Blodget, Jr. was born on August 28, 1757.⁵³ Samuel Blodget, Sr. was a canal builder, merchant and a manufacturer. He had an interest in mechanical devices and developed machinery for raising sunken ships.⁵⁴ While most biographical accounts claim that Blodget was born either in Goffstown, New Hampshire, or Woburn, Massachusetts, official records indicate that the family was then living in Boston.⁵⁵ The Blodget family lived in Boston until 1769 when they moved to Goffstown, New Hampshire.⁵⁶ Like many men in his generation, Blodget served in the Continental Army. He joined forces at an encampment in Cambridge, Massachusetts in July 1775, and eventually became a captain in the New Hampshire Militia. He resigned this post on December 22, 1777. According to later accounts, Blodget was injured during his military service, which may have led to his decision to return to civilian life.⁵⁷

Immediately after the resignation he was attracted to the town of Exeter, New Hampshire, an intrigue likely enticed by Dorothy Folsom (1758–1789), the daughter of General Nathaniel Folsom (1726–1790) and Dorothy Smith (1726–1776). Blodget married Dorothy Folsom in January 1778 in Exeter. They would go on to have five children. Not limited to this personal attachment, he also engaged locally in business but that proved unsuccessful. His father had to pay his debts and as a result, the young couple removed to Boston, where Blodget tried his hand at business again. This time he chose successfully, investing in East India Trade, and, as a result, he amassed a small fortune. Blodget traveled to Europe in 1784, where his portrait was painted by John Trumbull, and he conducted his business operations in London.⁵⁸ The constant volatility that would haunt him throughout his life became apparent during these prosperous early years. On New Years Day of 1787, his wife, Dorothy Folsom Blodget, died in Boston at just twenty-nine years old. Blodget appears to have been in London at this time.⁵⁹

⁵² George Waldo Browne. Hon. Samuel Blodget: the pioneer of progress in Merrimack Valley. (Manchester, NH: George Waldo Browne, 1907), p. 1-61.

⁵³ Town and City Clerks of Massachusetts. *Massachusetts Vital and Town Records*. Holbrook Research Institute :Provo, UT.

⁵⁴ Kenneth, Hafertepe,. "Blodget, Samuel, Jr.," *American National Biography Online*, Feb. 2000. Accessed 16 May 2016..

⁵⁵ His birth record is in the Boston town birth records. Courtesy Ancestry.com.

⁵⁶ Browne, Hon. Samuel Blodget, p. 16.

⁵⁷ Kenneth, Hafertepe,. "Blodget, Samuel, Jr.," *American National Biography Online*, Feb. 2000. Accessed 16 May 2016..

⁵⁸ Kenneth, Hafertepe,. "Blodget, Samuel, Jr.," *American National Biography Online*, Feb. 2000. Accessed 16 May 2016..

⁵⁹ *Colombian Centinal*. (Boston, Massachusetts: 3 January 1787), p. 1.; “Death Notice,” *The American Recorder and the Charlestown Advertiser* (Boston, Massachusetts: 5 January 1787), p. 1.



Samuel Blodget, Sr. Courtesy the Massachusetts Historical Society. Samuel Blodget, Jr. Sketch by John Trumball. Courtesy the Yale University Art Gallery.

Likely motivated by his financial aspirations, Blodget again removed, this time to Philadelphia about 1791, continuing to maintain business interests in Boston and elsewhere.⁶⁰ His immediate motivation for coming to Philadelphia was to work with Ebenezer Hazard to try to find investors for a tontine – an early form of life insurance – which he had helped start in Boston, failing to attract enough investors. Being something of a big-picture thinker, this large operation of pooling capital investments appealed to him. With Hazard’s help, Blodget was able to entice some Philadelphians interested in creating the Universal Tontine Association in 1792. That fall, the investors renamed the company the Insurance Company of North America (INA). Blodget took to the idea immediately and was so successful finding investors that at the first shareholders’ meeting in December 1792 he was elected head of the board of directors. INA’s first policy was for a ship and its cargo. Because he was a successful promoter of the company, he continued to serve on the board of directors until 1799 when he began to experience financial difficulties. Blodget served on key committees that expanded the INA’s business in fire and life insurance.⁶¹ Little did Blodget know that his prudent decision would enable another, less fortuitous one.

⁶⁰ Many biographical accounts state he came to Philadelphia in 1789 but the contemporary records all indicate that it was sometime around 1791 (for example, see Guardians’ Bond for the children of “Samuel Blodget of London in the Kingdom of Great Britain Merchant,” 3 December 1790, Probate, Estate Packets Old Series No. 5602, Rockingham Co., New Hampshire, Wills and Probate Records, 1643–1982).

⁶¹Marquis James. *Biography of a Business, 1792 – 1942: Insurance Company of North America* (New York: Bobbs-Merill Co., 1942), p. 11–17.



Samuel Blodget, Jr., c. 1786. Courtesy Private Collection.

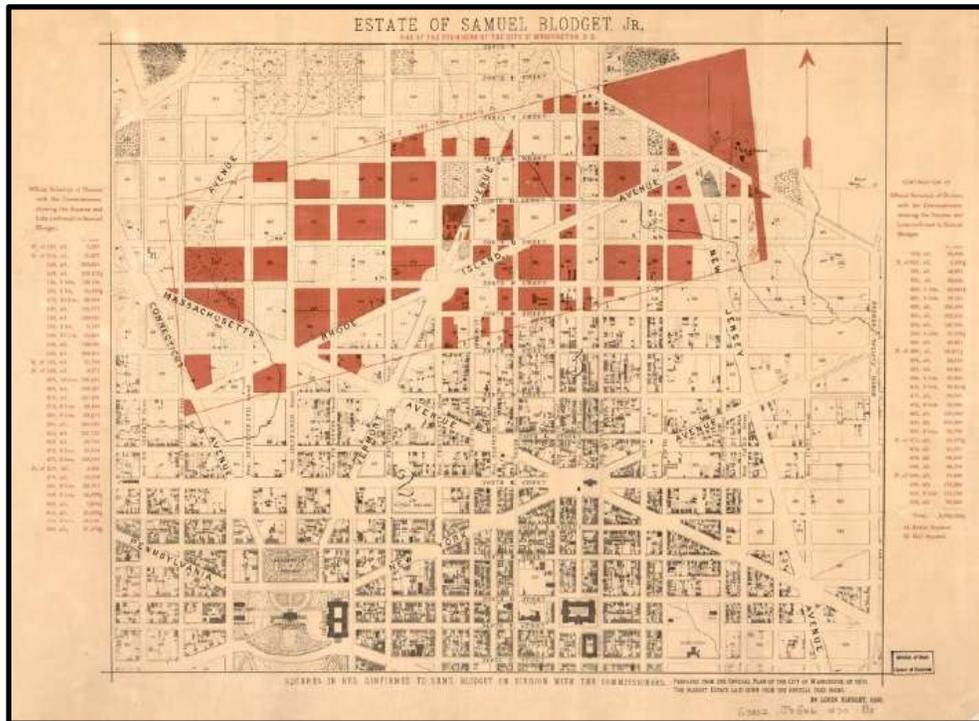
Blodget was a charismatic, ambitious and successful man by 1792. This, no doubt, qualified him to marry a notoriously beautiful and well-placed lady -- Rebecca “Becky” Smith, daughter of Rev. Dr. William Smith, D.D., the founding Provost of the College of Philadelphia (later University of Pennsylvania). The marriage took place in May 1792 at Christ Church before Bishop William White with a large number local and nationally prominent people in attendance, including the son of John and Abigail Adams.⁶²

[Rebecca Smith] was dressed in a sprig’d muslin *chemise*, and wore a bonnet with a curtain. The young ladies, her bridesmaids, had also on *chemises*, but their hats ornamented. . . . There was a monstrous company—forty-seven people—at supper. *That* was perfectly elegant in every respect, and not even a whisper or joke that could have raised a blush in a vestal...⁶³

⁶² *Pennsylvania Marriage Records*. Harrisburg, PA: Pennsylvania Archives Printed Series, 1876. Series 2, Series 6.

⁶³ “Advertisement,” *Federal Gazette*. (Philadelphia: 12 May 1792), p. 1.

His new father-in-law was also an ambitious man recently forced out from the University of Pennsylvania and then greatly involved in land speculation in western Pennsylvania and New York.⁶⁴



Estate of Samuel Blodget, Jr.: one of the founders of the City of Washington, D.C.: [Jamaica, Washington, D.C.].
Courtesy the Library of Congress.

Blodget's involvements were numerous during this time. Living in Philadelphia in the 1790s across the street from Independence Hall where Congress met, he was well positioned to become heavily involved in the establishment and development of the new Federal City. He was an early and long lasting supporter of the city. He purchased four lots at the first public auction of property in October 1791. The tract included a "Mansion House" at the southwest portion of the property.⁶⁵

Blodget also owned land in other cities. In January 1792, he purchased 494 acres known as the Jamaica tract for \$35,000, one of the largest in the District of Columbia.⁶⁶

Blodget's most important role in our national heritage was his involvement in the promotion of the Federal City among investors and the general public. A constant flow of correspondence passed between Samuel Blodget, Jr. and American Founding Fathers, George Washington, then President of the United States, and Thomas Jefferson, then

⁶⁴ Horace Wemyss Smith. *Life and Correspondence of the Rev. William Smith, D.D.*, Volume 1. (Philadelphia: Ferguson & Co.), p. 12.

⁶⁵ View of the City of Washington in 1792 and in 1911. Courtesy the Library of Congress.

⁶⁶ Bob Arnebeck, *Through a Fiery Trial: Building Washington, 1790–1800* (New York: Madison Books, 1991), this book has the most complete description of Blodget's activities in Washington in the 1790s; and Kenneth, Hafertepe, "Blodget, Samuel, Jr.," *American National Biography Online*, Feb. 2000. Accessed 16 May 2016.

Secretary of State, who were both greatly involved in the planning of the Federal City. Blodget proved helpful to the Federal government in providing planning innovations, as well as real estate development advice throughout much of 1792, gaining the respect of his peers. One particularly important entity he impressed was the Commissioners of the District of Columbia, who were charged with siting, designing and selling off land there.. In March 1792, Blodget presented the Commissioners with a plan to raise among his business contacts in Boston and Philadelphia a \$500,000 loan to provide funding for the construction of the new Federal buildings. Jefferson liked the idea at once. Blodget also stepped forward to help the Commissioners get an engraving of L'Enfant's plan, which was produced in Boston.

Blodget was also involved in the promotion of real estate development for his own gain, the erection of public buildings, and the movement to establish a national university. His architectural interests emerged during this time, as he was one of several to submit designs for the new capitol building. Inspired by the Maison Carrée in Nîmes, Blodget's design was favorable, but not the ultimate selection.

The idea for a "Superintendent" of buildings for the District of Columbia emerged during this time and several were considered for such a post including Major L'Enfant. General Washington did not seem to have a particular person in mind when he wrote to the Commissioners of the District of Columbia on November 30, 1792; however, he did entertain the notion that Blodget might be considered, along with several others, to fill the appointment, leaving the final decision to the Commissioners of the District of Columbia. Washington states:

Mr Blodget seems to be the person on whom many eyes are turned, & among others who look that way, are some of the Proprietors. He has travelled, I am told, a good deal in Europe; & has turned his attention (according to his own Account) to Architecture & matters of this kind. He has staked much on the issue of the Law establishing the permanent residence; and is *certainly* a projecting genius, with a pretty general acquaintance. To which may be added, if he has any influence in this Country, *it* must be in a quarter where it is most needed; and where, indeed, an antitode is necessary to the poison which Mr F——s C——t is spreading; by insinuations, that the accomplishment of the Plan is no more to be expected than the fabric of a vision, & will vanish in like manner. But whether with these qualifications, Mr Blodget is a man of industry & steadiness, & whether (as soon as it is necessary) he would take up a settled abode there, are points I am unable to resolve. As an Architect, Mr Jefferson has a high opinion of Mr Hallet, but whether Mr Hallet has qualities, & is sufficiently known to fit him for general superintendancy I cannot *pretend* even to give an opinion upon. If Mr B[l]odget is

contemplated for this office would it not be well to be *on* or *off* with him at once. [I] hear he is held in suspence on this head.⁶⁷

Shortly after receiving Washington's letter, the Commissioners appointed Blodget to a post that would evolve to become the "Superintendent of the Buildings," which was one of several titles for the position at that time.⁶⁸ As Commissioner David Stuart states in a letter to Washington:

I cannot but think that Mr Blodget will be found to possess the other qualities necessary for a Superintendant, in a higher degree than Major L'Enfant—For the Major, besides the objection to his temper, has no turn for œconomy, and no acquaintance with accounts, which are both indispensably necessary. Besides, he could not have the same influence with the Eastern people, which tho' it may be considered as an adventitious circumstance, is certainly very desirable.⁶⁹

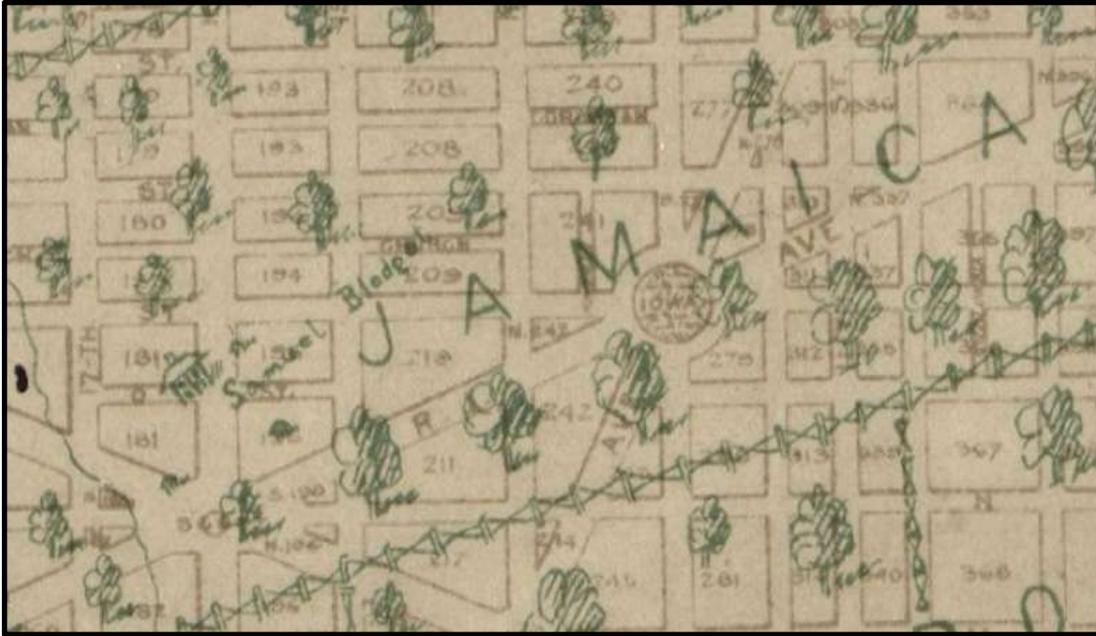
One of his first acts in the new post was to devise a way to promote interest and investment in the Federal City. Blodget's solution to this was to turn to a familiar public financing device of the time – a lottery. True to his character, Blodget's plan was extremely ambitious, raising \$350,000 through sale of 50,000 tickets – the largest lottery at that time.⁷⁰ Blodget secured support from the Commission for his Washington Lottery in the first days of January 1793. Blodget set about at once using the lottery tickets as means to extend both his and the Commissioner's business in the selling of DC lots (which was intended as the primary source of funding for the Commission).

⁶⁷ Letter: George Washington to David Stuart. Philadelphia: 30 November 1792. Found in Founders Online, National Archives and Records Administration. <<http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/05-11-02-0264>> Accessed 15 May 2016.

⁶⁸ Letter: Commissioners of the District of Columbia to Samuel Blodget, Jr. Washington, D.C.: 5 Jan. 1793. DNA: RG 42, Records of the Commissioners for the District of Columbia, Letters Sent. He received a salary of £600, which was payable in lots or money.

⁶⁹ Letter: David Stuart to George Washington. Hope Park, Fairfax County, Virginia: 10 December 1792. Found in Founders Online, National Archives and Records Administration. <<http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/05-11-02-0264>> Accessed 15 May 2016.

⁷⁰ John Samuel Ezell, *Fortune's Merry Wheel: The Lottery in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960), p. 102–105.



“The Jamaica Tract” with the location of both the house and fencing of Samuel Blodget, Jr. View of the City of Washington in 1792 and in 1911. Courtesy the Library of Congress.

Blodget’s tenure as “Superintendent of the Buildings” was fraught with controversy. For the first months of 1793 he was largely engaged in the planning of the Washington Lottery scheme. From its start, however, the Washington Lottery was unrealistic, offering a \$50,000 hotel to be built on his own property as first prize, and lesser prizes worth up to \$30,000. When ticket sales (due in part to the Yellow Fever epidemic in Philadelphia that summer) did not meet his ambitious expectations, the lottery quickly became economically unsound. Perhaps his success selling shares in the INA convinced him that he could also do the same with the lottery tickets.⁷¹ This resulted in Blodget being unable to deliver on the prizes by the advertised deadline of September 1793. He was forced to delay the drawing of winners and paying out of the prizes.⁷² Rather than turn from the venture, he instituted a second lottery in June 1793 offering case prizes as well as lots with houses.

As a result, even when construction of the hotel commenced, its progress was gradual due to Blodget’s limited finances, sitting unfinished for years on Pennsylvania Avenue. Based on plans prepared by White House architect James Hoban, the \$50,000 building was the largest private structure in Washington, DC during the Federal period. The building took

⁷¹ This was not entirely unreasonable since lottery tickets during this period were beginning to be sold through brokers and traded like stocks (Ezell, *Fortune’s Merry Wheel*). Blodget even used some of his lottery tickets as payment for land purchases in Georgia.

⁷² Lotteries before the 1820s required that every single ticket had to be drawn from both a number wheel and a prize wheel both filled with the same number of tickets. The more tickets in the lottery, the longer it took to determine who the winners were (Ezell, *Fortune’s Merry Wheel*, 95–96; George William Gordon, *A Lecture Before the Boston Young Men’s Society on the Subject of Lotteries* [Boston: Temperance Press, Ford & Dambrell, 1833], p. 16).

years to complete, proving to be a key part of Blodget's financial downfall.⁷³ Following the failure of the first Washington Lottery, the Commissioners of the District of Columbia quickly publicly distanced themselves from the scheme and determined that Blodget was personally liable for the prizes.

Before the difficulties of the lottery manifested, Blodget was able to establish many important relationships and participate in key planning decisions while Superintendent. Likely a connection made in Philadelphia, Dr. William Thornton (1759–1828), a British-American architect, inventor, painter, and physician, and, most importantly, the architect of the United States Capitol, became an important personal friend. Thornton and his family rented their DC residence from Blodget in the 1790s and 1800s. Another important architect he worked with was James Hoban (1758–1831), an Irish-born American architect who designed the White House and many other residential buildings in Washington, DC. Blodget was in constant communication with Thornton regarding his design for the Capitol, as well as Hoban regarding his design for the White House.⁷⁴ By June 1793, Blodget had selected a site for the proposed “National University” on his own property and the Commissioners of the District of Columbia were in agreement with his proposed plan.⁷⁵ Blodget was also involved in both architectural and practical matters related to the planning of the designs for the U.S. Capitol.

In addition to his other involvements, Blodget was also a principal founder of the Bank of Columbia, which was chartered by the State of Maryland in December 1793 and was the first private bank in the District of Columbia. He served as president of the bank for one year and was then succeeded by Benjamin Stoddert (1744–1813), a business associate of Blodget's, as well as the first United States Secretary of the Navy.⁷⁶

None of his architectural or planning accomplishments mattered once General Washington and Thomas Jefferson became aware of the problems with the lottery schemes. Washington felt “that speculation has been his primary object from the beginning.”⁷⁷ Washington expected a detailed manager, but got instead a grand planner,

⁷³ “A New View of Blodget's Hotel,” *Washington History*, 2 (Spring, 1990), 103–106. Blodget's Hotel was one of the few large buildings in the city that was not burned.

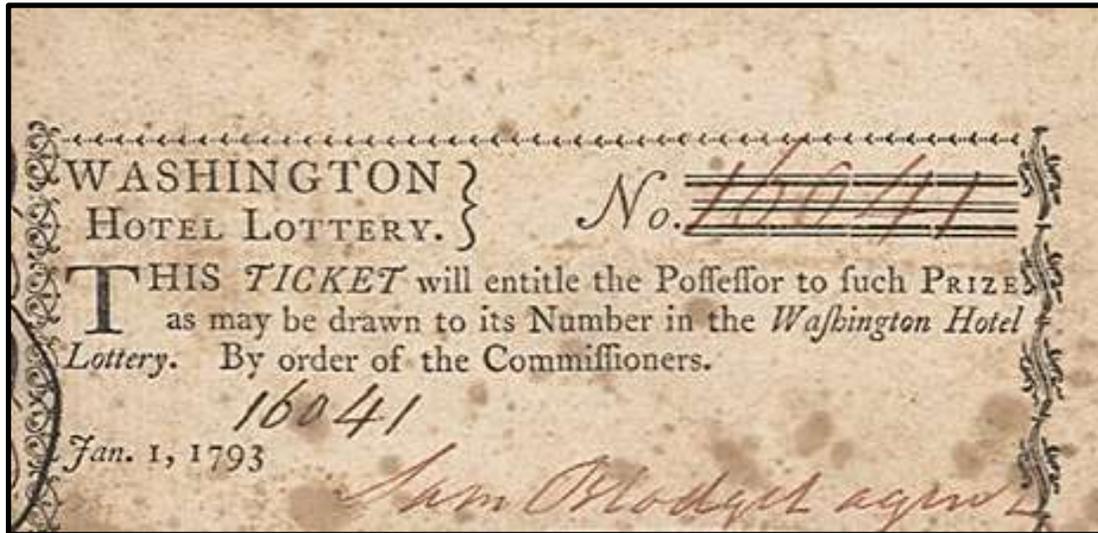
⁷⁴ Letter: Commissioners of the District of Columbia to George Washington. Georgetown, 23 June 1793. Found in Founders Online, National Archives and Records Administration. <<http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/05-11-02-0264>> Accessed 1 May 2016.

⁷⁵ Letter: Commissioners of the District of Columbia to George Washington. Georgetown, 24 June 1793. Found in Founders Online, National Archives and Records Administration. <<http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/05-11-02-0264>> Accessed 1 May 2016.

⁷⁶ Serving from 1798 to 1801, Stoddert was influential in Washington, DC at the time when Blodget needed his assistance. John Joseph Walsh, *Early Banks in District of Columbia, 1792–1818* (Washington: 1940), p. 68–69; Bryan, *National Capital*, 1:145, 223; and *Alexandria Advertiser and Commercial Intelligencer*. (Alexandria: 10 Oct. 1801), p. 1.

