

# 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: **706 Sansom Street**

Postal code: **19104**

Councilmanic District: **1**

#### 2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

Historic Name: **Publishing House of Henry C. Lea, Co.**

Common Name: **706-08 Sansom Street**

#### 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: **Jewelry Industry**

#### 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

**1866 to 1922**

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration:

**1865-1866**

Architect, engineer, and/or designer:

**Collins & Autenrieth**

Builder, contractor, and/or artisan:

**Yarnall & Cooper**

Original owner:

**Henry C. Lea**

Other significant persons:

**NA**

**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
- X (c) **Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style; or,**  
(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,
- X (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: THE PRESERVATION ALLIANCE FOR GREATER PHILADELPHIA**

Authors: Oscar Beisert, Architectural Historian & Aaron Wunsch, Ph.D., Architectural Historian

Email: **psteinke@preservationalliance.com**

Date: **18 August 2016.**

Street Address: **1608 Walnut Street, Suite 804**

Telephone: **215-546-1146**

City, State, and Postal Code: **Philadelphia, PA 19103**

Nominators are not the property owners.

**PHC USE ONLY**

Date of Receipt: 18 August 2016

☒ Correct-Complete ☐ Incorrect-Incomplete

Date: 9-6-2016

Date of Notice Issuance: 9-6-2016

Property Owner at Time of Notice

Name: RP Sansom Street LLC

Address: 717 Sansom St

City: Philadelphia State: PA Postal Code: 19106

Date(s) Reviewed by the Committee on Historic Designation: 10-21-2016

Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission: 11-10-2016

Date of Final Action: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Designated

☐ Rejected

4/11/13

**NOMINATION FOR THE  
PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**



“Busy Sansom Street” by Frank H. Taylor, 1914. Courtesy the Library Company of Philadelphia.

**Publishing House of Henry C. Lea & Co.  
Later the Publishing House of Lea & Febiger  
706-08 Sansom Street  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.**

*Publishing House of Henry C. Lea & Co., 706-08 Sansom Street, Philadelphia  
Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, Fall 2016 – Page 1*

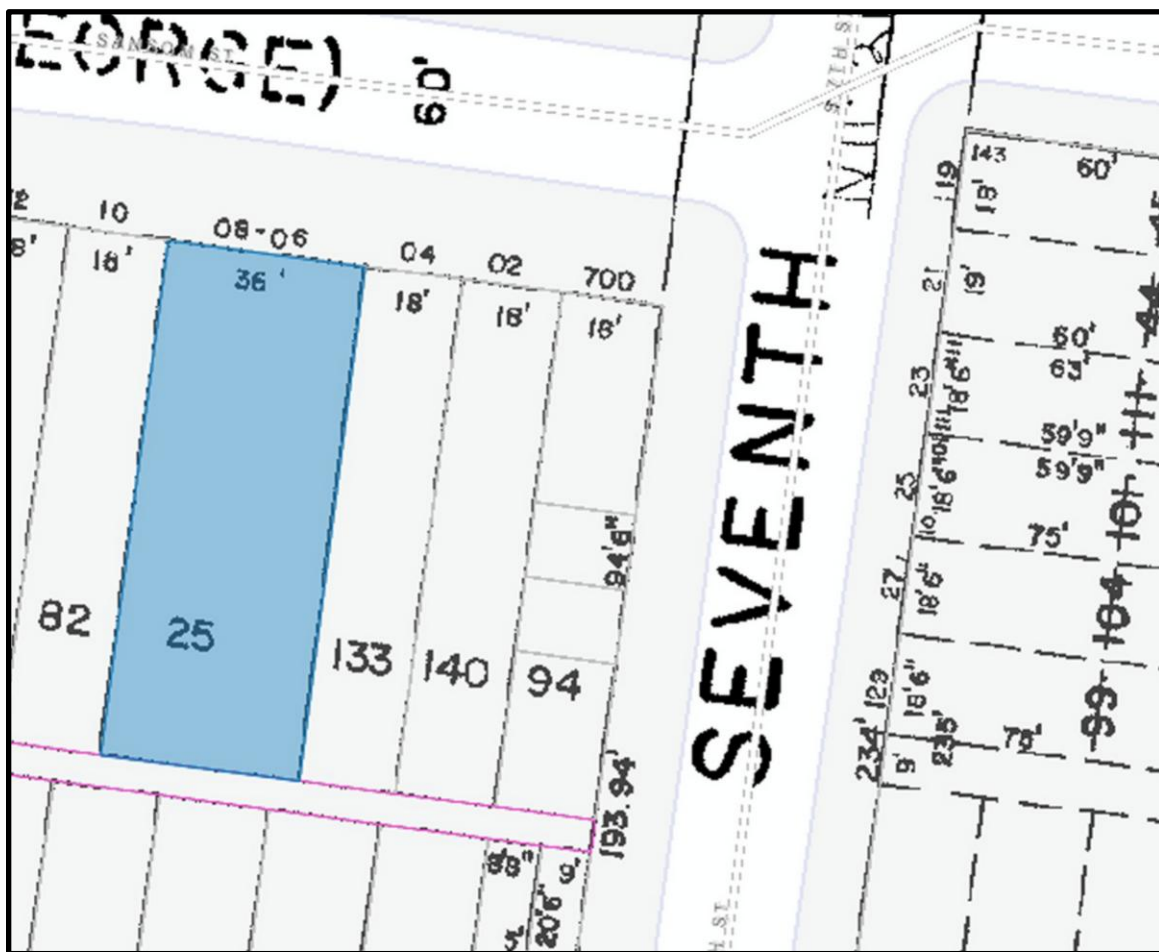
## 5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary description of the 706-08 Sansom Street is as follows:

ALL THOSE TWO CERTAIN CONTIGUOUS lots or pieces of ground with the buildings and improvements thereon erected, SITUATE on the South side of Sansom St. at the distance of 54 feet Westward from the West side of Seventh Street.

CONTAINING in front or breadth on the said Sansom Street 36 feet and extending of that width in length or depth Southward between parallel lines at right angles to the said Sansom Street 94 feet 6 inches to a certain 6 feet wide alley. BEING known as 706-708 Sansom Street

Department of Records Parcel No. 001S17-0025. OPA Account No. 871008200



The parcel subject to the proposed designation is highlighted in blue.. Courtesy City of Philadelphia.





Looking south. Courtesy Rachel Hildebrandt.

## 6. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The Publishing House of Henry C. Lea & Co. at 706-08 Sansom Street stands on the south side of the block between Seventh and Eighth Streets within Jewelers' Row in Center City Philadelphia. It is a contributing resource within the East Center City Commercial Historic District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1984. The structure occupies the full width and much of the depth of a double lot, standing three stories with a rear wing. Its primary, north-facing elevation fronts on Sansom Street, with a secondary south façade facing onto a narrow footway. The east and west elevations are party walls largely shared by adjacent structures.

*Publishing House of Henry C. Lea & Co., 706-08 Sansom Street, Philadelphia  
Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, Fall 2016 – Page 3*

The building's façade is the earliest commercial representation on the block. The three-story commercial building is of load-bearing, brick masonry construction featuring a façade of cast-iron piers at the first floor and red pressed brick on the second and third floors. The first floor includes a double shop front divided by seven cast-iron piers, which are demarcated by recessed panels, giving the raised, vertical interstices the appearance of pilasters. Of the seven piers on first floor, the central one is wider than the others; each having recessed panels, astrigals, and corniced capitals. The piers delineate modern plate glass shop windows. Above the piers is an austere entablature that appears to be a replacement.

The upper stories are defined by a façade of red pressed brick laid in a running bond, featuring four bays per floor. The second story bays are simple, as the brick piers delineate four large windows. The apertures are capped with simple entablatures that may or may not be original. Third story windows have raised brick architraves and segmental headers divided by keystones. The latter are of brownstone, as are the sills. The entablature is divided into three horizontal zones: a sparse, pressed-tin cornice and two rows of projecting bricks that read as simplified modillions or exaggerated dentils. The bottommost row sits within the recessed wall panels and is broken by the intervening "pilasters."



Looking south. Courtesy Aaron Wunsch.





Looking southeast. Courtesy Rachel Hildebrandt.





Looking south. Courtesy Aaron Wunsch.



Looking southwest. Courtesy Aaron Wunsch.



Looking west. Courtesy Rachel Hildebrandt.



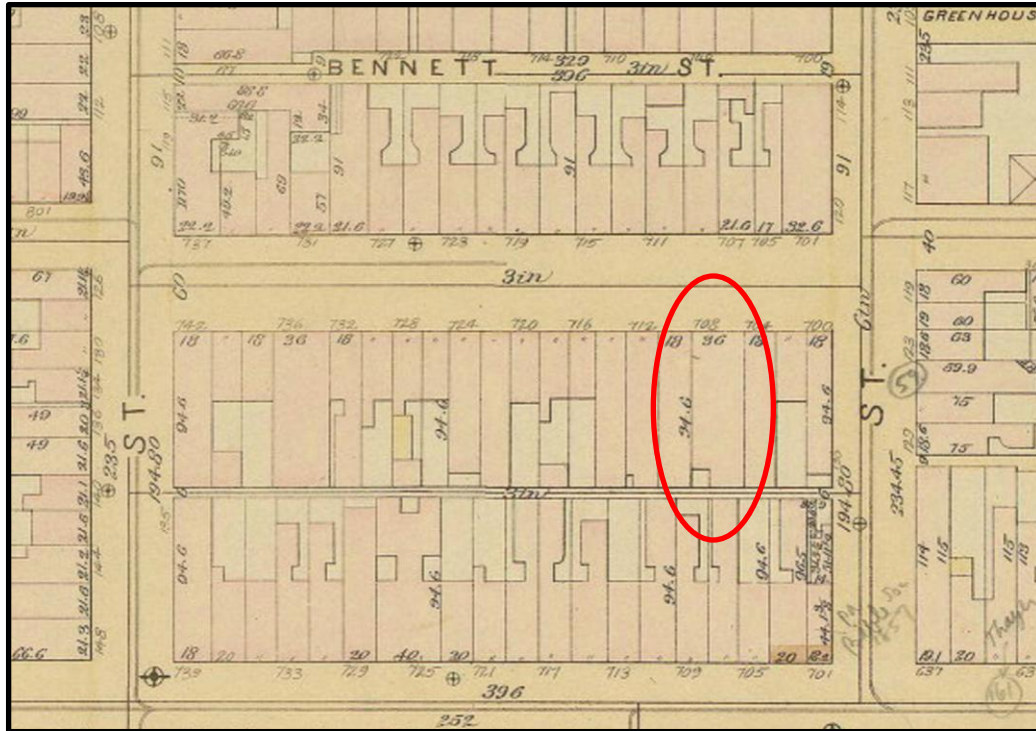
Sansom Row, Seventh and Sansom Streets, Philadelphia. Courtesy the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