⁷⁷ Letter: George Washington to Thomas Johnson. Philadelphia, 23 January 1794. Found in Founders Online, National Archives and Records Administration. <<http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/05-11-02-0264>> Accessed 15 May 2016.

as well as a speculator. Blodget's service as Superintendent was terminated in February 1793.⁷⁸



First Washington Lottery Ticket, Washington, DC, 1793. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

General Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and the Commissioners of the District of Columbia worked to resolve the Washington Lottery scheme and appear to have been somewhat sympathetic to Blodget's plight. Blodget was anxious to resolve the scandal; however, in the end this would require an excessive amount of capital that the Washington Lottery and Blodget himself could raise.⁷⁹

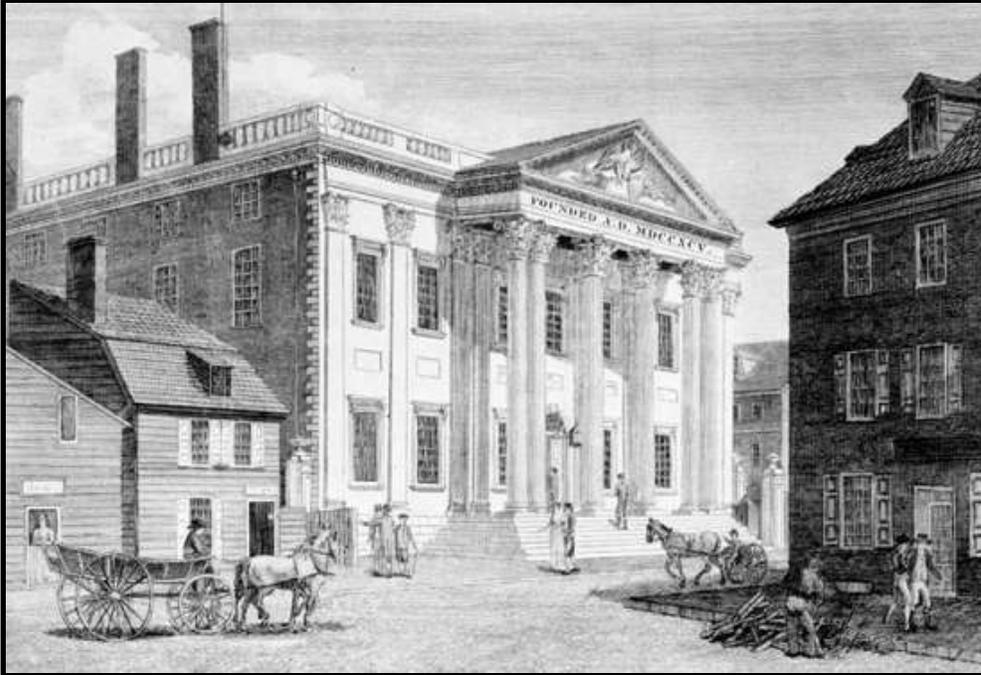
Despite Blodget's Washington Lottery scandal, he was able to continue business in Philadelphia. In fact, just as he seems to have lost all confidence and respect in the Federal City, he made progress in reasserting himself in Philadelphia. Blodget was commissioned to complete designs for the first Bank of the United States in 1795. Eventually occupied for more than a century by Girard's Bank, the design was inspired by that of the Exchange in Dublin, which was the work of architect Thomas Cooley (1740–1784), a prominent English-born Irish architect.⁸⁰ This was one of the first

⁷⁸ Letter: Thomas Johnson to George Washington. Georgetown: 6 February 1794. Found in Founders Online, National Archives and Records Administration. <<http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/05-11-02-0264>> Accessed 15 May 2016.; and Letter: David Stuart to George Washington. Hope-Park, Virginia: 6 February 1794. Found in Founders Online, National Archives and Records Administration. <<http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/05-11-02-0264>> Accessed 15 May 2016.

⁷⁹ Bob Arnebeck. *Through a Fiery Trial: Building Washington, 1790–1800*. (New York: Madison Books, 1991), p. XXX; Budd and Pryor to George Washington. Philadelphia, 31 October 1796. For example of a citizen's response, calling Blodget "unblushing, Bottle-conjuring Villian ... [who would] gull and bubble us," see Anonymous to George Washington, New England, 7 September 1796.

⁸⁰ There has been some doubt raised about whether Blodget was actually the architect of the building (in spite of comments by contemporaries such as Owen Biddle to the contrary). Some recent scholarship, however, confirms the original attribution (Kenneth Hafertepe, "Banking Houses in the United States: the First Generation, 1781–1811," *Winterthur Portfolio* 35 [Spring 2000]: p. 13).

classical-inspired buildings in America to be completed with a marble façade.⁸¹ Another work by Blodget was his circa 1795 design for the bridge over the “Eastern Section” in the District of Columbia.⁸² He was still active with the INA, inducing the company to offer life insurance in 1795 and designed their corporate seal.⁸³



First Bank of the United States. Courtesy the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Business matters were not the only things that occupied Blodget’s time in Philadelphia. Talk of “national institutions of education” were floating about Philadelphia in 1794 and 1795. The American Philosophical Society held a contest for a plan for a national university. In December of 1794, Blodget and several artists formed an Association of Artists of America to create an art school. The group chose Blodget along with Charles Willson Peale, George H.S. Parkins, Walter Robertson, and William Birch to form a committee to visit artists throughout the city to gain support. He was also appointed to a committee to devise a plan for the institution, which they called the Columbian College. Blodget had the task of working on the disciplines of architecture and “perspective.” Unfortunately, the group soon split over adopting a more English or a more American (i.e. democratic) structure for the school. Blodget sided with the English group. The split doomed the entire movement and the plans fell apart by the spring of 1795.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone, ed., *Dictionary of American Biography* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1937), p. 380-381.

⁸² Department of State, District of Columbia Papers, II, p. 107. Courtesy the Special Collections of the Library of Congress.

⁸³ Marquis James. *Biography of a Business, 1792 – 1942: Insurance Company of North America*, (New York: Bobbs-Merill Co., 1942), p. 44, 56.

⁸⁴ Lillian B. Miller, ed., *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family*, v. 2, *Charles Willson Peale: The Artist as Museum Keeper, 1791–1810* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), p. 101–113.

Between 1793 and 1795, Blodget made Philadelphia his primary residence. He, his second wife and his children from both of his marriages lived at 169 (now 503) Chestnut Street in a house owned by the widow of Christian Febiger. The house contained 4,500 square feet and included three outbuildings, together valued at \$8,000 in 1798.⁸⁵ His neighbors (at 509 Chestnut) included his wife's aunt Williamina Bond and her son, Phineas, the British Consul to the United States.

With no regard for his impending debt in Washington, DC, Blodget expanded his real estate holdings by purchasing property in Philadelphia. On January 1, 1795, he bought a 50¼-acre tract from the Francis brothers, as previously.⁸⁶ Blodget's purchase, the Greenville Estate, was a short distance from the middle and upper ferries at the Schuylkill River. Like his investments in Washington, DC, he intended to develop this property for speculation. Later it would become apparent that Blodget also intended to reserve a small portion of the subdivision for his own personal use.⁸⁷ Blodget began constructing a "Mansion House" between the time of purchase and July 1799. Perhaps anticipating this development, he was one of the early shareholders and directors of the Company for Erecting a Permanent Bridge over the River Schuylkill (later the Market Street bridge) when it was formed in 1798.⁸⁸

Following the economic Panic of 1797, Blodget, like many other speculators of the period, was without the funds to fulfill most of his financial obligations. The hotel remained unfinished and its owner, Robert S. Bickley, sued Blodget in 1798. The suit, along with other major bankruptcies like that of Robert Morris (1734–1806) and Supreme Court Justice James Wilson (1742–1798), no doubt prompted Blodget to protect certain investments.

⁸⁵ *United States Direct Tax of 1798: Tax Lists for the State of Pennsylvania*. M372, microfilm, 24 rolls. Records of the Internal Revenue Service, 1791-2006, Record Group 58. National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

⁸⁶ Deed: Tench Francis, esquire, and Anne, his wife, and Thomas Willing Francis and Dorothy, his wife, to Samuel Blodget, 1 January 1795, recorded in Philadelphia Deed Book D., No. 67 p. 467, City Archives of Philadelphia.

⁸⁷ Deposition of Charles P. Heath, witness for complainant, 8 April 1826. Found in Burr vs. McEuen et al, Case Papers, Equity Records, Case # 3 April Sessions 1818, Records of the U.S. Circuit Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, Record Group 21, NARA.

⁸⁸ *Statistical Account of the Schuylkill Permanent Bridge, Commenced September 5th 1801, Opened January 1st 1805* (Philadelphia: Jane Aitken, 1807), p. 21.



Miniature Painting of Samuel Blodget, Jr.
Courtesy Ancestry.com.

Blodget and his wife Rebecca sold the Greenville Estate in July 1799 to Thomas McEwen, Thomas Hale, and William Davidson of the firm of McEwen, Hale, & Davidson.⁸⁹ Though the deed was used “as security for a certain debt,” later documents and correspondence reveal that this transaction was intended to hold the property in trust.

At the turn of the nineteenth century, Samuel Blodget, Jr. owned the tract in Blockley Township, which included the unfinished Mansion House; the largely intact Jamaica Tract in Washington, DC; a valuable parcel “on the Capitol Hill” in present-day southeast Washington, DC; and several lots and houses, including the two houses in F Street, NW, which Dr. William Thornton rented. While all of these properties had the potential to grow tremendously in value as both Philadelphia and Washington, DC continued to develop, none of them would prove to create an immediate return. Blodget’s charisma and connections did manage to enable him to avoid immediate and complete ruin for his family’s future. He also borrowed substantial amounts of money from his wife’s family and others who trusted him.

The Rev. Dr. William Smith proved to be one of Blodget’s most ardent supporters. Perhaps Smith admired Blodget’s ambition, similar to his own.⁹⁰ William Smith and Benjamin Stoddert provided financial surety for him, advancing substantial loans to prevent his financial ruin.⁹¹

Pray give my Love to [your son] William M. Smith. Tell him I shall bring with me part of the debt I owed him when he so kindly relieved me from confinement that nothing can ever remove from my heart the indelible

⁸⁹ Deed: Samuel Blodget, the younger, of the City of Philadelphia, and Rebecca, his wife, to Thomas McEwen, Thomas Hale, and William Davidson, of the city, merchants, 22 July 1799, Philadelphia Deed Book D., Vol. 77, Page 198, CAP.

⁹⁰ Smith had actually been involved in politically charged lotteries for the University of Pennsylvania in his early years.

⁹¹ Letter: Samuel Blodget, Jr. to James S. Dobbis. Georgetown, 6 July 1801. Found in Collection 603: the Smith Family Papers (1757-1861), 19.0 linear feet, 14 boxes, 82 volumes, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

impressions of gratitude to him, to you and to all the relations which my alliance with your family have given me, of which I could never have known the true value but through misfortune.— I am now engaged settling old accounts of my late partnership, as before they can be completed my little family will be removed to Huntingdon.⁹²

Upset by his son-in-law's financial problems, Smith provided not only financial assistance. In January, Smith wrote to the President, John Adams (1735–1826), to plea for a political appointment for Blodget:

My best wishes and those of my Family have therefore always attended you—My Sons need not mention—Even my Daughter has shown high attachment by naming her last Son JOHN ADAMS. She cannot, however, but have in the difficulties under which her husband now labors not only from his early zeal for promoting the city of Washington, but from that Spirit of Speculation, which (when I consulted you on their marriage) you dreaded might be one day hurtful to him, if not repressed. This it hath been of late from his own good sense and I am well assured that after clearing himself of all encumbrances, a very good Estate will remain to Him.—But to come to the Main Design of this Letter—I see by the News Papers that one of the Commissioners, my old acquaintance, Gustavus Scott is dead.—I have not yet seen that his place is supplied—Might I hint that for talents and genius no man could better supply his Place than Blodget. Had some of his early Plans been adopted, considerable expense might have been saved. Some of the buildings would have been equally convenient and suitable to the Dignity of the U.S.⁹³

Blodget worked hard in the first years of the nineteenth century to make some quick money to help cover his debts; however, in most cases, he was not successful. Benjamin Stoddert reports in March 1801:

He [Samuel Blodget, Jr.] is building two very good houses near the Presidents, which will be worth when finished [\$]8000 each—Would it not be well for you to take an absolute Deed for these houses—for the debt due Hunter—and for fear of accidents to include more property in the Deed. ... Starting with his own family, Blodget was unsuccessful the following in getting a loan from his father, whose money was still tied up in his canal projects, had to turn to his father-in-law.⁹⁴

¹⁵⁴ Letter: Samuel Blodget, Jr. to William Smith, Georgetown, 23 May 1802. Found in Collection 603: the Smith Family Papers (1757-1861), 19.0 linear feet, 14 boxes, 82 volumes, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

⁹³ Letter: William Smith, to John Adams. Falls of the Schuylkill: 17 January 1800. Found in Collection 603: the Smith Family Papers (1757-1861), 19.0 linear feet, 14 boxes, 82 volumes, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

⁹⁴ Letter: Benjamin Stoddert to William Smith. Georgetown: 23 March 1801. Found in Collection 603: the Smith Family Papers (1757-1861), 19.0 linear feet, 14 boxes, 82 volumes, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Despite his longtime involvement in the development of the District of Columbia, Blodget appears to have lived between Philadelphia and Washington City over the years. While living in Philadelphia, Blodget came to Washington City periodically. In 1800, he visited the Thorntons for an extended period of time, which was recorded in the diaries of Anna Marie Brodeau Thornton, wife of William Thornton. Blodget appears to have spent most of his visit meeting with people, attending dinners and playing backgammon with the Thorntons.⁹⁵

Despite his visits to the Federal City, Blodget continued to live in Philadelphia. The Philadelphia city directories list Samuel Blodget “gentlemen” on Chestnut Street to 1802 and the county tax records assess him in Blockley Township in 1802 and 1803.⁹⁶

The Bickley lawsuit had continued through the turn of the nineteenth century. In 1802, the Pennsylvania courts ruled in favor of Bickley (a Philadelphia resident), deciding that Blodget owed Bickley the title to the unfinished hotel in Washington, DC and an additional \$21,500 to complete the construction. Unable to meet his financial obligations, Blodget appears to have been thrown into debtor’s prison. The precise date of his time in prison is unknown; however, Mrs. Thornton recorded “visiting Mr. Blodget at the jail,” on several occasions in 1803.⁹⁷



Drawing of Washington, D.C., c. 1803, showing the White House on the far left and Blodget’s Hotel on right. Courtesy the Library of Congress.

⁹⁵ Diary of Mrs. William Thornton [Anna Marie Brodeau Thornton], 1800-1863. The Diaries are located within the William Thornton Papers (1741-1865), Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

⁹⁶ Cornelius William Stafford, *Philadelphia Directory for 1800* (Philadelphia: William W. Woodward, 1800); Stafford, *Philadelphia Directory for 1800*; John Robinson, *Philadelphia Directory for 1802* (Philadelphia: William W. Woodward, 1802). Blockley Township, Philadelphia County Tax 1802, 1803, CAP. The tax lists assesses a personal tax on him at this location which suggests he was living here.

⁹⁷ Diary of Mrs. William Thornton [Anna Marie Brodeau Thornton], 1800-1863. The Diaries are located within the William Thornton Papers (1741-1865), Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Early in 1803, a petition was presented to Congress to allow Blodget to leave prison; however, the result of this appears to have perhaps only gained him more liberal privileges. Rev. Dr. William Smith, D.D. died in 1803, meaning that he was no longer providing financial surety for Blodget.

William Thornton came to his aid and agreed to serve as Blodget's surety in July 1804, which appears to have led to Blodget's ability to come and go from prison—"the liberty to walk therein, out of prison, for the preservation of his health."⁹⁸ Thornton later said that he was not fully aware of the enormity of Blodget's debt.⁹⁹ In 1805, a public sale of Blodget's property occurred to pay the outstanding debt. However, the proceeds of the sale did not cover the entire amount owed and Blodget remained in debt to Bickley. As one observer described it in 1806:

Around these public buildings are various clusters of Houses, an unfinished brick church and the walls of an unfinished house. On one side of the Pennsylvania Avenue is an unfinished large hotel without window sashes [Blodget's Hotel], proceeding from the Presidents house to George town northwestwardly, we find disconnected Rows of houses in Brick which are inhabited, 4 6 & 7 together, designated the 6 buildings &c. then comes a void of half a mile which brings you to Rock creek & George town. The original speculators [Robert] Morris, [John] Nicholson, [James] Greenleaf & [Samuel] Blodget, failed and left the master builders to pay their workmen as they could and abandon the work to decay.¹⁰⁰

William Thornton kept a detailed account of Blodget's debt. James Hoban was employed to work on the hotel periodically from May 30, 1806 through the time of Blodget's death in 1814.¹⁰¹ William Dunlap, a Commissioner of the District of Columbia noted the following about Blodget in his personal diary:

Blodget the speculator called on me to remind me of former acquaintance in London and New York and to make a long talk. He is an eternal proser. He has plan'd a great national University to be established here, the colleges to be placed around a monument erected to the memory of Washington, that the student may have ever more before their eyes the image of the founder of their liberties.¹⁰²

⁹⁸ Wilhelmus Bogart Bryan, *A History of the National Capital from Its Foundation Through the Period of the Adoption of the Organic Act* (Washington, D.C.: Macmillan, 1914), 1:553.

⁹⁹ Letter: William Thornton to James Madison. 17 December 1808. Found in Founders Online, National Archives and Records Administration. < <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Madison/99-01-02-3057> > Accessed on 5 May 2016.

¹⁰⁰ *Diary of William Dunlap (1766 – 1839): The Memoirs of A Dramatist, Theatrical Manager, Painter, Critic, Novelist, and Historian* (New York: NYHS, 1930), p. 2:394.

¹⁰¹ Ledger of Expenses of Samuel Blodget, Jr. [1806-1814]. Found in the William Thornton Papers (1741-1865), Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

¹⁰² *Diary of William Dunlap*. 2:395.

Despite his failures, Blodget was not without influence. In 1805, he managed to get a commission from the U.S. Senate to prepare plans for decoration and arrangement of the Senate Chamber in the impeachment trial of Supreme Court Justice Samuel Chase – the case which would set the precedent for independence of the Federal judiciary.¹⁰³ Vice President Aaron Burr, who presided over the trial, chose Blodget because Benjamin Henry Latrobe did not get his set of plans to Burr in time.¹⁰⁴

Capturing his interest in large projects, Blodget turned to something that he became famous for in later generations – the study of political economy. In 1801, he published a pamphlet in Washington, entitled *Thoughts on the Increasing Wealth and National Economy of the United States of America*.¹⁰⁵ He continued this work and, in 1806, published *Economica: A Statistical Manual for the United States*, which included a lengthy prefatory address; a chronology of American history; notes on agriculture, commerce, and banking; and an appendix devoted to the movement for the establishment of a national university and offering his own account of the reasons for his financial problems with Washington, DC. Both books are considered among the earliest on American economics.¹⁰⁶



Federal style houses built by Samuel Blodget, Jr.—eventually located at 1333-1335 F Street, NW in Washington, D.C. William Thornton eventually owned one of the houses, likely taking it as partial payment for his surety for Blodget over the years. Courtesy of the Historical Society of Washington, D.C.

¹⁰³ Letter: Benjamin Henry Latrobe to Thomas Jefferson, Wilmington, 26 January 1805. Found in Founders Online, National Archives. < <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/99-01-02-1617> > Accessed on 18 July 2016.

¹⁰⁴ Found in the Papers of Benjamin Henry Latrobe (1803-1817), the Library of Congress.

¹⁰⁵ Samuel Blodget, *Thoughts on the Increasing Wealth and National Economy of the United States of America*, (Washington, D.C.: Way and Groff, 1801).

¹⁰⁶ Kenneth Hafertepe. “Banking Houses in the United States: The First Generation 1781-1811” *Winterthur Portfolio*, Vol. 35, No.1. (Spring 2000), p. 11; Martin Öhman, “The Statistical Turn in Early American Political Economy: Mathew Carey and the Authority of Numbers,” *Early American Studies* 11 (2013): 486–515.

A second printing of *Economica* occurred in 1810, including a further analysis of both 1805 and 1809.¹⁰⁷ It gained some laud at the time of its printing and even changed his reputation with the President of the United States, having lastly had a poor influence on the opinion of General Washington.

I have read also the *Economica* of Mr Blodget for which I pray you to thank him. It is I presume a work of merit and Utility. I have not been able as yet to attend to it very carefully.¹⁰⁸

Blodget also sent a copy of the book to Thomas Jefferson.¹⁰⁹

Having lived in Washington, DC since about 1803, Samuel Blodget, Jr. returned to the Greenville Estate in the fall of 1812.¹¹⁰ Blodget lived in the unfinished Mansion House and Rebecca “Becky” Smith Blodget lived in the stable. Blodget remained at the Greenville Estate for roughly nineteenth months. During this time his primary endeavor was in the “opening of streets” for proposed subdivision of the Greenville Estate.¹¹¹

The precise circumstances of Blodget’s health prior to his death are unknown; however, his health was, as one biographer described, “much broken” final years according.¹¹² In the spring of 1814, he was admitted to Pennsylvania Hospital. He died there on April 11, 1814 under the care of Edward Barton, Vice Dr. Price and Resident Physician, at the age of sixty-six, of “Debility.”¹¹³ Between April 11 and April 22, Blodget was interred in the Christ Church Burial Ground. His widow asked that he be interred in the Smith family’s vault at East Falls, but this had been firmly rejected by the Smith brothers.¹¹⁴ On April 15, the Pennsylvania Hospital was paid \$98.44 for services provided to Blodget in his last days.¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁷ Kenneth, Hafertepe,. "Blodget, Samuel, Jr.," *American National Biography Online*, Feb. 2000. Accessed 16 May 2016.. and *Economica: A Statistical Manual for the United States* (Washington D.C., For the Author, 1806).

¹⁰⁸ Letter: John Adams to John Quincy Adams, Quincy, 7 January 1807. Found in Founders Early Access, <<http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/default.xqy?keys=FOEA-chron-1800-1807-01-27-3>> Accessed 18 July 2016.

¹⁰⁹ Letter: Samuel Blodget, Jr. to Thomas Jefferson, Washington, D.C., 25 May 1807. Found in Founders Online, National Archives and Records Administration. < <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/99-01-02-5628>> Accessed 18 July 2016.

¹¹⁰ The correspondence among family members and comments by Benjamin Rush indicate that Samuel and Rebecca had a very strained marriage and were probably separated during much of this period.

¹¹¹ Deposition of Jane Burns, 8 April 1826. Found in Burr vs. McEuen et al, Case Papers, Equity Records, Case # 3 April Sessions 1818, Records of the U.S. Circuit Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, Record Group 21, NARA.

¹¹² Horace Wemyss Smith, *Life and Correspondence of the Rev. William Smith, D.D.* (Philadelphia: Ferguson Brothers & Co., 1880), 2:518.

¹¹³ Burial Return for Christ Church Burial Ground, Philadelphia Board of Health Burial Records, CAP. Several biographies incorrectly state that Blodget died in a Baltimore Hospital.

¹¹⁴ *Baltimore Patriot & Evening Advertiser*. (Baltimore: 15 April 1814), p. 1.; *New England Palladium* (Boston: 22 April 1814), p. 1.; *Essex Register*, (Salem, Massachusetts: 27 April 1814), p. 1.; and Letter: William Moore Smith to Rebecca Blodget. Philadelphia: 12 April 1814. Found in Correspondence and General Papers, Yeates Papers, Box 9, folder 5, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

¹¹⁵ Auditor’s Report, Schedule A, 11 April 1828. Found in Burr vs. McEuen et al, Case Papers, Equity Records, Case # 3 April Sessions 1818, Records of the U.S. Circuit Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, Record Group 21, NARA.

At the time of his death, Blodget owed William Thornton just under \$10,000. Dying without a will, his widow Rebecca Smith Blodget, along with Aaron Burr, were granted the letters of administration in December 1815.



Rebecca "Becky" Smith Blodget, ca. 1798. By Gilbert Stuart (1755-1828).
Courtesy the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts.

CRITERION A

Rebecca "Becky" Smith Blodget (1772–1837)

Daughter of the Rev. Dr. William Smith, D.D. (1727–1803), the first provost of the University of Pennsylvania and a wealthy land speculator, and wife of Samuel Blodget, Jr., the aforementioned businessman and real estate speculator, Rebecca "Becky" Smith Blodget lived most of her life in Philadelphia and, through surviving correspondence and papers, proves to be an important and well-connected personage of the New Republic. A note about Becky Smith from a biography of her father:

This daughter, of whom a lovey portrait by Gilbert Stuart attests the justice of the social judgment, was one of the most admired beauties that

ever adorned the drawing-rooms of Philadelphia, and as much distinguished by sprightliness and wit as by her personal comeliness.¹¹⁶



The country seat of Rev. Dr. William Smith, D.D. at Falls of Schuylkill, which he built as a young man.
Courtesy Google Books.

The seventh child of Rev. Dr. Smith and Rebecca Moore, Rebecca “Becky” Smith was born on April 11, 1772 in Philadelphia, which she described in her personal correspondence:

...in the year [17]72, when at the corner of third and Walnut, I thrust my unfortunate head into this world of woe.¹¹⁷

Becky was baptized at Christ Church. Many years earlier her parents were married on July 3, 1758. Her mother, the late Miss Moore, was the daughter of William Moore, Esquire, of “Moore Hall” in Chester County, Pennsylvania. Sometime after his marriage to Becky’s mother, Dr. Smith built a summerhouse at the Falls of Schuylkill. The Smiths also maintained a residence in Philadelphia. Becky and her siblings were no doubt raised between these two places.

¹¹⁶ Horace Wemyss Smith. *Life and Correspondence of the Rev. William Smith, D.D., Volume 1.* (Philadelphia: Ferguson & Co.), p. 44.

¹¹⁷ Letter: Rebecca Smith Blodget to William Henry Rawle. [n.d.]. Found in Collection 603: the Smith Family Papers (1757-1861), 19.0 linear feet, 14 boxes, 82 volumes, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

The relationship between Dr. Smith and his daughter Becky is little known; however, the following excerpt from his biography sheds some light on the personalities:

After her father had delivered his oration on Franklin, before the American Philosophical Society, he returned home, and his daughter Rebecca was there to greet him. ‘Well, my daughter,’ said the Doctor, ‘I saw you seated among the magnates at the church. You heard me, I suppose?’ ‘Oh, yes,’ said the girl, ‘I was there and heard every word.’ ‘And how did you like the eulogy, let me ask?’ said the Doctor. ‘O papa,’ said the daughter, looking archly into her father’s face, ‘it was beautiful, very beautiful indeed; only—papa—only—only—’ ‘Only what?’ replied the Doctor. ‘Only—papa—now you won’t be offended, will you? I don’t think you believe more than one-tenth part of what you said of old Ben Lightning-rod; did you?’¹¹⁸

While there are limited details of her early years, “Becky” did recall throughout her life that at the age of fifteen she had met and, incidentally, first fallen for the promising young Aaron Burr (1756–1836), an American politician and later the third Vice President of the United States. Being about 1787 at the time of this meeting, Burr was then a golden boy, having left the New York State Assembly in 1785 and not yet appointed to serve as New York State Attorney General in 1789. She was acquainted with other famous Americans of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, including Dr. Benjamin Rush, who provided her the following advice:

When I consider you, my dear girl, the only surviving daughter of two aged and affectionate parents, and when I consider how much they expect and how much they require from you, I view you as living under peculiar obligations to act properly and wisely upon all occasions.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ Horace Wemyss Smith. *Life and Correspondence of the Rev. William Smith, D.D., Volume 1*. (Philadelphia: Ferguson & Co.), p. 28.

¹¹⁹ Letter: Dr. Benjamin Rush to Rebecca “Becky” Blodget. Philadelphia: 1 July 1791. Found in Collection 1017: Rush Family Papers (1748-1876), the Library Company of Philadelphia.



Rev. Dr. William Smith, D.D. by Gilbert Stuart, c. 1802. Courtesy the University of Pennsylvania Museum.

After the death of his first wife and early business successes and failures, Samuel Blodget, Jr. found himself in Philadelphia, where as a wealthy man, he had the pick of the most beautiful of the eligible young ladies. By May 1792, he was betrothed to Becky Smith.

In preparation for her marriage, “Becky” sought the advice from her family physician—Dr. Benjamin Rush:

In your conduct to Mr. Blodget, endeavor to command his esteem and respect. From these you will derive both honor and happiness; a woman owes nothing to a man for loving her—for if she has personal charms, he cannot withhold love. Besides, love is a selfish passion, and men yield to it for the sake of receiving, not imparting, pleasure. Men often insult the women they love when they are angry, but never the women whom they respect and esteem. Love is kind by fits and starts, but esteem and respect are durable and steady in producing kindness and gentleness to a wife. I need not mention to you the qualities which ensure esteem and respect. You know them all.¹²⁰

Dr. Rush’s response was an intense, lengthy letter regarding her duties as a wife and the requirement that she be subservient through her charms to build a solid marriage. She no doubt knew this viewpoint as standard of the day and she proceeded to marry Mr. Blodget, as described by a Cadwalader cousin:

¹²⁰ Letter: Benjamin Rush to Rebecca “Becky” Smith. Philadelphia, May 1792. Found in Collection 1017: Rush Family Papers (1748-1876), the Library Company of Philadelphia.

Philadelphia, June 20, 1792

My Dear Aunt:

What shall I say to the girls about the bride, Becky Smith's dress. She was dressed in a sprig'd muslin chemise [chintz], and wore a bonnet with a curtain. The young ladies, her bridesmaids had also on chemises [chintzes], but their hats ornamented. Did I write you that Miss Ann Hamilton, Miss Meade, and Miss Keppeler were her attendants; and that she left on the Saturday following, and saw nobody on Friday. There was great propriety both in her behavior and in all other respects. Every thing was, as it ought to be, without any affectation or parade. For our sweet girls I can only tell you, that they were the most interesting creatures I ever saw and that they were dressed in white muslin, without any thing on their heads but a white ribbon run through the hair. There was a monstrous company—forty-seven people—at supper. That was perfectly elegant in every respect, and not even a whisper or joke that could have raised a blush in a vestal. The young men's delicacy and propriety to their wives charmed me. They did not venture to speak or look at them the whole evening any further than that, Archibald McCall spoke to Betsy, and Tom Ringold to Maria. They had not seen them for ten days before the wedding....

Yours affectionately,
W. Cadwalader.¹²¹

Perhaps one of the most tumultuous of documented unions in the New Republic was that Mr. and Mrs. Blodget, which began, as stated above, on May 10, 1792 before the Bishop William White at Christ Church. Thomas Boylston Adams reported to his mother, Abigail, that the wedding was a respectable affair, noting specially that, "She [Rebecca "Becky" Smith] was dressed neat & simply—much frightened at first; but soon *composed*."¹²² From the start it was a marriage with unfortunate consequences for both parties. Becky preserved her feelings about the union in many letters written throughout her life:

...my sufferings commenced which they did on the never to be forgotten 16th of May [17]92 when poor Rebecca Smith died & [sic.] her ghost began to wander about under the form of Mrs. Blodget.¹²³

Becky would recount the abusive relationship between her and her husband many times during their marriage and after her husband's death in 1814..

¹²¹ Letter: Mrs. Williamina Cadwalader to Mrs. Ridgley. Philadelphia: 20 June 1792. Found in Horace Wemyss Smith. *Life and Correspondence of the Rev. William Smith, D.D.*, Volume 1. (Philadelphia: Ferguson & Co., 1880), p. 350.

¹²² Letter: Thomas Boylston Adams to Abigail Adams. Philadelphia: 14 May 1792. Found in the Adams Family Correspondence, Volume 9, the Massachusetts Historical Society.

¹²³ Letter: Rebecca Smith Blodget to Aaron Burr [n.d.]. Found in the Papers of Aaron Burr (1774-1836), NYHS.



The Miniature Painting of Rebecca "Becky" Smith Blodget.
Courtesy Amber Hathaway, a descendant of Samuel Blodget, Jr. and Rebecca "Becky" Smith Blodget.



Reverse showing the Locket of Hair within the Miniature Painting of Rebecca "Becky" Smith Blodget.
Courtesy Amber Hathaway, a descendant of Samuel Blodget, Jr. and Rebecca "Becky" Smith Blodget.

Nevertheless, she would go on to bear their first child, Thomas Smith Blodget (1793–1836) in the summer of 1793, disputed birthdates including June 5, 1793 and August 25, 1793.¹²⁴ Just one month earlier in July 1793, the first major yellow fever epidemic descended upon Philadelphia. While it began mid-summer, the peak of the epidemic was October 1793. In a city of roughly 45,000, Philadelphia lost about 5,000. Among those with yellow fever was Rebecca Smith Blodget. However, she was nursed by her mother and recovered from the fever. Unfortunately, ten days later, her mother, Rebecca Moore Smith, became infected and eventually died on September 20, 1793.¹²⁵ Her mother's nurse, Rev. Dr. William Smith, D.D.'s sister, also became infected and she died soon after. Likely due to the fever, Thomas Smith Blodget's baptism was postponed and did not take place until January 31, 1794 by the Bishop William White.¹²⁶

In 1795, Samuel Blodget, Jr. took out an insurance policy for a house at 269 Chestnut St., which was officially the Blodgets' city residence until about 1802. Also in 1795, Blodget purchased the Greenville Estate in Blockley Township, West Philadelphia. While mentioned previously in the biography of Samuel Blodget, Jr., Greenville would become of paramount importance in the life of Mrs. Blodget.¹²⁷

The Blodgets' second child, Julia Anna Allen Blodget (1795-1833), was born on November 13, 1795.¹²⁸ This was a critical time for Samuel Blodget, Jr., being that it was a great period of both private business and government service in Washington, DC. Given the problems in their marriage, they probably spent much of their time apart, as he was constantly traveling from Philadelphia to the Federal City.

By the time his second son was born, Blodget's popularity had diminished and the media, even in the late eighteenth century, produced negative advertisements based on the Washington Lottery schemes. John Adams Blodget was born on December 18, 1797 in Philadelphia.¹²⁹ While several secondary sources report that another child was born to the Blodgets at some point in 1797, the accuracy of this is not known. This is in reference to the birth of Elinor "Ellen" Mathilda Blodget. While only four children are documented as having been born to the Blodgets by name, Rebecca "Becky" Smith Blodget references "five infants" on several occasions in her correspondence, which may mean that there was at least one additional child or that one of the children from his previous marriage was still in residence at the time of the reference.

¹²⁴ Various documents found in Collection 603: the Smith Family Papers (1757-1861), 19.0 linear feet, 14 boxes, 82 volumes, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

¹²⁵ John Woolf Jordan, LL.D. *Colonial Families of Philadelphia*, Volume 2. (New York: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1911).

¹²⁶ Christ Church Register: Baptismal Records, 1769–1794. p. 1386. Courtesy Christ Church.

¹²⁷ Deed: Samuel Blodget, the younger, of the City of Philadelphia, and Rebecca, his wife, to Thomas McEwen, Thomas Hale, and William Davidson, of the city, merchants, 22 July 1799, Philadelphia Deed Book D., Vol. 77, Page 198, CAP.

¹²⁸ Ancestry.com. *Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Death Certificates Index, 1803-1915* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2011.

¹²⁹ *The Twentieth Century Bench and Bar of Pennsylvania, Volume II*. (Chicago: H.C. Cooper, Jr. Bro. & Co., 1903), p. 1026.



Rebecca "Becky" Smith Blodget by Neagle.
Courtesy the Biography of William Smith.

It appears that over time, Mr. Blodget and Mrs. Blodget became estranged. However, the precise details of their separation are unclear. In May 1802, Blodget appears to have made an emergency visit to Boston to visit his father, among other relatives. He was likely there to raise additional funds to safeguard against his impending prison sentence. While in Boston, Blodget wrote his father-in-law, Rev. Dr. William Smith, D.D., in which it becomes clear that by that time he and Becky were still living apart.



Rebecca Smith Blodget and her daughter Elinor Mathilde Blodget by Gilbert Stuart.
Courtesy Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts.

A letter from Blodget to his father-in-law illuminates the family's peculiar living situation in 1802:

Becky has written several letters to me which have given me great hopes, in one of these she is very particular in her expressions of gratitude to you, from this symptom and from her attention to her lovely little flock, we may hope soon to see her restored to the enviable rank of a dutiful Daughter & Mother, which will be enough to make me happy and enable me at once to retrieve all that I lost by a depression incident to the consequences of temporary delirium and inevitable derangement at home and abroad...¹³⁰

By the close of the year—1802, Samuel Blodget, Jr. appears to have been in debtor's prison. The precise period of Blodget's incarceration is unknown; however, the Diary of Mrs. William Thornton of Washington, D.C. documents a visit to him in 1803.¹³¹ Becky's precise location between 1802 and 1812 is one that changed fairly regularly. At

¹³⁰ Letter: Samuel Blodget, Jr. to Rev. Dr. William Smith, D.D. Boston: 23 May 1802. Found in Collection 603: the Smith Family Papers (1757-1861), 19.0 linear feet, 14 boxes, 82 volumes, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

¹³¹ Diary of Mrs. William Thornton [Anna Marie Brodeau Thornton], 1800-1863. The Diaries are located within the William Thornton Papers (1741-1865), Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

the opening of this period her father died, which likely proved to be quite unfortunate for Becky's financial plight. He, no doubt, had assisted her financially in a liberal fashion than would be practiced by her brothers. Becky appears to have had a fairly regular income during this time from her father's estate. However, this would not have been immediate after his death and that income would have been under the control of her brothers.¹³²

Becky's allowance was about \$300 per year, which was a pittance compared to what she accustomed to when she first married Blodget, but certainly more than enough to live on by early nineteenth century standards.¹³³ In 1805, there were some additional funds from the settlement of a small property. Becky's relative, Benjamin Morgan, sent her a small sum after gaining permission from her brother, Charles Smith, Esq.¹³⁴

About 1807, Blodget appears to have been granted some release and/or had some reprieve on account of his health. However, as previously mentioned, this release was one that was secured on a \$10,000 bond, which was posted by the aforementioned architect William Thornton.¹³⁵ Incidentally, the timing of Blodget's temporary release and his wife's choice to remove to New York with her children is close, but may or may not add up to explain the reasoning behind her sudden departure. However, correspondence tells us that she was continually unhappy with Mr. Blodget. As a result, the limitations of mere emotional estrangement proved unsuitable in equating to her the relief she required.¹³⁶

Becky was living with relatives in Lancaster, Pennsylvania in 1807, where her brother, Judge Charles Smith, Esq., served on the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. At the time, he likely lived at No. 22 South Queen Street in Lancaster City, a Georgian style house built in the mid-eighteenth century long before his residence.¹³⁷ Perhaps she feared that upon her husband's release he would come to Lancaster. Nevertheless, it appears that at some point in the spring or early summer of 1808, she left Lancaster unexpectedly, taking her minor children to New York City.¹³⁸

¹³² Letter: Benjamin Morgan to Charles Smith, Esq. Philadelphia: 24 April 1805. Found in Collection 603: the Smith Family Papers (1757-1861), 19.0 linear feet, 14 boxes, 82 volumes, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

¹³³ Letter: Benjamin Morgan to Charles Smith, Esq. Philadelphia: 24 April 1805. Found in Collection 603: the Smith Family Papers (1757-1861), 19.0 linear feet, 14 boxes, 82 volumes, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

¹³⁴ Letter: Benjamin Morgan to Charles Smith, Esq. Philadelphia: 8 July 1805. Found in Collection 603: the Smith Family Papers (1757-1861), 19.0 linear feet, 14 boxes, 82 volumes, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

¹³⁵ Ledger of Expenses of Samuel Blodget, Jr. [1806-1814]. Found in the William Thornton Papers (1741-1865), Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

¹³⁶ Found in various letters within Collection 603: the Smith Family Papers (1757-1861), 19.0 linear feet, 14 boxes, 82 volumes, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

¹³⁷ HABS No. PA-369: Judge Charles Smith House, 22 S. Queen Street, Lancaster, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

Found in the Records of the Historic American Buildings Survey, the National Park Service, the Department of the Interior, the Library of Congress. <<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/master/pnp/habshaer/pa/pa0500/pa0528/data/pa0528data.pdf>> Accessed 18 July 2016.

¹³⁸ Letter: Judge Thomas Smith to Charles Smith, Lancaster, 28 July 1808, Philadelphia, William Smith Papers, University Archives, University of Pennsylvania. Found in Collection 603: the Smith Family Papers (1757-1861), 19.0 linear feet, 14 boxes, 82 volumes, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

I will only state this fact – William & Charles Blodget called at my House on Saturday evening – they had merely heard that she [Rebecca Smith Blodget] had left Lancaster, but heard no more – when William was informed that she had gone to N. York – had taken the children with her – put the eldest into the British Navy & set up a Boarding House...

A few days ago Mr. Bond [Phineas Bond] put into my Hands for perusal & my advice upon a Letter from Mr. Blodget addressed to me & directed to Mr. Bond – it purports to be answer to one which I had written to him soon after my return from the Circuit informing him of the flight of Mrs. B. & her children & advising him, if he was at liberty to save his children – immediately, or their ruin might be the consequence. In his letter no two ideas can be connected, indeed no idea is expressed, excepting that he expressed his surprise, & requests Mr. Bond to inform him who supplied her with money to desert her relations – he too, is certainly insane. Mr. B thinks it is vain to answer it – I am of the same opinion.¹³⁹

The above-referenced correspondence indicates that both relatives, Judge Thomas Smith and Charles Smith, were planning to make a special visit to “Becky”, at which time they were planning to seize her children.

My little girl has some kind friends tho’ she does not recollect them as she was [sic] only five years old when driven from her native city – which I hope she will soon revisit with a little stranger who will bear the name of William Smith...¹⁴⁰

Nevertheless, it may have been during this excursion that “Becky” was reacquainted with her old friend, Aaron Burr. In fact, as late as March 1809, she appears to have been living and/or stopping at “Greenwich Street, No. 266” in New York City, from which address she wrote to the future President of the United States, James Madison, regarding the plight of Burr. While President Madison replied, his response was basically a cordial brush off.¹⁴¹

The Smith family continued to oversee Becky’s annual income through the close of the decade, as it was a component of her father’s estate.

In the fall of 1809 we had a meeting on family business at Mr. Morgan’s—Mr. Bond and the bishop came in to inquire of us, collected

¹³⁹ Letter: Judge Thomas Smith to Charles Smith, Lancaster, 28 July 1808, Philadelphia, William Smith Papers, University Archives, University of Pennsylvania. Found in Collection 603: the Smith Family Papers (1757-1861), 19.0 linear feet, 14 boxes, 82 volumes, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

¹⁴⁰ Letter: Rebecca Smith Bloget to Benjamin Rush. Huntingdon: 18 October 1811, p.15. Found in Collection 1017: Rush Family Papers (1748-1876), the Library Company of Philadelphia.

¹⁴¹ Letter Rebecca Blodget to James Madison. New York: 11 March 1809; and Letter: James Madison to Rebecca Blodget. New York: March 1809. Found in *The Papers of James Madison Digital Edition*, J. C. A. Stagg, editor (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2010).

there, what could be done for that worthless and abandoned wretch Mrs. Blodget in her then situation any thing form the G.L.D. was out the question.¹⁴²

In 1811, Rebecca Blodget Smith and one of her daughters traveled to Europe, a trip that is documented specifically in the extant correspondence of Dr. Benjamin Rush. Becky wrote Rush twice from London.¹⁴³

They had recently returned from England, where they had been no one could tell for what purpose. Mrs. B. was exactly in person, manner, and conversation what she was at 18 years old—beautiful, sprightly, eloquent, sensible, imprudent, desultory, and censorious.¹⁴⁴

Visiting Rush on the day of his diary entry, August 18, 1811, Rebecca Smith Blodget soon after went to Huntington, Pennsylvania where she stayed with relatives.¹⁴⁵

Becky is seemingly transient until the fall of 1812, at which time both she and her husband appear to the Greenville Estate. While her husband resided in the unfinished Mansion House, Becky lived in the “barn,” which was her word for what others called the coach house or stable. This was likely one of the dependencies or a building near the back of the property—present day Warren Street. However, her own descriptions illuminate that the building was on the “right side” of the “middle house,” meaning that it was west of Greenville.

Why, you will wonder, do I live in the barn – it is a long story, and I am too till to enter on it now – I shall only say that I have not been living with the unfortunate Mr. B. as I believe you have supposed I did – I came to this place because I firmly believed that I had been cheated out of it – I was led to believe fifteen years ago, that I signed a paper which gave away this property to a friend who took it merely to preserve it from creditors – & who cou’d faithfully return it to the family – viz Madam B. & her children...¹⁴⁶

Rebecca Smith Blodget and her husband, Samuel Blodget, Jr., resided separately on the Greenville Estate from the Fall of 1812 through April 1814, when her husband died in the Pennsylvania Hospital.

¹⁴² Letter: William Smith to Charles Smith, Esq. 11 August 1812. Found in Collection 603: the Smith Family Papers (1757-1861), 19.0 linear feet, 14 boxes, 82 volumes, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

¹⁴³ Letter: Rebecca Smith Blodget to Benjamin Rush. London: 3 June 1811, p. 14. Found in Collection 1017: Rush Family Papers (1748-1876), the Library Company of Philadelphia.

¹⁴⁴ Corner, George W., Editor. *The Autobiography of Benjamin Rush, His “Travels Through Life” together with his Commonplace Book for 1789–1813*. Published for The American Philosophical Society by Princeton University Press, 1948, 132.

¹⁴⁵ Letter: Rebecca Smith Blodget to Benjamin Rush. Huntington: 18 October 1811, p. 15. Found in Collection 1017: Rush Family Papers (1748-1876), the Library Company of Philadelphia.

¹⁴⁶ Letter: Rebecca Smith Blodget to Aaron Burr. Blockley Township, Philadelphia County: 17 June 1814. Found in the Papers of Aaron Burr (1774-1836), ca. 2,000 items, NYHS.

Mr B. died as he lived – you know how he lived – & will spare myself the pain of saying how he died – I gave him a teat – yet I bent in gratitude to Heaven – & thanked it's [sic] ruler – why then did I weep? – why am I still melancholy? ¹⁴⁷

It seems that almost immediately after the death of Samuel Blodget, Jr., the widowed Rebecca Smith Blodget began writing to Aaron Burr more frequently. In her first letters in the summer of 1814, she informed Burr of matters concerning the Greenville Estate, its value and her desire to liquidate the property and to fight for her rightful share of its value.

N.B. This property is worth nearly 400 000 dollars – part has been sold for 6000 dollars per acre! ¹⁴⁸... [repeated for emphasis]

Samuel's widow, Rebecca Smith Blodget, who had always had misgivings about the trust, started the process to get Greenville back into her hands in the summer of 1814. She turned to an old friend, Aaron Burr, whom she had known prior to her marriage. ¹⁴⁹ As she described to him:

I live – exist I mean, in the barn – on the right hand side of the middle house on the Lancaster turnpike – but perhaps you know nothing of the middle house! – I may be traced to my splendid abode by inquiry of the people at the bridge toll house – Why, you will wonder, do I live in the barn – it is a long story, and I am too ill to enter on it now – I shall only say that I have not been living with the unfortunate Mr. B[lodget]. as I believe you have supposed I did – I came to this place because I firmly believed that I had been cheated out of it – I was led to believe fifteen years ago, that I signed a paper which gave away this property to a friend who took it merely to preserve it from creditors – & who cou'd faithfully return it to the family – viz Madam B. & her children – I had a nice conscience in those days – & objected to the measure – but I was told that it wou'd not sell for 10 000 dollars & that it might be claimed by at least fifty people to all of whom he owed more than half that sum – & that the property wou'd one day be worth at least 300 000 dollars – I tried to think it right – I cast an eye on my darlings – & signed the paper – at that time I believe Mr. B. meant only to save the property for me & mine – McEuen Hale & Davidson call it theirs – Mr. B. is not here to contradict them – I think there was a secret agreement between McEuen & Mr. B. to cheat me (a toll Agreement) – but Hale McEuen will go still further & cheat the person whom Mr B intended to benefit fifteen years ago the firm was

¹⁴⁷ Letter: Rebecca Smith Blodget to Aaron Burr. Blockley Township, Philadelphia County: 17 June 1814. Found in the Papers of Aaron Burr (1774-1836), NYHS.

¹⁴⁸ Letter: Rebecca Smith Blodget to Aaron Burr. Blockley Township, Philadelphia County: 17 June 1814. Found in the Papers of Aaron Burr (1774-1836), NYHS.

¹⁴⁹ At this time Burr was primarily assisting Rebecca with claims to land in New York that trustees for Rebecca received in a deed from her father. Rebecca was a long-time supporter of Burr and even provided shelter to Burr when he was hiding from prosecution in 1808. As she once described it, she "owe[d] to him, what ever is valuable in myself" (see Letter: RSB to James Madison. New York: ca. 11 March 1809, *The Papers of James Madison Digital Edition*, J. C. A. Stagg, editor [Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2010]).

McEuen & Co – I do not believe that Hale & Davidson are acquainted with what past [sic] privately between McEuen & B[lodget] – I think Hale honest & wou'd stake my soul on the integrity of Davidson – so much for the barn – I can lay my commands on you, who are too polite to say no more, to disobey me, to be careful of this letter – to read attentively the above trusts – learn that I mean to remain in the barn till I can speak more plainly – when I can speak to the purpose I may desire you to come here – but this I shall not do till two learned Judges [Tilghman and Smith] tell me I am on sure ground – this I shall not do till there is a certainty that I can give my attorney almost 1000 dollars for his trouble – I live in hope – I have been cheated in Washington – I am going to write to Key to look after matters there – Mr B. died as he lived – you know how he lived – & will spare myself the pain of saying how he died – I gave him a tear – yet I bent in gratitude to Heaven – & thanked it's [sic] ruler – why then did I weep? – why am I still melancholy? Burr ought to know why for he ought to know my head – N.B. This property is worth nearly 400 000 dollars – part has been sold for 6000 dollars per acre!¹⁵⁰

After consulting with Rebecca and the trustees her father provided for her – Bishop William White and Pennsylvania Chief Justice William Tilghman – Burr decided to take up the case for Rebecca. In December 1815, Burr was granted Letters of Administration on Samuel Blodget, Jr.'s estate.¹⁵¹ Burr's first action was to establish a means to get Rebecca a clear undisputed claim for and possession of Greenville. Working with her brothers who were the executors of her father's will, the Smiths brought a suit against the estate of Samuel Blodget, Jr. which it could not pay. The sheriff of Philadelphia seized the Greenville estate and sold it at auction in May 1817 to John Britton, Jr., and James H. Dundas.¹⁵² Britton, Rebecca's son-in-law, and Dundas were acting as trustees for Rebecca. By coming to an agreement prior to the sale with William Fennell, another creditor of Samuel Blodget, Rebecca's trustees were able secure a solid equitable claim on the property which allowed her to move into Greenville.¹⁵³ Rebecca acted quickly and reported to Burr:

I am now lady of the manor of Greene Ville!¹⁵⁴

Rebecca Smith Blodget only occupied the house for a few years. By the mid-1820s, she rented Greenville and its outbuilding for \$150 per annum.

¹⁵⁰ Letter: Rebecca Smith Blodget to Aaron Burr. Philadelphia: 17 June 1814. Found in the Papers of Aaron Burr (1756–1836), the NYHS.

¹⁵¹ Letters of Administration Bond, 21 December 1815, Administration No. 315 of 1815, Philadelphia Register of Wills. The sureties for the bond were Aaron Burr of the City of New York, attorney at law, Robert Waistcoat (signed “Westcott”), of the same, gentleman, Richard Roe, and Rebecca Blodget, widow.

¹⁵² Deed Poll: Thomas Truxtun, sheriff, to John Britton, Jr., of the County of Philadelphia, gentleman, and James H. Dundas, of the city of Philadelphia, esquire, for \$24,800, Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas Sheriff Deed Book G., p. 140, CAP. The suit against Burr as administrator of Blodget's estate was filed in Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania, where Rebecca's brother lived, and was based upon a debt that Blodget owed to his father-in-law, Rev. William Smith.

¹⁵³ Articles of Agreement between Rebecca Blodget, widow of Samuel Blodget, merchant, deceased, and William Fennell, of the City of Philadelphia, merchant, 14 May 1817, Philadelphia Deed Book I.W., No. 5, p. 417, CAP.

¹⁵⁴ Rebecca Smith Blodget to Aaron Burr. Philadelphia: 25 May 1817. Found in the Papers of Aaron Burr (1774-1836), ca. 2,000 items, NYHS.

The Mansion House of Mrs. Blodget was not let until quite lately. It is now occupied by a Lady Mrs. Dobell and before that Mrs. Blodget lived there.¹⁵⁵

Once possession of Greenville was obtained, Burr, as administrator of Blodget's estate, filed an equity suit against McEwen, Hale, and Davidson in the U.S. Circuit Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania during April 1818 session. Burr asked for a full accounting of the management of the Greenville Estate and the property to be turned over to Britton and Dundas, Rebecca's trustees. The suit reached almost Dickensian proportions – dragging on for 18 years. It took a year for McEwen, Hale, and Davidson to respond with an accounting, which was inadequate, and eight years before depositions were sworn. The court rendered a decision in April 1830 and the final master's report was filed six years later.¹⁵⁶ In September 1836, the title finally passed to Britton and Dundas, and Rebecca Smith Blodget gained full control over the Greenville Estate.¹⁵⁷ The victory was not one Rebecca or her children could enjoy for long. She died in March 1837.¹⁵⁸ Only two of her four children were still living at the time of her death and her son-in-law, one of the trustees, died in January 1838.¹⁵⁹

Rebecca's daughter, Julia Ann Allen Blodget Britton, began the process of settling the Greenville Estate in 1839. She and her brother, John Adams Blodget, petitioned the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas in February to have another trustee appointed in her husband's place. In September, the trustees hired Nathan Supplee to survey and prepare a partition plan of the remaining part of the Greenville Estate. Supplee divided the estate into 94 lots.¹⁶⁰ The trustees came to an agreement with the William Fennell heirs regarding the debt still owed them and settled on putting the lots up for sale.¹⁶¹ The lots were staked out and an auction held on May 28, 1840.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁵ Deposition of Joseph S. Keen, 10 January 1826. Found in Burr vs. McEuen et al, Case Papers, Equity Records, Case # 3 April Sessions 1818, Records of the U.S. Circuit Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, Record Group 21, NARA.

¹⁵⁶ "Balance per Auditors Report," ca. 1834, Burr vs. McEuen et al, Case Papers, NARA. The main points of dispute were over the charges of McEwen, Hale and Davidson for finishing the work on Greenville, for covering legal costs in the suit, and for commission fees for their work (*Burr*, 1 Baldwin at 162–165).

¹⁵⁷ Deed: Thomas Hale and William Davidson, of the City of Philadelphia, to John Britton, Jr., of the City of Philadelphia, gentleman, and James Dundas, of the City of Philadelphia, esquire, 26 September 1836, Philadelphia Deed Book S.H.F., No. 3, p. 552, CAP.

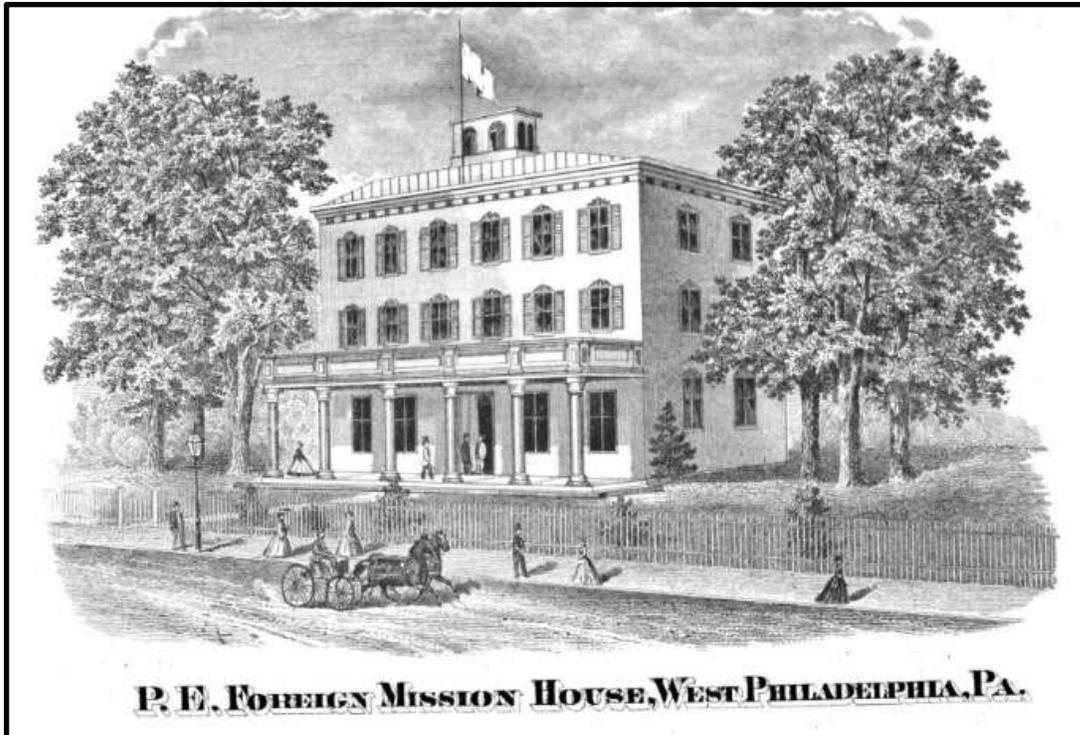
¹⁵⁸ Mrs. Rebecca Blodget, March 10, 1837, Record of Burials, Episcopal Church of the Epiphany, Philadelphia.

¹⁵⁹ Thomas Smith Blodget died in 1836, Elinor Matilda Smith (wife of her cousin Richard Penn Smith) died in 1833 (Horace Wemyss Smith, *Life and Correspondence of the Rev. William Smith, D.D.* [Philadelphia: Ferguson Bros. & Co., 1880], 2:544, 549).

¹⁶⁰ Nathan Supplee, *Plan of Greenville Situate on the west side of the River Schuylkill in the Borough of West Philadelphia, about 3/4 of a mile from Market St. Bridge*, 1839, HSP.

¹⁶¹ For information on Fennell see Philadelphia Historical Commission Staff, "Nomination of Historic Building, Structure, Site, or Object for 3600–30 Lancaster Avenue," Philadelphia Historical Commission, 2015, 24.

¹⁶² "Positive Sale of Valuable Building Lots In West Philadelphia," *North American and Daily Advertiser*, (Philadelphia May 27, 1840).



The Protestant Episcopal Mission House, West Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Courtesy of Hathi Trust.

CRITERION J: Greenville served as the Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States from 1866 until 1875. This was the primary mission training school of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America and one of the first foreign mission houses in the country. Greenville as the “Mission House” exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social, or historical heritage of the Protestant Episcopal Church in West Philadelphia and Philadelphia at-large during this brief period of the nineteenth century.

Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church

On June 12, 1866, Charles B. Durborow, Jay Cooke, Andrew Wheeler and Nathaniel B. Browne, trustees of the Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, purchased the subject property from Samuel Arnold and his wife Matilda Ann. The Arnolds were the last family to own and reside in Greenville as a private dwelling.¹⁶³

The interest in foreign missions among American Protestant churches has its origins in the formation of the inter-denominational American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in 1810 by a group of New England clergymen. In 1820, the Episcopal Church created its own organization, the Domestic and Foreign Mission Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church. The work of these organizations was fairly small in the early years because the major focus of all the major denominations was establishing new churches on the American frontier. The Episcopal Church’s first efforts abroad were in China, Greece

¹⁶³Deed: Samuel Arnold and Matilda Ann, his wife, to Charles B. Durborow, Jay Cooke, Andrew Wheeler and Nathaniel B. Browne, trustees, June 12 1866, recorded in Philadelphia Deed Book L.R.B., No. 192, p. 310, CAP.

and Liberia – all starting in the 1830s – but it was not until the late 1840s and 1850s that real momentum began to build for foreign missions.¹⁶⁴ An agreement was reached at the Church’s 1835 General Convention that assigned the work of foreign missions to the evangelical (sometimes called Low Church) wing of the Church. The evangelicals enthusiastically took up the cause. By the 1850s, a formal missionary district and bishop were established in Liberia, and in the 1860s the Church entered into Haiti.¹⁶⁵ The rising interest, however, soon was hampered by the lack of any formal training program for Episcopal missionaries in the United States.

The first movement toward the organization of the training program for missionaries was led by Rev. John Gottlieb Auer (1832–1874) (J.G. Auer), an Episcopalian Missionary and later bishop in Liberia who was on leave in the United States in 1863. He gave lectures on the subject at the Church of the Epiphany in Philadelphia. Because the Diocese of Pennsylvania was generally more evangelical than High Church, Auer found a very receptive audience in Philadelphia. Bishop Alonzo Potter supported the effort as well as a number of local clergymen. Auer’s proposal for the school was in part based on his own training at the famous Evangelische Missionsgesellschaft in Basel, Switzerland, the first nondenominational Protestant foreign missionary training school. Auer envisioned the school as “a central fire-place for cultivating, concentrating and diffusing warm Missionary-life; something concrete, that plainly tells the Church what we are about ... [and] will get such a central influence through its teachers and students, correspondence, visits, excursions, perhaps a good Missionary paper...”¹⁶⁶ Part of Auer’s appeal lay in pointing out the fact that English missionaries were no longer required to go to Basel for training, but could now be trained at a recent school created in England.¹⁶⁷ Bishop Potter, however, was able to act immediately to form a school.

Auer’s pleas also found receptive ears with Bishop Gregory T. Bedell of the Diocese of Ohio. In May 1864, the Episcopal Missionary Training School was organized at Gambier, Ohio, the location of the Gambier Seminary and College, established by the Episcopal Church in 1824. Rev. A.G. Auer was chosen as the principal. A month later, a house and land were secured, with plans for opening the school in the fall of 1864. Interestingly the cost of fitting up the property was provided by the people from the Diocese of Pennsylvania.¹⁶⁸ The Gambier Mission House, as it was known, was inaugurated on October 14, 1864. Plans for a new site and building in Gambier were underway by 1865.

¹⁶⁴ David Hein and Gardiner H. Shattack, Jr., *The Episcopalians*, Denominations in America, No. 11 (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2004), p. 68–70.

¹⁶⁵ Burton L. Goddard, *The Encyclopedia of Modern Christian Missions* (Camden, New Jersey: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1967), p. 550–53.

¹⁶⁶ Durborow, Samuel. *History of the Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church*. Philadelphia: A.C. Bryson & Co., 1869), p. 10.

¹⁶⁷ Durborow, Samuel. *History of the Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church*. Philadelphia: A.C. Bryson & Co., 1869), p. 8.

¹⁶⁸ A member of Christ Church, Germantown, William H. Aspinwall, contributed \$500 for contingent expenses (Durborow, Samuel. *History of the Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church*. Philadelphia: A.C. Bryson & Co., 1869), p. 14.

The Diocese of Pennsylvania still had great interest in the missionary training school. Though Bishop Potter died in July 1865, his successor, Bishop William Bacon Stevens, focused on the importance of a missionary training school and espoused the idea that the best course of action would be to remove the school to Philadelphia, whose location on the East Coast offered many advantages for the movement, particularly a greater fundraising capacity to sustain the school for many years. In 1866, negotiations between the Gambier Mission House and Bishop Stevens concluded with the decision to move the Mission House to Philadelphia.¹⁶⁹ The key person who handled the negotiations was Rev. Robert J. Parvin, the rector of St. Paul's Church in Cheltenham – founded by the financier of the Civil War, Jay Cooke.

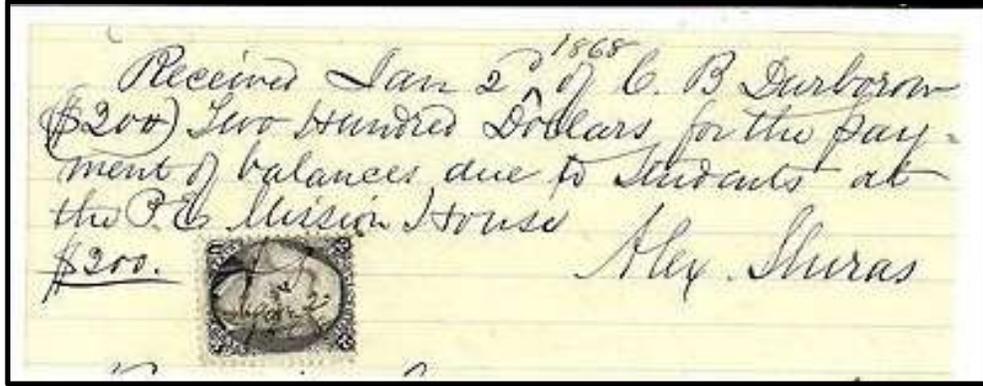
On June 5, 1866, Rev. Auer left Gambier with eight students of the mission school who would go on to contribute to the establishment of the Mission House at Philadelphia. Rev. Auer and the students arrived at the newly acquired Greenville the next day. The deed for Greenville, however, was not signed over to Charles B. Durborow, Jay Cooke, Andrew Wheeler, and Nathaniel B. Browne until June 12, 1866, at which time it became the Mission House.

A building was purchased for the Mission House in West Philadelphia, at the corner of Lancaster Avenue and a Thirty-sixth Street. The mansion stood in the center of a large lot, 120 feet wide and 190 feet deep, having shade trees, and several out buildings about it. The house contained seventeen or eighteen large rooms, the building being fifty feet square, and furnished excellent accommodations for lecture and recitation rooms. The location is excellent. It is one of the most pleasant and healthy suburbs of the city, about half a mile from the Market Street Bridge, and but six squares from the Philadelphia Divinity School. This affords the greatly desired facility of bringing these two Church Institutions into daily communication with each other, and students in either one of the Houses can avail themselves of the advantages of the other, as may seem desirable.

The cost of the buildings and the grounds was \$17,000, and several thousand dollars were expended to put it into complete repair, and fit it for its new uses by the time the first students should arrive.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁹ Durborow, Samuel. *History of the Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church*. Philadelphia: A.C. Bryson & Co., 1869), p. 21-31.

¹⁷⁰ Durborow, Samuel. *History of the Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church*. Philadelphia: A.C. Bryson & Co., 1869), p. XXX.



Receipt related to the Protestant Episcopal Mission House, Philadelphia, dated January 2, 1868. Courtesy of Ebay.

The school attracted much attention in Philadelphia. As one newspaper remarked in 1866, “it is the only institution of its kind in the United States, though there are some in England and on the continent of Europe.”¹⁷¹ The course of study was fairly rigorous. It took a total of six years – three in college or preparatory courses and three in theological courses at Philadelphia Divinity School.¹⁷² Medical instruction by several faculty members of the University of Pennsylvania Medical School was offered during the college course phase.¹⁷³

Though enrollment was never very large – 20 students in 1867 as well as 1869 – the school had significance for the Episcopal Church and Philadelphia.¹⁷⁴ The Mission House had the unusual feature for its time of an admission policy in which “no distinction is made ... on account of nationality or race ... [because] the missionary work does not admit of the idea of caste.”¹⁷⁵ This was in keeping with the Episcopal Church’s pioneering position of training native peoples for mission work.¹⁷⁶ In 1866, there were students from England, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Ireland, Denmark, Poland, and Haiti and in 1870, two Chinese students, two Native Americans (likely members of the Santee Sioux tribe), and “some colored men from the West Indies.”¹⁷⁷ The two Haitian students were Pierre E. Jones and Charles E. Benedict, who were sent to the Mission

¹⁷¹ “Flag Raising at the Episcopal Mission House,” *Evening Telegraph*, (Philadelphia: September 21, 1866), p. 5.

¹⁷² “The Mission House in Philadelphia,” *The Spirit of Missions, Edited for the Board of Missions of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America*, Volume 33. (Burlington, New Jersey: JL Powell, 1868), p 136.

¹⁷³ William Stevens Perry, *Churchman's Year Book, With Kalender for the Year of Grace 1871* (Hartford: Church Press Company, 1871), p. 292.

¹⁷⁴ “Taopi and his Friends, or the Indians' Wrongs and Rights,” *The Spirit of Missions, Edited for the Board of Missions of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America*, Volume 34. (Burlington, New Jersey: JL Powell, 1869), p 181.

The Mission House in Philadelphia,” *The Spirit of Missions, Edited for the Board of Missions of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America*, Volume 33. (Burlington, New Jersey: JL Powell, 1868), p 136.

¹⁷⁵ “Flag Raising at the Episcopal Mission House,” *Evening Telegraph*, (Philadelphia: September 21, 1866), p. 5.

¹⁷⁶ It was the first American protestant church to train Africans for mission work in 1835; followed by the Presbyterians in 1843 (Daniel H. Bays and Grant Wacker, *The Foreign Missionary Enterprise at Home: Explorations in North American Cultural History* [Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2003], p. 259 n. 7).

¹⁷⁷ “Untitled Article,” *The Evening Telegraph*, (Philadelphia: September 21, 1866), ¹⁷⁷ “Untitled Article,” *The Evening Telegraph*, (Philadelphia: February 12, 1870; “Taopi and his Friends, or the Indians' Wrongs and Rights,” *The Spirit of Missions, Edited for the Board of Missions of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America*, Volume 34. (Burlington, New Jersey: JL Powell, 1869), p. 579.

House from Haiti to get training.¹⁷⁸ While attending the school, they also worked with African Americans in Philadelphia at the Episcopal Church's settlement house.

Most of the students of the Mission House either returned to their home country or were sent out to new lands. Some of the first graduates or attendees went to Liberia.¹⁷⁹ Jones and Benedict completed their course of study in 1872 and were ordained first as deacons by Bishop Stevens in Philadelphia, and by as Episcopal priests in Haiti, where they spent the remainder of their careers.¹⁸⁰

In spite of the promise of being located in a large prosperous East Coast city, the Mission House struggled after only five years in Philadelphia. Its founder, Rev. J.G. Auer, returned to Liberia in December 1867. The school was not able to retain another minister as principal for more than two or three years. It was also having trouble paying off its mortgage debt and meeting its basic financial obligations. The treasurer reported in 1872 that he had to cut \$6,750 from its budget.¹⁸¹ It was clear that some of the major benefactors, such as Jay Cooke, lost interest in the endeavor. In June 1872, the Mission House entered into an agreement with the Philadelphia Divinity School in which the work of recruiting missionaries would fall to one of the existing endowed professors and the "House feature of the work including the support and instruction of students is to be transferred to New York."¹⁸²

In 1873, the property was transferred to Rev. John Cotton Smith, rector of the Church of the Ascension in New York City and active in missionary work. The property was still subject to a \$9,000 mortgage.¹⁸³ Smith held property for roughly two years when on October 20, 1875, he sold it for \$11,000 to the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men (PWHBM).¹⁸⁴

¹⁷⁸ *The Spirit of Missions, Edited for the Board of Missions of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America*, Volume 37. (Burlington, New Jersey: JL Powell, 1872), p. 496-497; *The Spirit of Missions, Edited for the Board of Missions of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America*, Volume 40. (Burlington, New Jersey: JL Powell, 1875), p. 606.

¹⁷⁹ In 1868 a Mr. R.G. Ware was sent to Cape Palmas (*The Spirit of Missions, Edited for the Board of Missions of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America*, Volume 33. (Burlington, New Jersey: JL Powell, 1868), p. 131.

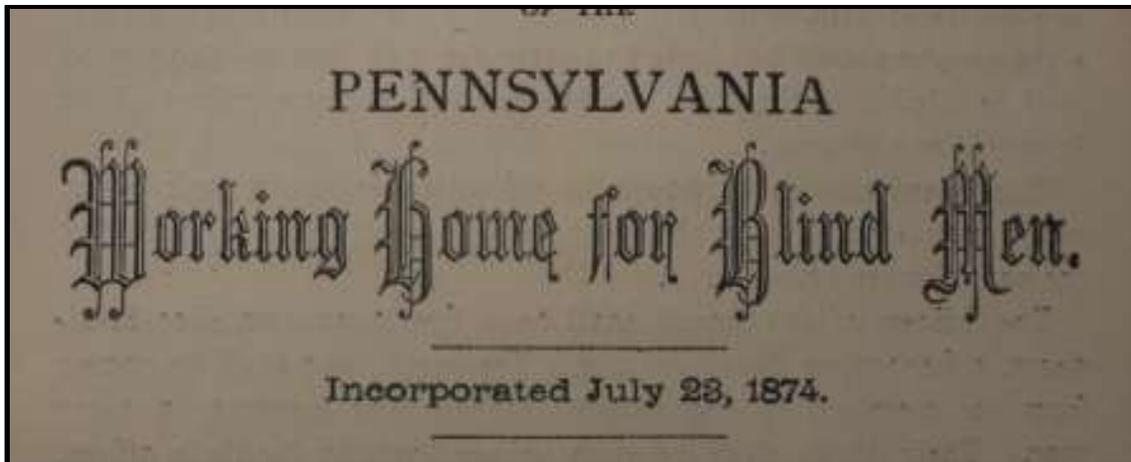
¹⁸⁰ *The Spirit of Missions, Edited for the Board of Missions of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America*, Volume 37. (Burlington, New Jersey: JL Powell, 1872), p. 496-497; *The Spirit of Missions, Edited for the Board of Missions of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America*, Volume 40. (Burlington, New Jersey: JL Powell, 1875), p. 606.

¹⁸¹ *The Spirit of Missions, Edited for the Board of Missions of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America*, Volume 37. (Burlington, New Jersey: JL Powell, 1872), p. 125.

¹⁸² "Local Affairs, Religious News," (Philadelphia: *Public Ledger*, June 8, 1872).; J. Wesley Twelves, *A History of the Diocese of the Pennsylvania of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the U.S.A., 1784-1968*. (Diocese of Pennsylvania, 1969), p. 54. The Divinity School professor was charged with visiting colleges and seminaries to interest students into going into foreign missions.

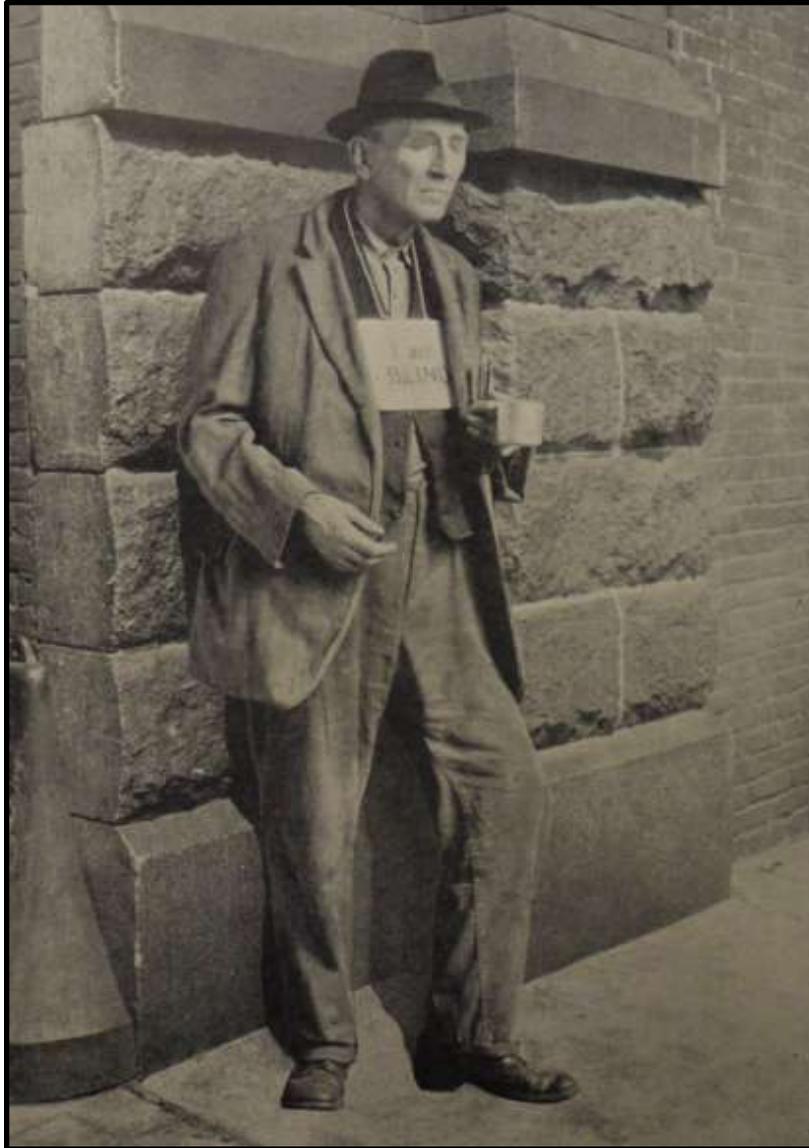
¹⁸³ Deed: Charles B. Durborrow, Jay Cooke, Andrew Wheeler and Nathaniel B. Browne, trustees of the Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States to Rev. John Cotton Smith, D.D., of New York, 25 February 1873, recorded in Philadelphia Deed Book F.T.W., No. 164, p. 25, CAP.

¹⁸⁴ Deed: Rev. John Cotton Smith, D.D., of New York, to Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men, 20 October 1875, recorded in Philadelphia Deed Book F.T.W., No. 156, p. 549, CAP.



Header from the Annual Report of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men. Courtesy the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

After the Protestant Episcopal Church ceased operations of the Mission House at the subject site, Greenville and its grounds were sold to the Trustees of the PWHBM. From 1873 to 1891, Greenville served as the primary building of the PWHBM, serving administrative, domestic/dormitory, educational, and other purposes. Over time Greenville was enlarged, including a three-story addition, which was completed in 1891. When the property was purchased in 1876, it included a two-story brick building at the rear of the property, fronting Warren Street. This building was immediately used as the Workshop. The Workshop appears to have been constructed between 1841 and 1876, although the precise date is unknown, its original purpose was likely an outbuilding. The Workshop was enlarged to a four-story building with a four-story addition in 1876, being expanded and connected to the rear of Greenville by the 1890s. The Factory is the largest, building on the site. This building was constructed in two parts. The first phase of construction took place between 1890 and 1892. This building was designed to serve almost all of the production operations of the PWHBM. The Factory was enlarged in between 1892 and 1895. The Administration Building was constructed between 1892 and 1895, serving as administrative offices of the PWHBM, as well as the Superintendent's Residence. Most of the buildings underwent very few physical changes for the duration of the PWHBM's existence and continue to retain a strong degree of integrity to-date. Representing perhaps the earliest institutions of its kind in Philadelphia and perhaps within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the extant buildings of the PWHBM *have significant character, interest, and value, as part of the development and heritage* of educational and/or vocational training, as well as the practical application of a trade, for blind men. The "working home" enabled both resident and non-resident blind men to earn a living and, more importantly, make a contribution to society through the industrial mechanisms of the age, *exemplifying the cultural, political, economic, social, or historical heritage* of West Philadelphia and Philadelphia at-large, as well as the progress of services to the blind community.



“This is the tragedy that fills the first hours of blindness with terror and hopelessness. It should not be. It need not be. In institutions like the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men, the blind become useful again, by learning a trade, working at it and receiving wages for it.”¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁵ Pamphlet: A Message from the Dark. Pennsylvania Working Home For Blind Men. 1926 .

*Greenville; The Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church; and
Buildings of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men
3514-30 Lancaster Avenue, West Philadelphia
Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, Summer 2016 – Page 99*

Historic Context: The Movement to Provide Education and Vocational Training to the Blind

As I sit here writing this Message from the Dark, fumbling a little over the typewriter that I am learning to use, I can feel the warm sun across my back—the sun that I shall never see again.

I don't want to be tragic about it, but it came so suddenly a year or two ago—this darkness—and I used to love the sunlight so, especially when it painted shadows on our little lawn, and bathed the children playing in it. . . Can you imagine what it means to go on without the sun? To grope—can you imagine it? I hope you can. . . .

For unless you realize what it means to go blind, you cannot grasp the message that comes from us who still live and who still love life, and who want to go on living—paying our way, as we are learning to do.¹⁸⁶

Following the successful establishment and operation of the Institution Nationale des Sourds-Muets (The National Institution for Deaf-Mutes) by Charles Michel, Abbé de l'Épée in 1760, Valantine Haüy (1745–1822) was inspired to establish L'Institution Nationale des Jeunes Aveugles (The National Institute for Young Blind Persons).¹⁸⁷ Funded by the Philanthropic Society, this Parisian institution was founded in 1784—the first charitable institution for the visually impaired. Haüy published *Essai sur l'Éducation des Aveugles* (Essay on the Education of the Blind), which explored methods of education for the purpose of vocational training. One of the ideas he expounded upon was the use of “embossed print” to enable blind persons to read. However, the use of Roman letters proved insufficient. In 1829, undoubtedly one of Haüy's most talented students, Louis Braille (1809–1852), invented a system of raised dots. This system became the universal system of the visually impaired for reading and writing. After this institution was founded in France, Great Britain followed suit.¹⁸⁸

In 1829, the Massachusetts State Legislature incorporated the New England Asylum for the Blind. Samuel Gridley Howe (1801–1876), the asylum's first superintendent, was instrumental in founding this, the first residential school for the visually impaired in America.¹⁸⁹ The New York Institution for the Blind was established two years later in 1831. This institution was founded by Samuel Wood, a Quaker philanthropist, Samuel

¹⁸⁶ Pamphlet: *A Message from the Dark*. Pennsylvania Working Home For Blind Men. 1926, p. 5.

¹⁸⁷ Beryl Lief Benderly. *Dancing Without Music: Deafness in America*, (Washington: Gallaudet University Press, 1990), p.115.

¹⁸⁸ Brian H. Nordstrom, *The History of the Education of the Blind and the Deaf*. (Prescott, Arizona: Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, 1986), p. 5-6.

¹⁸⁹ Robert Hamlett Bremner, *Children and Youth in America: 1600–1865*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1970).

Akerly, a physician, and John Dennison Russ, also a physician.¹⁹⁰ The original building was located at 34th Street and Ninth Avenue in New York City. In March 1832, the Pennsylvania Institution for the Instruction of the Blind was established by Julius Reinhold Friedlander (1803–1839), a German-born Philadelphia transplant. In 1835, the institution established itself more formally at 20th and Race Streets, but would ultimately move in the 1890s to the present campus at Overbrook—being renamed the Overbrook School for the Blind.¹⁹¹

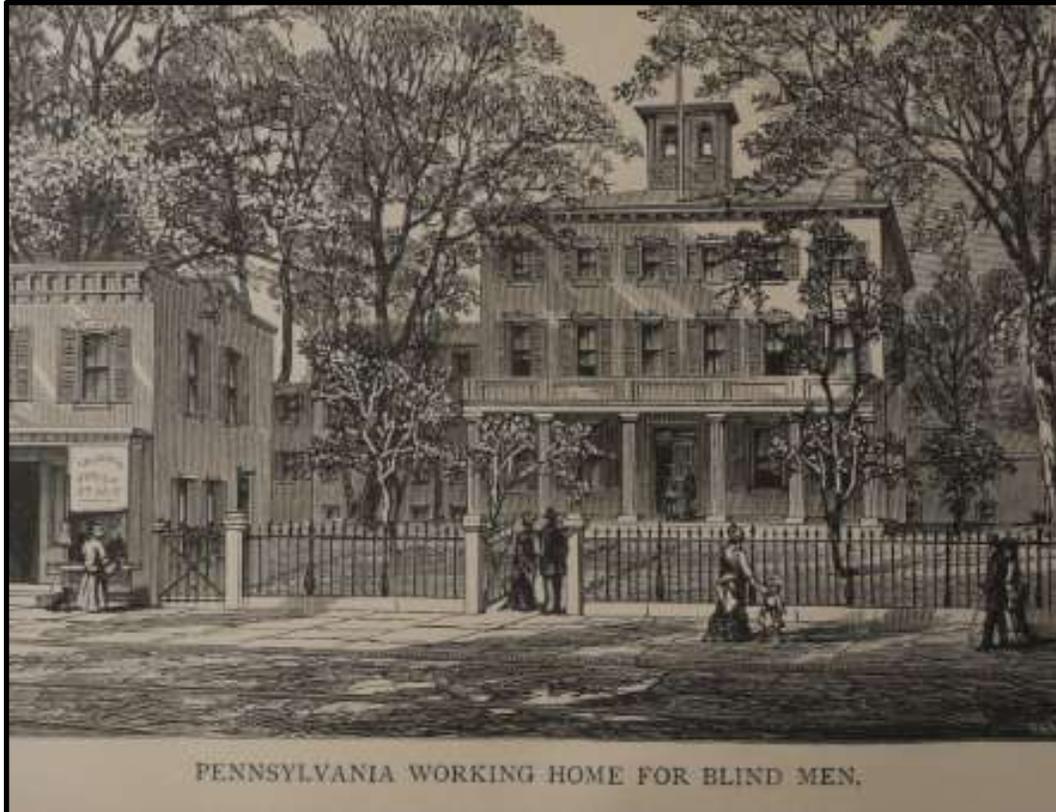
The primary purpose of these institutions was to educate and empower the visually impaired. In time, education and empowerment led to a general emphasis on vocational training. In the industrial era, even with the advent of their own educational institutions, blind persons had very limited vocational opportunities. The “blind trades” included broom manufacture, carpet and basket weaving, and chair canning. As the education of the visually impaired developed into a national movement, its institutional commitment became more sophisticated. In 1858, the American Printing House for the Blind was established in Louisville, Kentucky. By 1879, this institution would become the official printer for books related to educating the visually impaired. The progress of education included the establishment of the American Association of Instructors of the Blind, which was the first organization for blind professionals in America.¹⁹²

To provide resident and non-resident education to the visually impaired in the form of vocational training, as well as employment, industrial and working homes were established all across the country. In Philadelphia alone, there was the PWHBM and the Pennsylvania Industrial Home for Blind Women at **3929 Locust Street**. The PWHBM is one of the oldest extant “working home” complexes in Philadelphia and beyond that served “blind men” in providing both vocational training and employment opportunities.

¹⁹⁰ “Limitations of the Blind; Almost Removed By Education at the New-York Institute for the Blind...,” New York Times. New York: 13 May 1887.

¹⁹¹ Edith Willoughby, *Overbrook School for the Blind*. (Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing 2007), p.12

¹⁹² Michael Anagnostopoulos, *The Education of the Blind in the United States of America: Its Principles, Development and Results, Two Addresses*. (Boston:G.H. Ellis Company, 1902), p. 1–23.



Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men. Courtesy the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

The PWHBM was incorporated on July 23, 1874. Earlier that month, on July 2, 1874, the Board of Managers was established with the following officers: B.B. Comegys, President; William Chapin, A.M., Vice President; Alexander Brown, Vice President; Levi Knowles, Treasurer; and Charles D. Norton, Secretary. Eleven managers were appointed at that time. Greenville and its grounds were originally purchased for just under \$30,000. The funds were raised through contributions from generous citizens.¹⁹³ PWHBM's original purpose was reflected on and off throughout its history in various ways:

The Organization of Work-shops and a Home for Homeless Blind Mechanics, Teaching Useful Trades to Blind Men who have Homes, and the Selling of the Manufactures of the Corporation for its Benefit and Advantage.¹⁹⁴

The board members of the PWHBM elected the first president, B.B. Comegys, on December 1, 1874, at which time he took possession of Greenville (known then as 3518 Lancaster Avenue). At this time property consisted of the following:

¹⁹³ Sixth Annual Report of the Managers of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men. (Philadelphia: Printed for the Board of Managers by John H. Culberson & Co., 1880), p. 9–10.

¹⁹⁴ Thirteenth Annual Report of the Managers of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men. (Philadelphia: Printed for the Board of Managers by American Printing House, 1887), p. 4–5.

The lot of ground occupies in front on Lancaster Avenue 140 feet, extending back to Warren street a distance of 190 feet.

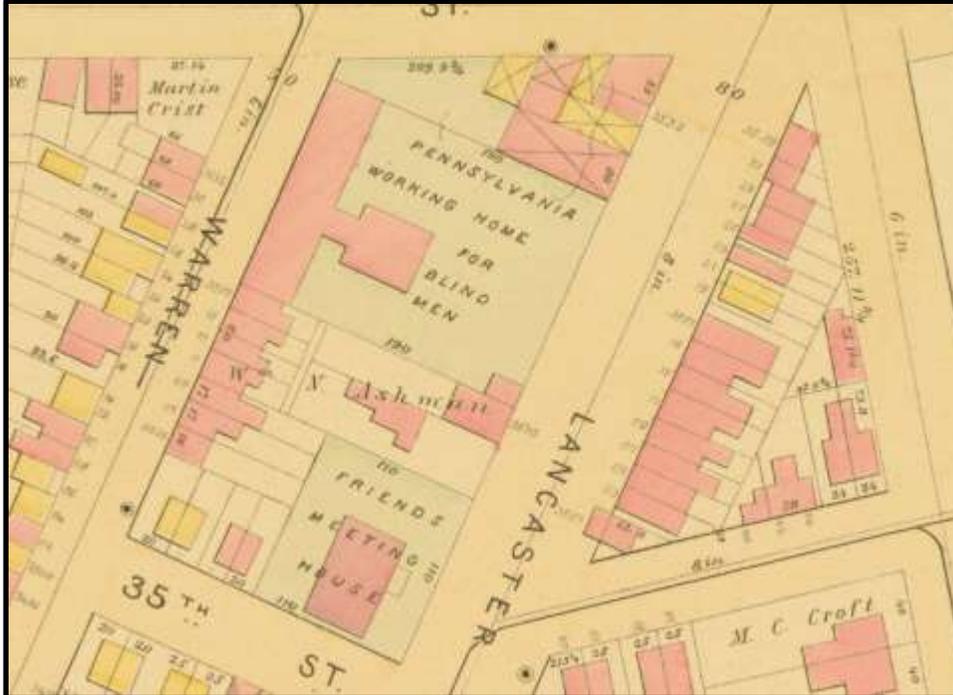
The main building [Mansion House], the centre of the lot, is 50 feet in front and three stories in height—containing twenty rooms. In each story a wide hall traverse [traverses] the house from front to rear, giving ample space for exercise in unfavorable weather, and securing thorough ventilation. There is sleeping room for about twenty-five inmates, in addition to that required for the family of the superintendent, and the necessary help.

In the rear of the lot is a two story building, which it is proposed to arrange for a workshop. It is about twenty-two feet, divided into two rooms on each story. It will accommodate about twenty-five workers with necessary machines &c.¹⁹⁵



Atlas of the 24th and 27th Wards, West Philadelphia, 1878. Courtesy University of Pennsylvania Archives.

¹⁹⁵ First Annual Report of the Managers of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men. (Philadelphia: Printed for the Board of Managers by James B. Chandler's Steam Printing Establishment, 1875), p. 9–11.



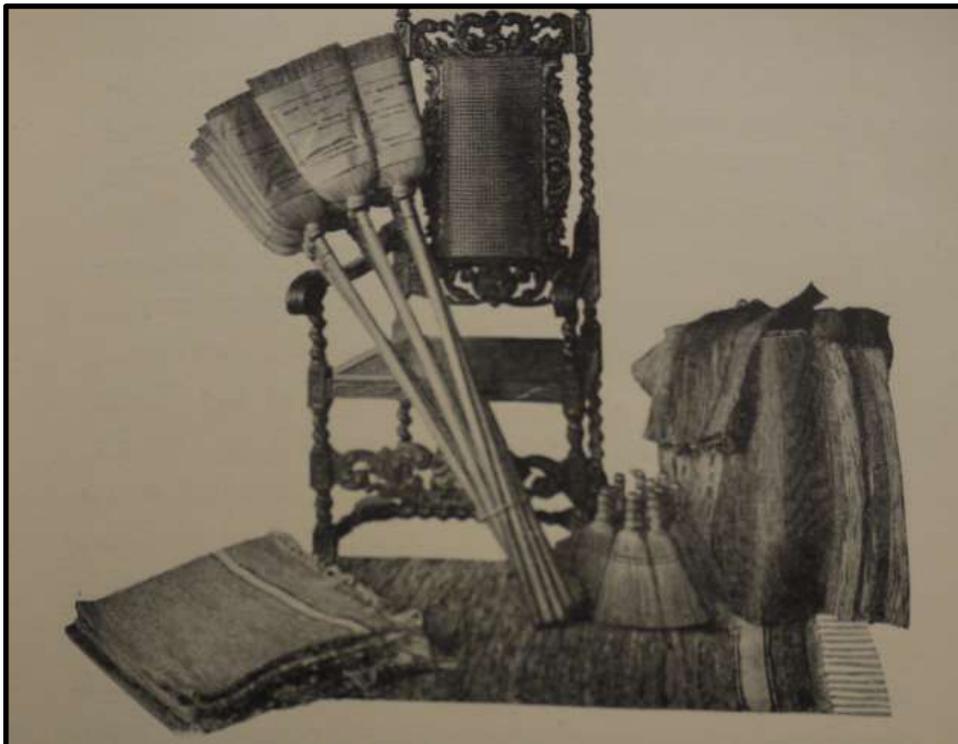
Atlas of West Philadelphia, 24th and 27th Wards, 1886. Courtesy Philadelphia GeoHistory.
 Courtesy University of Pennsylvania Archives.

Prior to the president taking possession of the newly acquired premises in December 1875, Greenville had not been occupied for some time and was in a state of disrepair. The grounds were in a neglected condition. The proposed workshop in the rear of Greenville required improvements to make it suitable to serve as a manufactory. However, all of this could be fixed through the generosity of the PWHBM's private benefactors and through the labors of the "blind men," including both inmates and non-residents. By the close of 1875 separate reports, from the manager and the superintendent, respectively, described the property as improved during the year:

The whole property as purchased, has been all paid for; the grounds have been graded and beautifully improved; extensive repairs have been made, and the premises enclosed with good fences; a fine two-story brick store have [has] been erected in front [formerly located near the site of the Administration Building], for the sale of manufactured wares, with additional work-rooms for the lighter mechanical branches, also an additional work-shop. Twenty working inmates, and five outside workers have been admitted, and industriously employed from nine to ten hours daily; some of them paying their board in full, others in part, from the proceeds of their own labor.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁶ Second Annual Report of the Managers of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men. (Philadelphia: Printed for the Board of Managers by Grant, Faires & Rodgers, 1876), p. 5–7. Second Annual Report of the Managers of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men. (Philadelphia: Printed for the Board of Managers by Grant, Faires & Rodgers, 1876), p. 8–10.

In addition to the store constructed on Lancaster Avenue and the workshop improvements on Warren Street, the sidewalks on Warren Street were also paved and a complete drainage system of terra cotta pipes was completed for the site. Fences on the east and west sides of the property were improved and the brick wall at the rear of the property raised in height.¹⁹⁷ With \$17,855 in receipts by the date of the first annual report and \$18,600 in 1875, the state of affairs reported upon in the second annual report represented a total of \$36,455. Including all of the generous donations, the gross receipts were reached through the work of inmates and non-residents, producing “nearly 14,000 brooms, 1,068 yards of carpet, and various other useful articles, such as brushes, mattresses, harness, and leather work...” PWHBM also started their first year perfecting the art of making cane-seat chairs.¹⁹⁸



“These are the products of the slow, thorough hands of the blind. They go out to the world under the trade-name BLINDMADE. Before you buy rugs, brooms, or have your chairs recanted, it will give you more than monetary value to inspect these products of the blind. For you will not only save money—you will help a blind man earn his living.”¹⁹⁹

The next year, 1876, led to a gradual rise in the number of inmates and non-resident workers and the suitability of the premises allowed for nearly a year of manufacture and training, which led to increased annual receipts. In order to accommodate the growth, as well as plan for the ever-increasing need, further construction was completed on the site.

¹⁹⁷ Report of the Superintendent. Philadelphia: Printed for the Board of Managers by Grant, Faires & Rodgers, 1876), p. 10.

¹⁹⁸ Second Annual Report of the Managers of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men. (Philadelphia: Printed for the Board of Managers by Grant, Faires & Rodgers, 1876), p. 6–7.

¹⁹⁹ Pamphlet: A Message from the Dark. Pennsylvania Working Home For Blind Men. 1926, p. 22.

An additional shop has been built on the grounds, four stories high. The interior is fitted with an elevator for moving stock, and a full set of the best machines. A bleaching room is attached to the shop, capable of preparing a large amount of material at one time. An infirmary, conveniently arranged, has been added, also a laundry and bathroom with all the modern appliances. A very important safeguard against possible danger has been furnished by a fire-escape, running from the shop to the main building [Mansion House], an allowing passage either way.

The main building [Mansion House] has been provided with a new kitchen-range, a store-room, and a full supply of beds and bedding.²⁰⁰

By the close of 1876, the PWHBM included thirty-two resident and twelve non-resident workers. The expense of establishing and improving the facility, as well as the manufacturing process, had not yet escaped the PWHBM. With \$21,916 spent by the manufacturing department and production that brought in \$21,836, there was a deficit of \$80, but the entire expenditure, including the loss, was seen as an investment in the future. One accomplishment of the year was the PWHBM's presence at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia, which greatly raised awareness of the institution and its importance.²⁰¹

With a final total of forty-six workers, the following year witnessed the production of 80,001 brooms, 3,366 yards of carpet, 10,111 brushes (scrubs), 225 reseatd chairs, 61 mattresses, and one set of harness. While production in 1877 had increased, the PWHBM was still working to get its foothold in its new business. Training was difficult and the facilities were not exactly designed with an efficiency that might be found later in history. The only change to the facility reported was the interior reconfiguration of walls to expand the size of the dining room to the full depth of Greenville.²⁰² The next year or two were similar in that few changes were made to the property, aside from the reconfiguration of the interior space of the workshop to accommodate bleaching operations and horsepower for cleaning brooms. While sales weakened, production was higher in 1879 with 123,873 brooms, 6,335 brushes, 2,548 yards of carpet, 197 reseatd chairs, and twenty-four mattresses.²⁰³

The PWHBM constantly "appealed" for donations from both private benefactors and, more officially, from the Pennsylvania Legislature. In its early years, the state government was far less generous to the institution than private donors. There also seems

²⁰⁰ Third Annual Report of the Managers of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men. (Philadelphia: Printed for the Board of Managers by Culberson & Bache, 1877), p. 11.

²⁰¹ Third Annual Report of the Managers of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men. (Philadelphia: Printed for the Board of Managers by Culberson & Bache, 1877), p. 12–16.

²⁰² Fourth Annual Report of the Managers of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men. (Philadelphia: Printed for the Board of Managers by Culberson & Bache, 1878), p. 12–15.

²⁰³ Fifth Annual Report of the Managers of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men. (Philadelphia: Printed for the Board of Managers by Culberson & Bache, 1879), p. 10–11.

to have been an overall goal within the Blind Education Community of providing vocational training for some individuals outside of the industrial endeavors that largely supported the workers. Sporadically reports were made on the occupations of blind men. The 1879 report provided a long list of occupations held by blind males and females extending beyond the realm of the PWHBM for information and contextual purposes.²⁰⁴



Charles Stark, a blind man, making a broom.
Courtesy the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

²⁰⁴ Fifth Annual Report of the Managers of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men. (Philadelphia: Printed for the Board of Managers by Culberson & Bache, 1879), p. 12.

| OCCUPATIONS. | | | |
|---|--------|----------|--------|
| | Males. | Females. | Total. |
| Superintendents of Institutions for the Blind..... | 16 | ..... | 16 |
| Superintendents of Orphan Asylums..... | 4 | ..... | 4 |
| Teachers of Literature and Science, outside of Institutions..... | 26 | 1 | 27 |
| Teachers of Music or Literature in other Institutions for Blind..... | 9 | 19 | 28 |
| Graduates of this School, now employed as Teachers..... | 54 | 13 | 67 |
| Graduates of this School, now employed here otherwise than as Teachers..... | 13 | 9 | 22 |
| Teachers in Public Schools..... | 7 | 3 | 10 |
| Students in Literary College..... | 7 | ..... | 7 |
| Graduates from Literary College..... | 13 | 1 | 14 |
| Students in Theological Seminary..... | 2 | ..... | 2 |
| Graduates from Theological Seminary..... | 3 | ..... | 3 |
| Ministers of the Gospel..... | 34 | ..... | 34 |
| Attorneys-at-Law..... | 3 | ..... | 3 |
| Justices of the Peace..... | 1 | ..... | 1 |
| Editors..... | ..... | 1 | 1 |
| Authors..... | 7 | 5 | 12 |
| Publishers..... | 5 | 2 | 7 |
| Medical Students or Physicians..... | 5 | 1 | 6 |
| Agents and Lecturers..... | 64 | 1 | 65 |
| Teachers of Music otherwise than in Institutions..... | 131 | 83 | 214 |
| Organists in Churches..... | 59 | 10 | 69 |
| Vocalists and Teachers of Singing, outside of Institutions..... | 58 | 27 | 85 |
| Piano-tuners, not including Pupils..... | 124 | 1 | 125 |
| Composers and Publishers of Music..... | 9 | 3 | 12 |
| Teachers of Handicraft in other Institutions..... | 16 | 3 | 19 |
| Manufacturers, employing others..... | 28 | ..... | 28 |
| Manufacturers..... | 197 | 20 | 217 |
| Working at Handicraft, elsewhere than in Institutions..... | 599 | 74 | 673 |
| Storekeeping, Selling Wares and Trading..... | 267 | 10 | 277 |
| Owning and Managing Real Estate..... | 38 | 7 | 45 |
| Sawing and Lumbering..... | 7 | ..... | 7 |
| Farmers..... | 38 | 1 | 39 |
| Knitting-machine Operators and Teachers, outside of Institutions..... | ..... | 1 | 1 |
| Employed by Sewing Machine Company..... | ..... | 2 | 2 |
| Housekeepers or at Housework..... | ..... | 179 | 179 |
| Hotel-keepers..... | 1 | ..... | 1 |
| Insurance Brokers..... | 2 | ..... | 2 |
| Newspaper Venders..... | 7 | ..... | 7 |
| Employed in Printing Office..... | 2 | ..... | 2 |
| Employed in Sash and Blind Factory..... | 1 | ..... | 1 |
| Florists..... | 1 | ..... | 1 |
| Switch-tenders..... | 2 | ..... | 2 |
| Cabinet-makers..... | 2 | ..... | 2 |
| Mail Contractors and Carriers..... | 1 | ..... | 1 |
| Assistants in Restaurants..... | 1 | ..... | 1 |
| Sailor and Cook..... | 1 | ..... | 1 |
| Horse Dealers..... | 9 | ..... | 9 |
| At Home—at machine and plain sewing, housework, chores, &c..... | 46 | 535 | 581 |
| At any Home or Institution for Employment..... | 39 | 39 | 78 |
| Imbecile or incapacitated..... | 55 | 63 | 118 |
| Deceased..... | 247 | 189 | 436 |
| Unknown..... | 382 | 234 | 616 |
| Remaining Pupils..... | 1198 | 1094 | 2292 |
| Total Admissions to the Institutions..... | ..... | ..... | 8943 |

Occupations of Blind Men and Women. Published 1879. Courtesy the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

The greatest success in achieving the ideal of a “working home” came in 1879, as the forty-eight men employed did very well in production and training achievement. While there was still a large deficit, the art of production was improving. However, for the home to be truly profitable it would need to enlarge its capacity, increase its workforce, and continually “modernize” to remain competitive. As a result, the board and managers of the PWHBM were always fundraising and lobbying for their desired goals. Without major achievements in the procurement of state funding, the PWHBM could not increase

its resident workforce nor could it even enlarge the non-resident population of workers due to the limitations of a small manufactory.²⁰⁵

In 1880, the PWHBM devised a plan that would entertain the ideal “cottage system” for a better living, manufacturing, and training facility. However, this plan required a minimum-five-acre site and new buildings outside the city and, was not realized. However, there were 49 workmen at the opening of the year with 51 by the close. These and other men who came and went produced 157,632 brooms, 13,248 brushes, 22 mattresses, 4,259 yards of carpet, and 5,350 cigars. A reported 178 chairs were also reseat. This led to total earnings of \$5,455.29 paid out to the working men in 1880. Through outside donations, additional improvements were made to the facility.

...we were able to enlarge both the workshops and the main building, making the former one hundred and forty feet in length by four stories in height; and giving accommodations for fifty additional workmen. The extension of the main building will enable us to receive twenty more inmates, and besides the dormitories it contains a commodious sewing-room with linen closets and other conveniences.²⁰⁶

From 1880 through the middle of the decade, the population of the PWHBM would gradually rise, and, in most cases, the deficit would decrease. The United States Census of 1880 provided the PWHBM a better understanding of the need and, ultimately, created further justification for state funding.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁵ Sixth Annual Report of the Managers of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men. (Philadelphia: Printed for the Board of Managers by John H. Culberson & Co., 1880), p. 11–13.

²⁰⁶ Seventh Annual Report of the Managers of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men. (Philadelphia: Printed for the Board of Managers by John H. Culberson & Co., 1881), p. 10–13.

²⁰⁷ Eighth Annual Report of the Managers of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men. (Philadelphia: Printed for the Board of Managers by John H. Culberson & Co., 1882), p. XXX.; Ninth Annual Report of the Managers of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men. (Philadelphia: Printed for the Board of Managers by John H. Culberson & Co., 1882), p. XXX.; Ninth Annual Report of the Managers of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men. (Philadelphia: Printed for the Board of Managers by John H. Culberson & Co., 1883), p. xxx.; and Tenth Annual Report of the Managers of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men. (Philadelphia: Printed for the Board of Managers by Stager & Maxwell, 1884), p. xxx.

Rough Count of Blind in the State of Pennsylvania, as Shown by the United States Census, of 1880.

| County of | No. of Blind | County of | No. of Blind. |
|------------|--------------|----------------|---------------|
| Adams | 43 | Lackawanna | 107 |
| Allegheny | 209 | Lancaster | 111 |
| Armstrong | 54 | Lawrence | 37 |
| Beaver | 39 | Lebanon | 31 |
| Bedford | 32 | Lehigh | 62 |
| Blair | 43 | Luzerne | 127 |
| Berks | 95 | Lycoming | 51 |
| Bradford | 47 | McKean | 12 |
| Bucks | 68 | Mercer | 63 |
| Butler | 26 | Mifflin | 17 |
| Cambria | 45 | Monroe | 24 |
| Cameron | 5 | Montgomery | 80 |
| Carbon | 35 | Montour | 11 |
| Centre | 25 | Northumberland | 44 |
| Chester | 81 | Northampton | 57 |
| Clarion | 30 | Perry | 29 |
| Clearfield | 19 | Philadelphia | 968 |
| Clinton | 16 | Pike | 13 |
| Columbia | 36 | Potter | 18 |
| Crawford | 54 | Schuylkill | 116 |
| Cumberland | 37 | Snyder | 23 |
| Dauphin | 55 | Somerset | 32 |
| Delaware | 50 | Sullivan | 4 |
| Elk | 7 | Susquehanna | 23 |
| Erie | 78 | Tioga | 27 |
| Fayette | 72 | Union | 10 |
| Forrest | 3 | Venango | 25 |
| Franklin | 53 | Warren | 36 |
| Fulton | 10 | Washington | 59 |
| Greene | 39 | Wayne | 26 |
| Huntingdon | 33 | Westmoreland | 60 |
| Indiana | 38 | Wyoming | 16 |
| Jefferson | 19 | York | 73 |
| Juniatta | 18 | | |
| Total | | | 3,997 |

Rough Count of the Blind in the State of Pennsylvania, as Shown by the United States Census of 1880.
 Courtesy the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

By 1886, there were 105 inmates, producing 373,294 brooms at a gross income of \$60,827.²⁰⁸ According to the annual report of the Superintendent that year, "...accommodations in the Home and work-shops will not allow further admission."²⁰⁹ The report went on to say that the dining room was too small, the dormitories had grown crowded—along with the workshops—and that there was no place to care for the sick and infirmed. Plans for a new building and/or an addition through a grant of \$75,000 from the Pennsylvania Legislature had been approved in the previous legislative session to allow for up to 250 workmen, but nothing was solidified by the close of 1886.²¹⁰

Twenty-five new workmen were admitted in 1887—fourteen "inmates" and eleven "non-residents"; however, eleven inmates and three non-residents departed that year as well, one of which was by death. Roughly twenty-nine additional persons were employed in neighborhood training programs with partners of the PWHBM. Despite the pledge from the Pennsylvania Legislature, almost nothing occurred to address the need for new

²⁰⁸ Thirteenth Annual Report of the Managers of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men. (Philadelphia: Printed for the Board of Managers by American Printing House, 1887), p. 5.

²⁰⁹ Thirteenth Annual Report of the Managers of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men. (Philadelphia: Printed for the Board of Managers by American Printing House, 1887), p. 5.

²¹⁰ Thirteenth Annual Report of the Managers of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men. (Philadelphia: Printed for the Board of Managers by American Printing House, 1887), p. 6.

buildings aside from the replacement of worn out machinery. Production increased regardless from 373,294 corn brooms in 1886 to 398,616 in 1887. Other production reports for the year included 8,640 brushes, 4,005 yards of carpet woven, 600 chairs re-caned, and 89 mattresses, allowing \$16,665 in wages for working blind men.²¹¹

A similar institution also opened in 1887, the Industrial Home of Mechanical Trades for the Adult Blind, Oakland, California. This institution was modeled after the PWHBM and controlled by the State of California.²¹² By 1888, the PWHMB had still not secured their \$75,000 stipend from the Pennsylvania Legislature.

So far as extension of the work is concerned, we have come to a full stop.²¹³

Production included 461,078 corn brooms, 8,640 brushes, 3,924 yards of carpet, 83 mattresses, and 614 re-caned chairs, earning gross receipts of \$55,960 that paid \$18,974 in wages. The working men increased the wages to \$20,000 by performing outside work, such as working as organ blowers on Sundays.²¹⁴

The last report of the decade shows production at an all-time high—302,457 corn brooms, 6,624 brushes, 4,176 yards of carpet, forty-two mattresses, and 680 re-caned chairs. This led to sales of \$60,253 and earnings of \$20,286 with an additional \$4,000 earned by inmates as “out-door salesmen” and “organ blowers.” Regulations were constant, requiring inmates to rise at six in the morning, take breakfast thirty minutes later, begin work at seven, attend “dinner” from noon to one, and then return to work until five or six. Supper followed, then evening prayers and the newspapers—“...the reading of which was completed by Mrs. G. M. Vernon.” Before bed at ten, free time was often dedicated to “...reading embossed books...,” musical entertainments, and games.²¹⁵

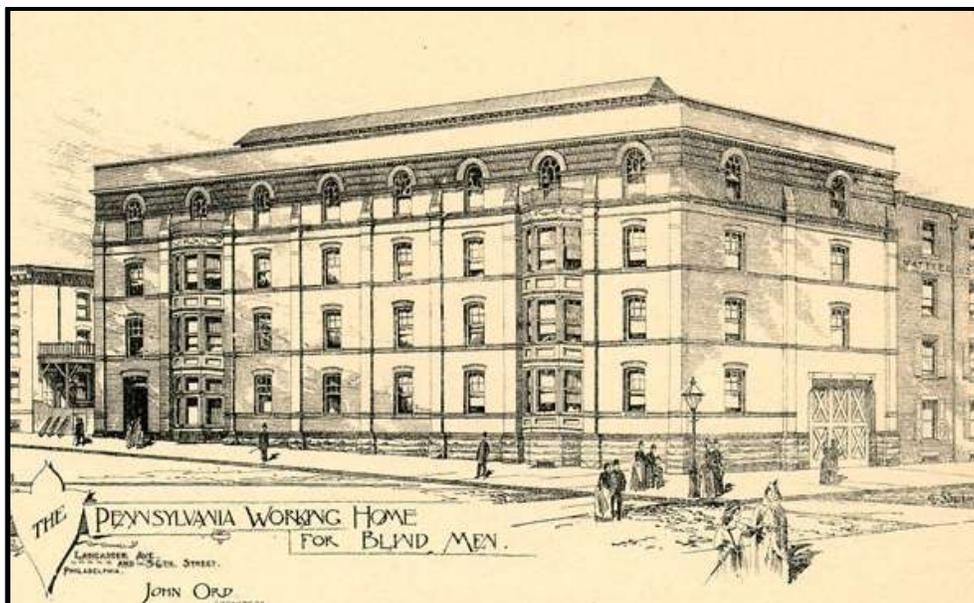
²¹¹ Fourteenth Annual Report of the Managers of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men. (Philadelphia: Printed for the Board of Managers by American Printing House, 1888), p. 1–9.

²¹² Fourteenth Annual Report of the Managers of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men. (Philadelphia: Printed for the Board of Managers by American Printing House, 1888), p. 10.

²¹³ Hall, H.L. Fifteenth Annual Report of the Managers of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men, Superintendent’s Report. (Philadelphia: Printed for the Board of Managers by American Printing House, 1889), p. 10–11.

²¹⁴ Fifteenth Annual Report of the Managers of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men. (Philadelphia: Printed for the Board of Managers by American Printing House, 1889), p. 1–9.

²¹⁵ Sixteenth Annual Report of the Managers of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men. (Philadelphia: Printed for the Board of Managers by American Printing House, 1890), p. 1–12.



Design for the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men by John Ord, Architect. Published June 7, 1890 in the *American Architect and Building News*, No. 754. Courtesy Google Books.

Plans for the new building or “workshops” were underway by February 1890, when the Building Committee of the Board of Managers commissioned architect John Ord to design the building.²¹⁶

The Pennsylvania Working-Home For Blind Men, Lancaster Ave. and 36th St., Philadelphia, PA. Mr. John Ord, Architect, Philadelphia, PA.

This building is now in the process of construction at a contract of \$33,148, which includes granite base and red stretcher-brick superstructure, plant floors and roofs—the latter being covered with tin—and copper bay windows. The stairway, which is entirely fireproof, is outside the building altogether, giving more room and greater safety.²¹⁷

The architectural plans of John Ord reflect the first portion that was completed by the PWHBM prior to 1892, as reflected in Bromley’s Real Estate Atlas of that year.²¹⁸ However, it is more likely that the building was completed by the time of the following transfer of sale published in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*:

Lancaster ave., S.W. s., 110 ft. N.W. 35th st.—W.N. Ashman to Penna.

²¹⁶ “In West Philadelphia Happenings in the Pretty Suburb Across the Schuylkill,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. (Philadelphia: 4 February 1890), p. 3.; and “In Real Estate Circles. New Workshops for Blind Men—Big Building Operations,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. (Philadelphia: 12 April 1890), p. 6.

²¹⁷ Design for the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men by John Ord, Architect. Published June 7, 1890 in the *American Architect and Building News*, No. 754..

²¹⁸ G.W. Bromley and Company, *Atlas of the City of Philadelphia, Volume 7, 22nd Ward*, (Philadelphia: G.W. Bromley and Company, 1889).

Working Home for Blind Men; Dec. 5, '91; 60x190.....24,000.²¹⁹

For the last two or three years our shops and rooms have been crowded beyond the point of safety. We have been compelled repeatedly to turn away applicants for admission, and feared our work had almost reached its limit. The generous appropriation of the last Pennsylvania Legislature removed this apprehension, and with the increased accommodation afforded by the new factory, built from this gift, and such other enlargements as are necessary to make it available, the Managers look now to a future of enlarged usefulness, and of greater benefit to the class of unfortunates who are their charity.

The new factory is on the North-east corner of Thirty-sixth and Warren Streets, with a frontage on Warren Street of 48 feet, and of 124 in height on Thirty-sixth Street.

It is four stories in height, with ceilings of 12 feet each, except on the ground floor, where advantage has been taken of the slope of Thirty-sixth Street to increase the height of the ceilings to fifteenth feet, and thus gain more storage capacity.

The base is of granite to the level of the first floor and the body of the building of brick. A brick parapet surrounds the roof, and nothing has been set aside for the sake of decoration.

In the interior, a special feature is the absence of the numerous columns so usual in the ordinary factory, which to the blind men would have been a serious inconvenience.

The Report of the Superintendent shows the way the manufacturing department has been arranged so as to economize labor and time, the raw stock is sent to the fourth floor and moves downward in the various processes to the second, where it is finished and stored for shipment; the second, third, and fourth floors of the building are the main workrooms and have each a floor area of 5525 square feet; this is room for 250 workmen.²²⁰

Despite the completion of the new building, Title Caleb L. Milne recommended further additions in his annual report of 1890, which included more space for a larger dining hall within the main building among other improvements. PWHBM were planning to ask the Pennsylvania Legislature for an additional \$45,000 to be allocated in its next session.

²¹⁹ "The Building Trade Another Big Structure in the Business Center of Town.," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. (Philadelphia: 11 December 1891), p. 7.

²²⁰ Seventeenth Annual Report of the Managers of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men. (Philadelphia: Printed for the Board of Managers by American Printing House, 1891), p. 5–6.

The new factory is now completed and occupied. The description of the building belongs more properly to the report of the Managers, but its working system may be stated here: The broom-corn is delivered by a driveway for wagons at the south-east angle of the building, and stored in the ground floor and basement; it is taken from there as needed, on an elevator, to the fourth floor, power being furnished by an 17 H.P. gas engine in the basement, which also drives the fan in the drying-room and other necessary machinery. On the fourth floor the bales are distributed to the workmen; the sorting, sizing, wetting, hurl cutting, and coloring, are all done on this floor, and the prepared material dropped through shuts to the third; here the brooms are wound, sewed, combed, and clipped. Another chute leads to the second floor, on which are paint shop, stream-drying and finishing rooms, and after passing through these operations the brooms are bunched and stored ready for shipment. The rooms for making mattresses, weaving rag-carpet, and cane-seating chairs are on the first floor, at the northern end, also the office and sales-room for manufactured goods.

At the time this major improvement was completed, the old factory—the 1876 Workshop and its 1880 Addition—were “...roofed and remodeled...” as additional dormitories, convenient to Greenville, which still served as the main building of the PWHBM.

On the first floor will be the laundry and the drying-room, with a smoking-room and water-closets. The second and third floors are for sleeping-rooms, and the fourth for trunk-room, linen closets, bedding, etc. Baths and washing rooms are provided on the second floor. This will give room for 100 men, so far as sleeping accommodations are concerned.²²¹

Eighty thousand brooms marked another year of success in 1891. Additional funds were allocated by the Pennsylvania Legislature that allowed for the completion of a new addition to Greenville, “the 1891 Addition”.

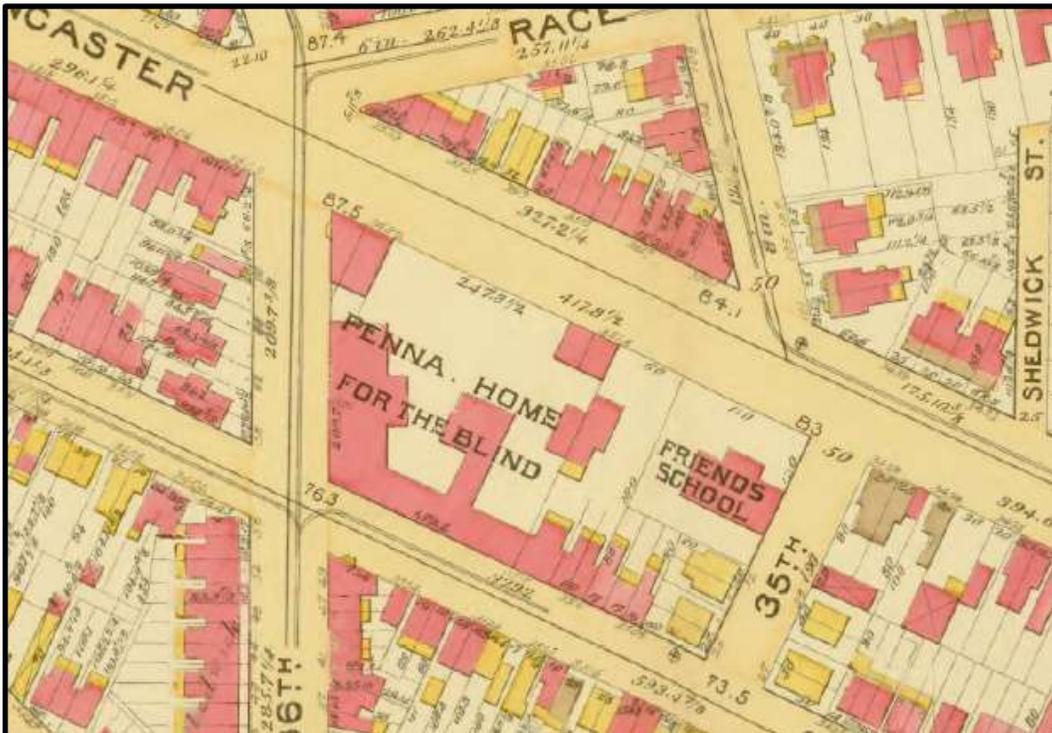
The pressing demand for increased housing accommodations has been met by an addition to the main building, as described in the Superintendent’s report and the first story is a much needed extension of the dining room. The dangers from fire, often referred to, have been removed by the introduction of steam heat.

It is an extension to the east side of the main building [Mansion House], three stories in height, and measuring 30 x 40 feet. The first floor is a dining-room, in addition to and on the same level as the old one. The second story is the men’s sitting room, and will also be used as a chapel.

²²¹ Seventeenth Annual Report of the Managers of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men. (Philadelphia: Printed for the Board of Managers by American Printing House, 1891), p. 5–6.

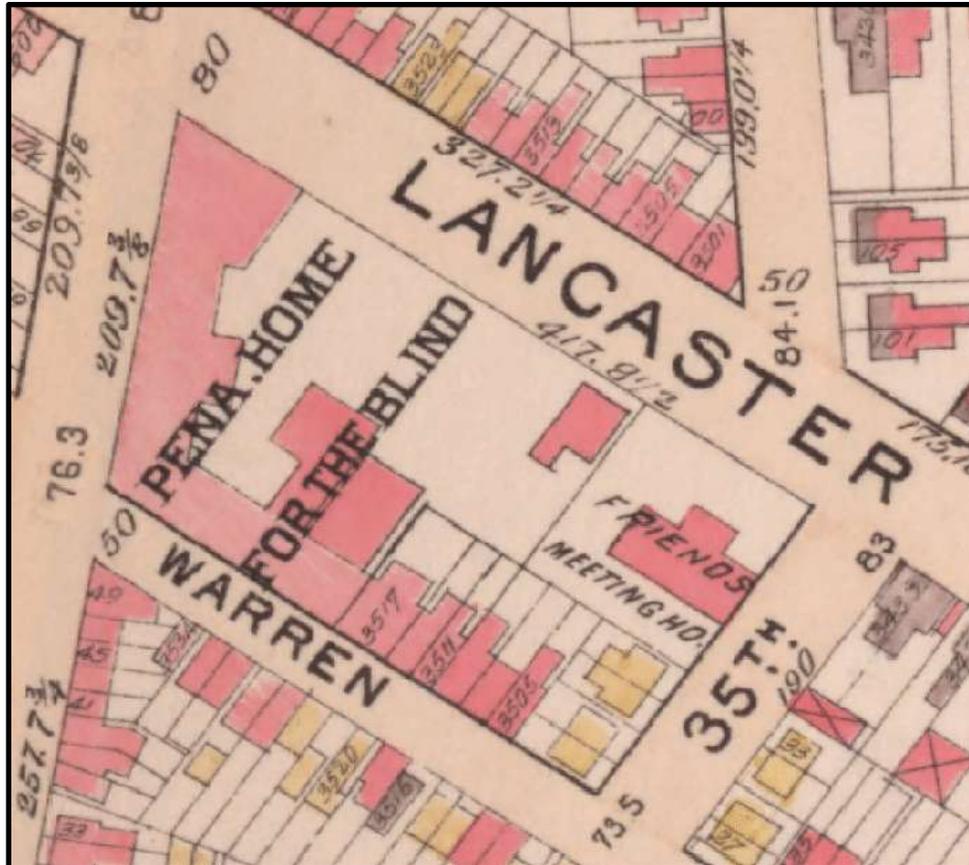
The third story is a dormitory. The building will probably be under roof before publication of this report, and will be pushed to completion as rapidly as possible.²²²

The second, grander phase of construction of the Factory was completed after the publication of the Bromley Atlas in 1892 and prior to the Bromley Atlas of 1895, as shown in the map below.



Walter S. Bromley's 1892 Atlases of West Philadelphia's 24th, 27th and 34th Wards.
Courtesy the West Philadelphia Community History Center.

²²²Eighteenth Annual Report of the Managers of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men. (Philadelphia: Printed for the Board of Managers by American Printing House, 1892), p. 12–13.



1895 Philadelphia Atlas. By G.W. Bromley.
Courtesy the Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network.

*Greenville; The Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church; and
Buildings of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men
3514-30 Lancaster Avenue, West Philadelphia
Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, Summer 2016 – Page 116*



The Factory of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men, ca. 1890s.
Courtesy the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Also in 1891, another lot was purchased to the east of the facility from Judge William N. Ashman and his wife, Mary E., which would allow for other future improvements.²²³

In 1892, the primary addition to the property was completed by the aforementioned purchase of land to the east of the facility, terminating at the property of the Quaker Meeting House. The additional land allowed for the completion of an Administration Building, which was set somewhat close to Lancaster Avenue. The building appeared much like a large private house—fully detached, unlike many of the new homes then built in the neighborhood with some rare exceptions. The Administration Building served as the main office quarters for the PWHBM, as well as the living quarters of the superintendent and his family. This allowed for additional living space for workmen in the former portion occupied by the superintendent and made the job a more attractive one, and, incidentally, rewarded Milne for his time served.²²⁴

²²³ Deed: William N. Ashman, of the city, judge of the Orphans Court, and Mary E., his wife, to the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind, 5 December 1891, Philadelphia Deed Book T.G., No. 136, p. 46.

²²⁴ Eighteenth Annual Report of the Managers of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men. (Philadelphia: Printed for the Board of Managers by American Printing House, 1892), p. 12–13.



A blind man weaving a rug in the Factory.
Courtesy the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

The Twentieth Annual Report of the Managers of the PWHBM was proud to extoll that the institution had survived the financial collapse of 1893 through its proactive management to ensure its long-term success. That same year, the institution published *Trades for the Blind*, which was a report read before the World's Congress Auxiliary of the World's Columbian Exposition in July 1893.²²⁵

It is of course a truism to say that nothing has more constantly, or earnestly engaged the attention of friends of the blind than the search for some trade or calling in which they could engage with a fair chance or self-support. One industry after another has been brought forward, tried and thrown aside, bead-work, mats, baskets, ropes, brushes, nets,

²²⁵ Twentieth Annual Report of the Managers of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men. (Philadelphia: Printed for the Board of Managers by American Printing House, 1893), p. 12–13.

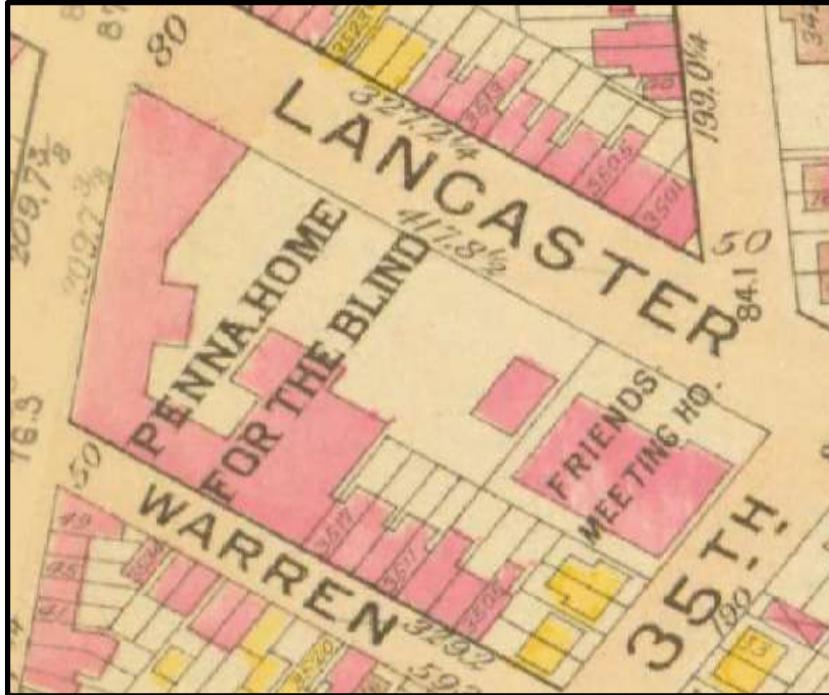
*Greenville; The Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church; and
Buildings of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men
3514-30 Lancaster Avenue, West Philadelphia*

mattresses, with a long list of other things, have been attempted, and at some places on or other has been pronounced fairly successful, while at others it is reported as a failure. Is this from the inherent defectiveness in the blind? Is it from changed conditions of labor? It goes without saying that a blind man will not be as dexterous in the use of tools, or in manipulating a piece of work, as he would be with the possession of sight. It is also true that institutions will sometimes judge of a trade by the financial results to themselves....

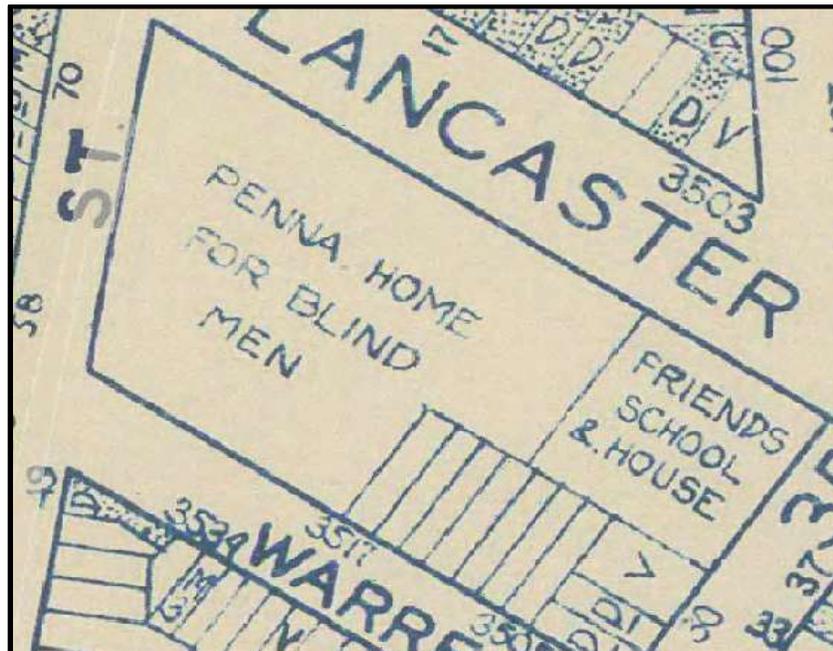
There are two distinct classes of the blind. The first consists of those born without sight, or who have lost it in early childhood. To those, blindness although acknowledged as a defect, is a natural condition, they have gained no knowledge from it, and have, therefore, nothing to unlearn, experience that have come to them unconsciously, and judicious training has given their other senses a quickness, and a delicacy that almost compensate for sight, and to their mental faculties, especially memory, a wonderful strength and tenacity. This class is the special province of institutions for the education of the blind. It is for them to develop these minds, supporting them with materials, discover latent possibilities, train and discipline their powers, and where a special aptness is found, to give such special instruction as will best qualify them for the pursuit in life indicated. From this class come the lawyers, ministers, musicians, mathematicians, teachers, etc.—men occupying honorable positions for which their fitness has been discovered, and where lives show that blindness is not an insurmountable barrier to a man of determined purpose, but even of this class, the larger number have nothing...



The Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men, 1900. Courtesy the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.



1910 Philadelphia Atlas. By G.W. Bromley.
 Courtesy the Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network.



1942 Land Use Maps. Works Progress Administration.
 Courtesy the Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network.

After the turn of the twentieth century, education and vocational training for the blind and visually-impaired became a more standard part of public service. Public funding began to offer more impactful budgets to institutions for the blind and visually impaired. This led to a shared responsibility for funding from both government and private sources. As *Greenville; The Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church; and Buildings of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men 3514-30 Lancaster Avenue, West Philadelphia Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, Summer 2016* – Page 120

Braille came into more common practice, these educational and vocational training programs placed a greater emphasis on literacy. On a national level, the American Red Cross enlisted volunteers to teach Braille to blind veterans returning from World War I. The Volunteer Services for the Blind was formed in 1945, which had a special emphasis on transcribing books and magazines to Braille. Other organizations emerged throughout the century, including the Information Center for the Blind, the Nevil Institute for Rehabilitation and Service, and the Volunteer Services for the Blind.

After the Second World War, the PWHBM went through hard times for several decades and by the 1970s there were severe financial problems.

After nearly one hundred five years at the same location and after a protracted decline and a long and involved bankruptcy, the Center for the Blind [PWHBM] expired in 1979.²²⁶

After the closure of the PWHBM, the organization evolved to merge with Information Center for the Blind, the Nevil Institute for Rehabilitation and Service, and the Volunteer Services for the Blind. These organizations formed the Associated Services for the Blind in 1983 and this organization is located in the Robert Morris Building at 919 Walnut Street.

²²⁶ George H Kettell, "End of a world: A history of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men from its beginning in 1874 until the bankruptcy proceedings in 1979." (Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1990), p. xxx.



“This is Tim Callahan who came to us many years ago, and who has not only made his home here, but has made this a home for us all. If you have ever helped us, I should think it would make doubly glad to have helped a man like Tim.”²²⁷

²²⁷ Pamphlet: A Message from the Dark. Pennsylvania Working Home For Blind Men. 1926, p. 13.



The Administration Building and Superintendent's Residence. Courtesy the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.



The grounds of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men. Courtesy the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

*Greenville; The Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church; and
Buildings of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men
3514-30 Lancaster Avenue, West Philadelphia
Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, Summer 2016 – Page 123*

Criterion D

The Factory embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural and engineering specimen, as its design was specific to the use of the blind men who occupied the building. The fire escapes, the structure of which is still intact on the exterior, are integral to the design as a fire safety measure for blind men, who used the building.

The design of the building itself was one specific to its use by blind men and this is a significant feature that the National Park Service and the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission ensured to preserve when the building was converted into apartments and received historic tax credits nearly three decades ago.

The new factory is on the North-east corner of Thirty-sixth and Warren Streets, with a frontage on Warren Street of 48 feet, and of 124 in height on Thirty-sixth Street.

In the interior, a special feature is the absence of the numerous columns so usual in the ordinary factory, which to the blind men would have been a serious inconvenience.²²⁸

Criterion E

The Factory of the PWHBM is the work of architect John Ord, whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City of Philadelphia.

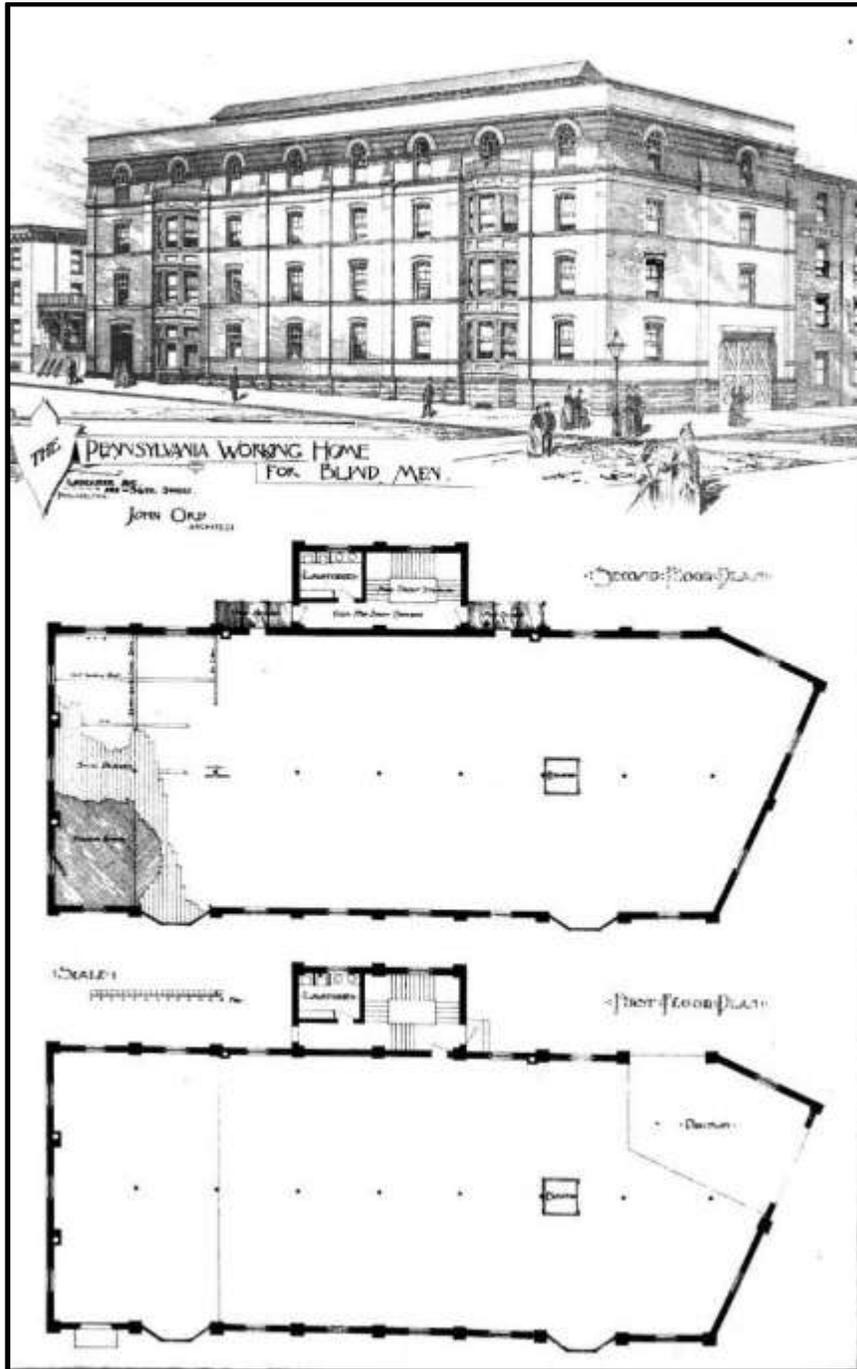
John Ord was born in Scotland and apprenticed in the firm of Peddie & Kinnear there before coming to Philadelphia. (In the Peddie & Kinnear office at the time was also Robert G. Kennedy, who also became a well-known Philadelphia architect.) Ord's first listing in the Philadelphia city directories occurs in 1873, when he is listed as a draftsman with no office address noted. By 1877 it is noted that he is operating from an office at 215 South 5th Street, an office shared by Addison Hutton, with whom Ord soon formed a partnership under the name of Hutton & Ord. By 1880 Ord was assisting another Scots architect, [John McArthur, Jr.](#) on the design and construction of the Philadelphia City Hall and, on the senior architect's death in 1890, succeeded him on this project. In 1893 Ord retired from this position and was succeeded by W. Bleddyn Powell.²²⁹

John Ord is a significant architect and this is one of his strong works, warranting specific designation under Criterion E for designation as historic in the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

²²⁸ Seventeenth Annual Report of the Managers of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men. Philadelphia: Printed for the Board of Managers by American Printing House, 1891), p. 5–6.

²²⁹ Biography of John Ord. Philadelphia Architects and Builders Database.

<https://www.baltimorebuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display.cfm/26487> Accessed 5 May 2016.



Design for the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men by John Ord, Architect. Published June 7, 1890 in the *American Architect and Building News*, No. 754. Courtesy Google Books.

*Greenville; The Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church; and
Buildings of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men
3514-30 Lancaster Avenue, West Philadelphia
Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, Summer 2016 – Page 125*

Bibliography

- “A New View of Blodget’s Hotel,” *Washington History*, Volume 2 (Spring 1990), 103–106.
- “Account A of McEuen, Hale and Davidson,” Auditors’ Report, April 11, 1828, Burr vs. McEuen et al, Case Papers, National Archives and Records Administration.
- Anagnostopoulos, Michael. *The Education of the Blind in the United States of America: Its Principles, Development and Results, Two Addresses*. Boston: G.H. Ellis Company, 1902.
- Ancestry.com. *Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Death Certificates Index, 1803-1915* [database online]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2011.
- Arnebeck, Bob. *Through a Fiery Trial: Building Washington, 1790–1800*. New York: Madison Books, 1991.
- Articles of Agreement between Rebecca Blodget, widow of Samuel Blodget, merchant, deceased, and William Fennell, of the City of Philadelphia, merchant, 14 May 1817, Philadelphia Deed Book I.W., No. 5, p. 417, City Archives of Philadelphia.
- Auditor’s Report, Schedule A, 11 April 1828, Burr vs. McEuen et al, Case Papers, National Archives and Records Administration.
- “Balance per Auditors Report,” ca. 1834, Burr vs. McEuen et al, Case Papers, National Archives and Records Administration.
- Bay, Daniel H. and Grant Wacker. *The Foreign Missionary Enterprise at Home: Explorations in North American Cultural History*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2003.
- Benderly, Beryl Loeff. *Dancing Without Music: Deafness in America*, Washington: Gallaudet University Press, 1990.
- Biographical directory of the United States Congress, 1774-1989: the Continental Congress, September 5, 1774, to October 21, 1788, and the Congress of the United States, From the First Through the One Hundredth Congresses, March 4, 1789, to January 3, 1989, Inclusive*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. G.P.O., 1989.
- Blockley Township Tax List, 1802.
- Blockley Township Tax List, 1803.
- Blockley Township Tax List, 1804.
- Blockley Township Tax List, 1805.
- Blockley Township Tax List, 1806.
- Blockley Township Tax List, 1807.
- Blockley Township Tax List, 1808.
- Blockley Township Tax List, 1809.
- Blockley Township Tax List, 1810.
- Blockley Township Tax List, 1811.
- Blockley Township Tax List, 1812.
- Blodget, Samuel. *Economica: A Statistical Manual for the United States* (Washington D.C., For the author, 1806.
- Blodget, Samuel. *Thoughts on the Increasing Wealth and National Economy of the United States of America*. Washington, D.C.: Way and Groff, 1801.
- Bremner, Robert Hamlett. *Children and Youth in America: 1600–1865*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1970.
- Bromley, G.W. and Company, *Atlas of the City of Philadelphia, Volume 7, 22nd Ward*, Philadelphia: G.W. Bromley and Company, 1889.
- Browne, George Waldo. Hon. Samuel Blodget: the pioneer of progress in Merrimack Valley. Manchester, New Hampshire: George Waldo Browne, 1907.
- Bryan, Wilhelmus Bogart *A History of the National Capital from Its Foundation Through the Period of the Adoption of the Organic Act*. Washington, D.C.: Macmillan, 1914.
- Greenville; The Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church; and
Buildings of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men
3514-30 Lancaster Avenue, West Philadelphia*
- Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, Summer 2016 – Page 126*

- “Building Lots for Sale In the Village of Hamilton.” *Gazette of the United States*. Philadelphia: September 19, 1803.
- Burial Return for Christ Church Burial Ground, Philadelphia Board of Health Burial Records, City Archives of Philadelphia.
- Burr vs. McEuen et al, Case Papers, Plan and list of lots, National Archives and Records Administration.
- Corner, George W., Editor. *The Autobiography of Benjamin Rush, His “Travels Through Life” together with his Commonplace Book for 1789–1813*. Princeton, New Jersey. Princeton University Press, 1948.
- Christ Church Register: *Baptismal Records, 1769–1794*. Courtesy Christ Church.
- “Death Notice.” *The American Recorder and the Charlestown Advertiser*. Boston, Massachusetts: 5 January 1787.
- Deed: Benjamin Orne, city, merchant, to John Blodgett Britton, city, gentleman, for lots 21, 25, 26, 49, 52, 57, 61, 62, 76, 84, 93, 94, for \$8,000, 27 September 1841, Philadelphia Deed Book G.S., No. 33, p. 307; Deed: John Blodgett Britton, city, gentleman, to Julia A. Britton, late of city now of Mantua, widow, for lots 25 & 26, 30 September 1841, for \$7,000, Philadelphia Deed Book G.S., No.31, p. 527, City Archives of Philadelphia.
- Deed: Charles B. Durborrow, Jay Cooke, Andrew Wheeler and Nathaniel B. Browne, trustees of the Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States to Rev. John Cotton Smith, D.D., of New York, 25 February 1873, recorded in Philadelphia Deed Book F.T.W., No. 164, p. 25, City Archives of Philadelphia.
- Deed: James Dundas and Andrew D. Cash, both of city, trustees, to Benjamin Orne, city, merchant, for lots 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21 (\$800), 25 (\$1,250), 26 with Greenville (\$3,000), 27 (\$1,200), 32 (\$750), 36, 37, 38, 45, 47, 49, 50, 52, 53, 55, 57, 59, 60, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 76, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 92, 92, and 94, Philadelphia Deed Book G.S., No. 39, p. 72, City Archives of Philadelphia.
- Deed: James McCloskey, city, curb setter, to Samuel Arnold, Haddam, Connecticut, quarry man, for \$8,500, 18 August 1862, Recorded in Philadelphia Deed Book A.C.H., No. 58, p. 255, City Archives Philadelphia.
- Deed: John Blodgett Britton, city, gentleman, to Julia A. Britton, late of city now of Mantua, widow, for lots 25 & 26, 30 September 1841, for \$7,000, Philadelphia Deed Book G.S., No.31, p. 527, City Archives of Philadelphia.
- Deed: Rev. John Cotton Smith, D.D., of New York, to Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men, 20 October 1875, recorded in Philadelphia Deed Book F.T.W., No. 156, p. 549, City Archives of Philadelphia.
- Deed: Julia A. Britton, District of West Philadelphia, widow, to James McCloskey, District of Spring Garden, curb setter, for \$8,000, 15 March 1853, Recorded in Philadelphia Deed Book T.H., No. 75, p. 60, City Archives of Philadelphia.
- Deed: Samuel Arnold and Matilda Ann, his wife, to Charles B. Durborrow, Jay Cooke, Andrew Wheeler and Nathaniel B. Browne, trustees, for \$4,500 (also subject to mortgage debt), 12 June 1866, Recorded in L.R.B., No. 192, p. 310, City Archives of Philadelphia.
- Deed: Samuel Blodget, the younger, of the City of Philadelphia, and Rebecca, his wife, to Thomas McEwen, Thomas Hale, and William Davidson, of the city, merchants, 22 July 1799, Philadelphia Deed Book D., No. 77, p. 198, City Archives of Philadelphia.
- Deed: Tench Francis, esquire, and Anne, his wife, and Thomas Willing Francis and Dorothy, his wife, to Samuel Blodget, 1 January 1795, recorded in Philadelphia Deed Book D., No. 67, p. 467, City Archives of Philadelphia.
- Deed: Thomas Hale and William Davidson, of the City of Philadelphia, to John Britton, Jr., of the City of Philadelphia, gentleman, and James Dundas, of the City of Philadelphia, esquire,

- 26 September 1836, Philadelphia Deed Book S.H.F., No. 3, p. 552, City Archives of Philadelphia.
- Deed Poll: Thomas Truxtun, sheriff, to John Britton, Jr., of the County of Philadelphia, gentleman, and James H. Dundas, of the city of Philadelphia, esquire, for \$24,800, Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas Sheriff Deed Book G., p. 140, City Archives of Philadelphia.
- Deed: Recorded in G.S., No. 39, CAP.
- Deposition of Charles P. Heath, 8 April 1826, Burr vs. McEuen et al, Case Papers, National Archives and Records Administration.
- Deposition of Jane Burns, 8 April 1826 Burr vs. McEuen et al, Case Papers, National Archives and Records Administration.
- Deposition of John Britton, sworn 10 January 1826, Burr vs. McEuen et al, Case Papers, National Archives and Records Administration.
- Deposition of Joseph S. Keen, 10 January 1826, Burr vs. McEuen et al, Case Papers, National Archives and Records Administration.
- Deposition of Lawrence Harmstad, 8 April 1826, Burr vs. McEuen et al, Case Papers, National Archives and Records Administration.
- Deposition of Thomas Boyd, 10 January 1826, Burr vs. McEuen et al, Case Papers, National Archives and Records Administration.
- Diary of William Dunlap (1766 – 1839): The Memoirs of A Dramatist, Theatrical Manager, Painter, Critic, Novelist, and Historian.* New York: New York Historical Society, 1930.
- Diary of Mrs. William Thornton [Anna Marie Brodeau Thornton], 1800-1863. Manuscript Collections of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
- Durborow, Samuel. *History of the Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church.* Philadelphia: A.C. Bryson & Co., 1869.
- Eighth Annual Report of the Managers of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men. Philadelphia: Printed for the Board of Managers by John H. Culberson & Co., 1882.
- Eighteenth Annual Report of the Managers of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men. Philadelphia: Printed for the Board of Managers by American Printing House, 1892.
- "The Estate in Blockley in a/c with McEuen Hale & Davidson," ca. 1819, Burr vs. McEuen et al, Case Papers, Equity Records, Case # 3 April Sessions 1818, Records of the U.S. Circuit Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, Record Group 21, National Archives and Records Administration.
- Ezell, John Samuel. *Fortune's Merry Wheel: The Lottery in America.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960.
- Fifteenth Annual Report of the Managers of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men. Philadelphia: Printed for the Board of Managers by American Printing House, 1889.
- Fifth Annual Report of the Managers of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men. Philadelphia: Printed for the Board of Managers by Culberson & Bache, 1879.
- First Annual Report of the Managers of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men. Philadelphia: Printed for the Board of Managers by James B. Chandler's Steam Printing Establishment, 1875.
- "Flag Raising at the Episcopal Mission House." Philadelphia: *Evening Telegraph*, September 21, 1866.
- Fourteenth Annual Report of the Managers of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men. Philadelphia: Printed for the Board of Managers by American Printing House, 1888.
- Fourth Annual Report of the Managers of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men. Philadelphia: Printed for the Board of Managers by Culberson & Bache, 1878.

- Goddard, Burton L. *The Encyclopedia of Modern Christian Missions*. Camden, New Jersey: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1967.
- Gordon, George William. *A Lecture Before the Boston Young Men's Society on the Subject of Lotteries*. Boston: Temperance Press, Ford & Dambrell, 1833.
- Guardians' Bond for the children of "Samuel Blodget of London in the Kingdom of Great Britain Merchant," 3 December 1790, Probate, Estate Packets Old Series No. 5602, Rockingham Co., New Hampshire, Wills and Probate Records, 1643–1982. Courtesy Ancestry.com.
- Hafertepe, Kenneth. "Banking Houses in the United States: The First Generation 1781-1811" *Winterthur Portfolio*, Vol. 35, No.1. (Spring 2000), pp. 1-52.
- Hafertepe, Kenneth. "Blodget, Samuel, Jr.," *American National Biography Online*, Feb. 2000.
- Hains, Samuel. *Mantua and the Roads in its Vicinity, situated 3 miles from the old Court house of Philadelphia in Blockley, W. side of Schuylkill on lands of Richard Peters Esqr.* Philadelphia: ca. 1830. Historical Society of Pennsylvania.
- "Hamilton Village Lots." *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*. Philadelphia: May 3, 1814.
- Hein, David and Gardiner H. Shattack, Jr., *The Episcopalians, Denominations in America*, No. 11. Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2004.
- HABS No. PA-369: Judge Charles Smith House, 22 S. Queen Street, Lancaster, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Found in the Records of the Historic American Buildings Survey, the National Park Service, the Department of the Interior, the Library of Congress. <<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/master/pnp/habshaer/pa/pa0500/pa0528/data/pa0528data.pdf>> Accessed 18 July 2016.
- "In Real Estate Circles. New Workshops for Blind Men—Big Building Operations.," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. Philadelphia: 12 April 1890.
- "In West Philadelphia Happenings in the Pretty Suburb Across the Schuylkill." *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. Philadelphia: 4 February 1890.
- James, Marquis. *Biography of a Business, 1792 – 1942: Insurance Company of North America*. New York: Bobbs-Merill Co., 1942.
- "John Ord." Philadelphia Architects and Builders Database. <https://www.baltimorebuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display.cfm/26487> Accessed 5 May 2016.
- Johnson, Allen and Dumas Malone, ed., *Dictionary of American Biography*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937.
- Jordan, John Woolf. *Colonial Families of Philadelphia*, Volume 2. New York: Lewis Publishing Company, 1911.
- Kettell, George H. "End of a world: A history of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men from its beginning in 1874 until the bankruptcy proceedings in 1979." Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1990.
- "Ledger of Expenses of Samuel Blodget, Jr. [1806-1814]." William Thornton Papers (1741-1865), Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
- Letter: Benjamin Henry Latrobe to Thomas Jefferson, Wilmington, 26 January 1805, Found in Founders Online, National Archives. <<http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/99-01-02-1617>> Accessed on 18 July 2016.
- Letter, Benjamin Morgan to Charles Smith, Esq. Philadelphia: 24 April 1805. Collection 603: the Smith Family Papers (1757-1861), 19.0 linear feet, 14 boxes, 82 volumes, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.
- Letter, Benjamin Morgan to Charles Smith, Esq. Philadelphia: 8 July 1805. Collection 603: the Smith Family Papers (1757-1861), 19.0 linear feet, 14 boxes, 82 volumes, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

- Letter: Dr. Benjamin Rush to Rebecca “Becky” Blodget. Philadelphia: 1 July 1791. Collection 1017: Rush Family Papers (1748-1876), the Library Company of Philadelphia.
- Letter: Dr. Benjamin Rush to Rebecca “Becky” Smith OR BLODGET?. Philadelphia, May 1792. Collection 1017: Rush Family Papers (1748-1876), the Library Company of Philadelphia.
- Letter: Benjamin Stoddert to William Smith, Georgetown, 23 March 1801. Collection 603: the Smith Family Papers (1757-1861), 19.0 linear feet, 14 boxes, 82 volumes, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.
- Letter: Budd and Prior to George Washington, Philadelphia 31 October 1796. Found in Founders Early Access, <<http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/default.xqy?keys=FOEA-chron-1800-1807-01-27-3>> Accessed 18 July 2016.
- Letter: Commissioners of the District of Columbia to Blodget. Washington, D.C.: 5 Jan. 1793. DNA: RG 42, Records of the Commissioners for the District of Columbia, Letters Sent.
- Letter: Commissioners of the District of Columbia to George Washington. Georgetown, 23 June 1793. DNA: RG 42, Records of the Commissioners for the District of Columbia, Letters Sent.
- Letter: Commissioners of the District of Columbia to George Washington. Georgetown, 24 June 1793. DNA: RG 42, Records of the Commissioners for the District of Columbia, Letters Sent.
- Letter: David Stuart to George Washington. Hope Park, Fairfax County, Virginia: 10 December 1792. Found in Founders Early Access, <<http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/default.xqy?keys=FOEA-chron-1800-1807-01-27-3>> Accessed 18 July 2016.
- Letter: David Stuart to George Washington. Hope-Park, Virginia: 6 February 1794. Found in Founders Early Access, <<http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/default.xqy?keys=FOEA-chron-1800-1807-01-27-3>> Accessed 18 July 2016.
- Letter: George Washington to David Stuart. Philadelphia: 30 November 1792. Found in Founders Early Access, <<http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/default.xqy?keys=FOEA-chron-1800-1807-01-27-3>> Accessed 18 July 2016.
- Letter: George Washington to Thomas Johnson. Philadelphia, 23 January 1794. Found in Founders Early Access, <<http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/default.xqy?keys=FOEA-chron-1800-1807-01-27-3>> Accessed 18 July 2016.
- Letter: James Madison to Rebecca Blodget. New York: March 1809. Found in Founders Early Access, <<http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/default.xqy?keys=FOEA-chron-1800-1807-01-27-3>> Accessed 18 July 2016..
- Letter: John Adams to John Quincy Adams, Quincy, 7 January 1807. Found in Founders Early Access, <<http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/default.xqy?keys=FOEA-chron-1800-1807-01-27-3>> Accessed 18 July 2016.
- Letter: Rebecca Blodget to Aaron Burr, 17 June 1814, Papers of Aaron Burr, 1756–1836, New York Historical Society.
- Letter: Rebecca Blodget to Aaron Burr, 25 May 1817, Papers of Aaron Burr, 1756–1836, New York Historical Society.
- Letter: Rebecca Smith Blodget to Benjamin Rush. London: 3 June 1811, LCP MSS, p. 14. Collection 1017: Rush Family Papers (1748-1876), the Library Company of Philadelphia.
- Letter: Rebecca Blodget to Benjamin Rush. Huntingdon: 18 October 1811, LCP MSS, p.15. Collection 1017: Rush Family Papers (1748-1876), the Library Company of Philadelphia.

- Letter: Rebecca Blodget to James Madison, New York , ca. 11 March 1809, *The Papers of James Madison Digital Edition*, J. C. A. Stagg, editor [Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2010].
- Letter: Rebecca Smith Blodget to William Henry Rawle. [n.d.]. Collection 603: the Smith Family Papers (1757-1861), 19.0 linear feet, 14 boxes, 82 volumes, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.
- Letter, Samuel Blodget, Jr. to James S. Dobbis. Georgetown, 6 July 1801. Collection 603: the Smith Family Papers (1757-1861), 19.0 linear feet, 14 boxes, 82 volumes, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.
- Letter: Samuel Blodget, Jr. to Thomas Jefferson, Washington, D.C., 25 May 1807. Found in Founders Early Access, <<http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/default.xqy?keys=FOEA-chron-1800-1807-01-27-3>> Accessed 18 July 2016.
- Letter: Samuel Blodget, Jr. to Rev. Dr. William Smith, D.D. Boston: 23 May 1802. Collection 603: the Smith Family Papers (1757-1861), 19.0 linear feet, 14 boxes, 82 volumes, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.
- Letter: Samuel Blodget, Jr. to Mrs. William White. Boston, 4 June 1792. Collection 603: the Smith Family Papers (1757-1861), 19.0 linear feet, 14 boxes, 82 volumes, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.
- Letter: Thomas Boylston Adams to Abigail Adams. Philadelphia: May 1792. Found in the Adams Family Correspondence, Volume 9, the Massachusetts Historical Society.
- Letter, Thomas Johnson to George Washington. Georgetown: 6 February 1794. Found in Founders Early Access, <<http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/default.xqy?keys=FOEA-chron-1800-1807-01-27-3>> Accessed 18 July 2016.
- Letter: Judge Thomas Smith to Charles Smith, Lancaster, 28 July 1808, Philadelphia, William Smith Papers, University Archives, University of Pennsylvania.
- Letter: William Moore Smith to Rebecca Blodget, 12 April 1814, Correspondence and General Papers, Yeates Papers, Box 9, folder 5, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.
- Letter: William Smith to Charles Smith, Esq. 11 August 1812. William Smith Papers, University Archives, University of Pennsylvania.
- Letter: William Smith, to John Adams, Falls of the Schuylkill, 17 January 1800. . Collection 603: the Smith Family Papers (1757-1861), 19.0 linear feet, 14 boxes, 82 volumes, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.
- Letter: William Thornton to James Madison. 17 December 1808. Founders Online, National Archives and Records Administration. <<http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Madison/99-01-02-3057>> Accessed on 5 May 2016.
- Letter: Mrs. Williamina Cadwalader to Mrs. Ridgley. Philadelphia 20 June 1792. Horace Wemyss Smith. *Life and Correspondence of the Rev. William Smith, D.D.*, Volume 1. (Philadelphia: Ferguson & Co., 1880), p. 350.
- Letters of Administration Bond, 21 December 1815, Administration No. 315 of 1815, Philadelphia Register of Wills.
- “Limitations of the Blind; Almost Removed By Education at the New-York Institute for the Blind...,” New York Times. New York: 13 May 1887.
- "Local Affairs, Religious News," *Public Ledger*. Philadelphia: June 8, 1872.
- “Lots in Hamilton Village.” *Poulson’s American Daily Advertiser*. Philadelphia: April 13, 1814.
- “Mantua Village.” *Poulson’s American Daily Advertiser*. Philadelphia: March 6, 1809.

- Miller, Lillian B., ed., *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family*, v. 2, *Charles Willson Peale: The Artist as Museum Keeper, 1791–1810*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982.
- "The Mission House in Philadelphia," *The Spirit of Missions, Edited for the Board of Missions of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America*, Volume 32. Burlington, New Jersey: JL Powell, 1867.
- "Mrs. Rebecca Blodget, March 10, 1837." Record of Burials, Episcopal Church of the Epiphany, Philadelphia.
- Ninth Annual Report of the Managers of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men. Philadelphia: Printed for the Board of Managers by John H. Culberson & Co, 1882.
- Nordstrom, Brian H. *The History of the Education of the Blind and the Deaf*. Prescott, Arizona: Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, 1986.
- Öhman, Martin. "The Statistical Turn in Early American Political Economy: Mathew Carey and the Authority of Numbers," *Early American Studies* Vol. 11, 2013, pp. 486–515.
- Ord, John. "Design for the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men." *American Architect and Building News*, No. 754. (Philadelphia: June 1890).
- Pamphlet: A Message from the Dark. Pennsylvania Working Home For Blind Men. On file at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania
- Perry, William Stevens. *Churchman's Year Book, With Kalender for the Year of Grace 1871*. Hartford: Church Press Company, 1871.
- Philadelphia County Tax, Blockley Township lists, 1795–1801, City Archives of Philadelphia *Pennsylvania Marriage Records*. Harrisburg, PA: Pennsylvania Archives Printed Series, 1876. Series 2, Series 6.
- "Positive Sale of Valuable Building Lots In West Philadelphia." *North American and Daily Advertiser*, Philadelphia: May 27, 1840.
- Robinson, John. *Philadelphia Directory for 1802*. Philadelphia: William W. Woodward, 1802.
- Second Annual Report of the Managers of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men. Philadelphia: Printed for the Board of Managers by Grant, Faires & Rodgers, 1876.
- Seventeenth Annual Report of the Managers of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men. Philadelphia: Printed for the Board of Managers by American Printing House, 1891.
- Seventh Annual Report of the Managers of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men. Philadelphia: Printed for the Board of Managers by John H. Culberson & Co., 1881.
- Seventh Census of the United States, 1850; (National Archives Microfilm Publication M432, 1009 rolls); Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29; National Archives, Washington, D.C.
- Sixteenth Annual Report of the Managers of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men. Philadelphia: Printed for the Board of Managers by American Printing House, 1890.
- Sixth Annual Report of the Managers of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men. Philadelphia: Printed for the Board of Managers by John H. Culberson & Co., 1880.
- Smith, Horace Wemyss. *Life and Correspondence of the Rev. William Smith, D.D.* Philadelphia: Ferguson Bros. & Co., 1880.
- The Spirit of Missions, Edited for the Board of Missions of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America*, Volume 33. Burlington, New Jersey: JL Powell, 1868.
- The Spirit of Missions, Edited for the Board of Missions of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America*, Volume 37. Burlington, New Jersey: JL Powell, 1872.
- The Spirit of Missions, Edited for the Board of Missions of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America*, Volume 40. Burlington, New Jersey: JL Powell, 1875.
- Stafford, Cornelius William *Philadelphia Directory for 1800*. Philadelphia: William W. Woodward, 1800.

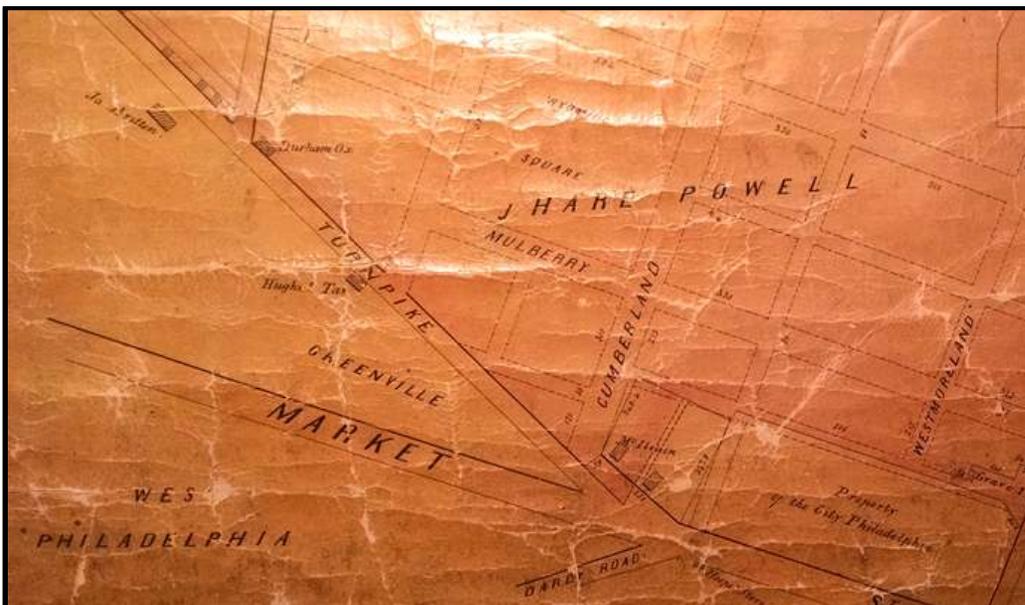
- Statistical Account of the Schuylkill Permanent Bridge, Commenced September 5th 1801, Opened January 1st 1805.* Philadelphia; Jane Aitken, 1807.
- Supplee, Nathan. *Plan of Greenville Situate on the west side of the River Schuylkill in the Borough of West Philadelphia, about 3/4 of a mile from Market St. Bridge,* Philadelphia: 1839, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.
- Survey No. 3746 for Julia A. Britton, October 7, 1841, Franklin Fire Insurance Company of Philadelphia Records, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.
- “Taopi and his Friends, or the Indians' Wrongs and Rights,” *The Spirit of Missions, Edited for the Board of Missions of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America*, Volume 34. Burlington, New Jersey: JL Powell, 1869.
- Tenth Annual Report of the Managers of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men. Philadelphia: Printed for the Board of Managers by Stager & Maxwell, 1884.
- Third Annual Report of the Managers of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men. Philadelphia: Printed for the Board of Managers by Culberson & Bache, 1877.
- Thirteenth Annual Report of the Managers of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men. Philadelphia: Printed for the Board of Managers by American Printing House, 1887.
- “To Be Sold, In the Village of Hamilton.” *Poulson’s American Daily Advertiser*. Philadelphia: March 24, 1814.
- “Town and City Clerks of Massachusetts.” *Massachusetts Vital and Town Records*. Holbrook Research Institute, Provo, UT.
- Twelves, J. Wesley. *A History of the Diocese of the Pennsylvania of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the U.S.A., 1784–1968.* Philadelphia: Diocese of Pennsylvania, 1969.
- Twentieth Annual Report of the Managers of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men. Philadelphia: Printed for the Board of Managers by American Printing House, 1893.
- The Twentieth Century Bench and Bar of Pennsylvania*, Vol. 2. Chicago: H.C. Cooper, Jr. Bro. & Co., 1903.
- United States Direct Tax of 1798: Tax Lists for the State of Pennsylvania.* M372, microfilm, 24 rolls. Records of the Internal Revenue Service, 1791-2006, Record Group 58. National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.
- “Untitled Article.” *Alexandria Advertiser and Commercial Intelligencer*. Alexandria, Virginia: 10 Oct. 1801.
- “Untitled Article.” *Baltimore Patriot & Evening Advertiser*. Baltimore: 15 April 1814.
- “Untitled Article.” *Colombian Centinal*. Boston, Massachusetts: 3 January 1787.
- “Untitled Article.” *Essex Register*. Salem, Massachusetts: 27 April 1814.
- “Untitled Article.” *The Evening Telegraph*. Philadelphia: September 21, 1866.
- “Untitled Article.” *The Evening Telegraph*. Philadelphia: February 12, 1870.
- “Untitled Article.” *Federal Gazette*. Philadelphia: 12 May 1792.
- “Untitled Article.” *New England Palladium*. Boston: 22 April 1814.
- Walsh, John Joseph. *Early Banks in District of Columbia, 1792–1818* Washington, 1940.
- Willoughby, Edith. *Overbrook School for the Blind*. Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2007.

Note: This nomination was prepared by Oscar Beisert, Architectural Historian and Historic Preservationist, for the Powelton Village Civic Association. J.M. Duffin, Archivist and Historian, was a significant contributor to the research and writing. Dr. Aaron Wunsch served as an advisor on the physical structure of Greenville. Christopher Mote and Kelly Wiles provided invaluable input as editors.

Appendix A: Additional Information on the Post-Blodgett Ownership



1843 Philadelphia County. By Charles Ellet, Jr. Courtesy the Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network.



Map of Mantua, West Philadelphia, 1837. Courtesy Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

*Greenville; The Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church; and
Buildings of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men
3514-30 Lancaster Avenue, West Philadelphia
Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, Summer 2016 – Page 134*

I wish an instrument to be drawn, which, in case of my death before I have conveyed a child's portion of my property & estates, to my daughter Julia Ann Allen Britton, shall enable my executor, Thomas Smith Blodgett, & John Britton, to do her ample justice, & to pledge the whole of the property & estates I now, or hereafter may possess, to the said executor, without contest or claim from any of my other heirs till such justice be rendered the said Julia Ann Allen Britton

Rebecca Blodgett

Greeneville
September 28th 1817

Will of Rebecca “Becky” Smith Blodgett. Courtesy University of North Carolina.

Julia Ann Allen Blodgett Britton (1798–1877)

Owner of Greenville, 1841–1852

After the death of her Rebecca Smith Blodgett, Julia Anne Allen Blodgett Britton (JAABB) inherited all of the estate. On September 27, 1841, her son, John Blodgett Britton (JBB), purchased fourteen lots on plan of “Greenville Estate,” including unimproved Lot Nos. 21, 25, 26, 49, 52, 57, 61, 62, 76, 84, 93, 94, as well as Lot Nos. 25 and 26, which included Greenville. The seller was Benjamin Orne, a merchant of Philadelphia. JBB paid \$8,000.²³⁰ Three days later, on September 30, 1841, JBB then sold Lot Nos. 25 and 26, including Greenville, for \$7,000 to his mother, JAABB.

“Mansion House and Improvements” marked Lots 25 & 26 on the Greenville Estate plan, Containing together in front on the Lancaster Turnpike road 160ft...²³¹

Born on 1798, JAABB lived most of her life in Philadelphia—the second half being primarily in Blockley and Mantua, West Philadelphia. The daughter of Samuel Blodgett,

²³⁰ Deed: Recorded in G.S., No. 39,

²³¹ **Error! Main Document Only.** Deed: John Blodgett Britton, city, gentleman, to Julia A. Britton, late of city now of Mantua, widow, for lots 25 & 26, 30 September 1841, for \$7,000, Philadelphia Deed Book G.S., No.31, p. 527, CAP.

*Greenville; The Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church; and
Buildings of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men
3514-30 Lancaster Avenue, West Philadelphia*

Jr. and Rebecca Smith Blodget, JAABB no doubt had a tumultuous childhood, being raised by her mother when not in the care of relatives.

All evidence points to the fact that JAABB lived in Greenville of the Greenville Estate. During the 1840s, the lots of the subdivision appear to have been liquidated. By 1850, JAABB owns \$30,000 in real estate. Living with her at the time were the following single children: Harriett F., George, Isabella P., Mary, and William Britton. Elizabeth R. Britton was then married to Stephen R. Bowen with who she had John and William Bowen. William Britton was then working as a clerk, while Stephen Bowen was recorded as a “gentleman.”²³²



Daguerreotype of Julia Ann Allen Blodget Britton (presumptive). Courtesy Amber Hathaway.

²³² Seventh Census of the United States, 1850; (National Archives Microfilm Publication M432, 1009 rolls); Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29; National Archives, Washington, D.C.



Daguerreotype of Ellen Britton Moore (by descent to the current owner). Courtesy Amber Hathaway.



William and James Bowen. Courtesy Amber Hathaway.



1862 Philadelphia Atlas. By Samuel L. Smedley. Courtesy the Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network.

*Greenville; The Mission House of the Protestant Episcopal Church; and
Buildings of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men
3514-30 Lancaster Avenue, West Philadelphia
Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, Summer 2016 – Page 138*