## **7. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Known as the Printing House of Henry C. Lea & Co., the commercial building at 706-08 Sansom Street is a significant resource that merits designation by the Philadelphia Historical Commission and inclusion on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Located within the distinctive block known today as Jewelers' Row, 706-08 Sansom Street satisfies the following Criteria for Designation:

- 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;
- c) Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style;
- 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;
- 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; *and*
- j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social, or historical heritage of the community.



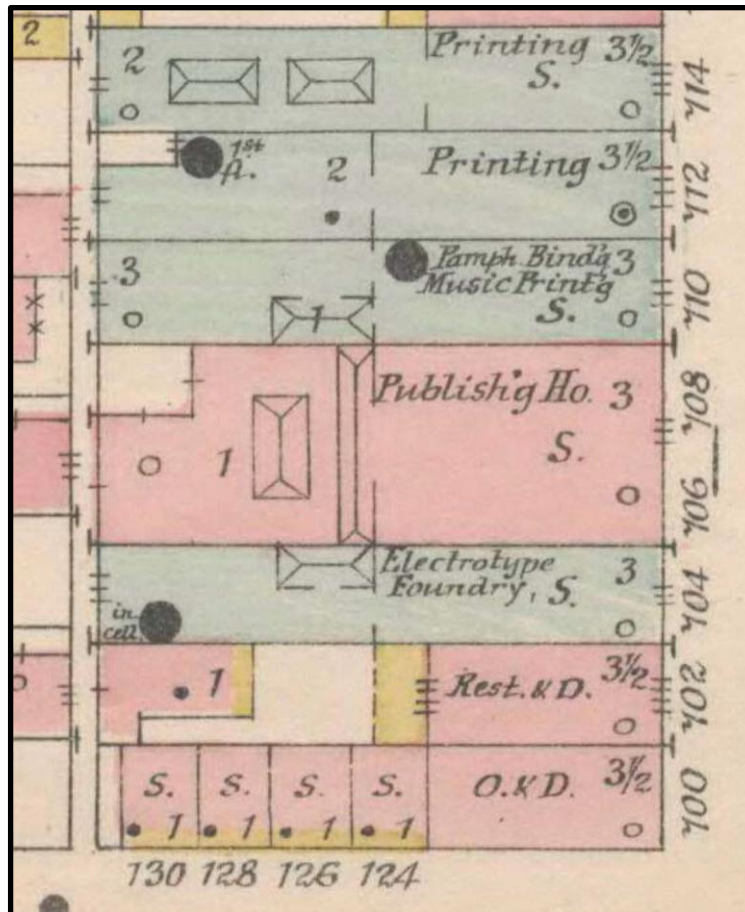


Atlas of the City of Philadelphia, 1885. Note: the block is still partly residential; however, the subject buildings have already been altered and/or reconstructed for commercial use.  
 Courtesy Philadelphia GeoHistory Network.

The Publishing House of Henry C. Lea & Co. at 706-08 Sansom Street is perhaps the earliest commercial building on the block. Under the leadership of Henry C. Lea (1825-1909), the firm's principal officer, author, historian, and civic leader, the building was constructed between 1865 and 1866 by one of the oldest publishing houses in Philadelphia. Being one of many commercial buildings developed by Lea in the second half of the nineteenth century, this building served his family firm within the larger the publishing and printing industry that was established in the neighborhood. The building at 706-08 Sansom Street was designed to serve as a publishing house for the Lea family business and it was here that many important works were produced.

The architectural firm of Collins & Autenrieth designed the Publishing House in 1865, adhering to the fashion and style of the time for commercial buildings. The Publishing House was one of the earliest of several commercial properties that were commissioned and owned by the family in a mercantile district arrayed along Arch, Chestnut, and Market Streets. Many of these buildings were designed by Collins & Autenrieth. The patronage of this firm produced a variety of significant commercial, institutional, and residential commissions across the city, most of which are unfortunately no longer extant.





Hexamer Insurance Maps of the City of Philadelphia, 1887, Plate 30.  
Courtesy the Free Library of Philadelphia.

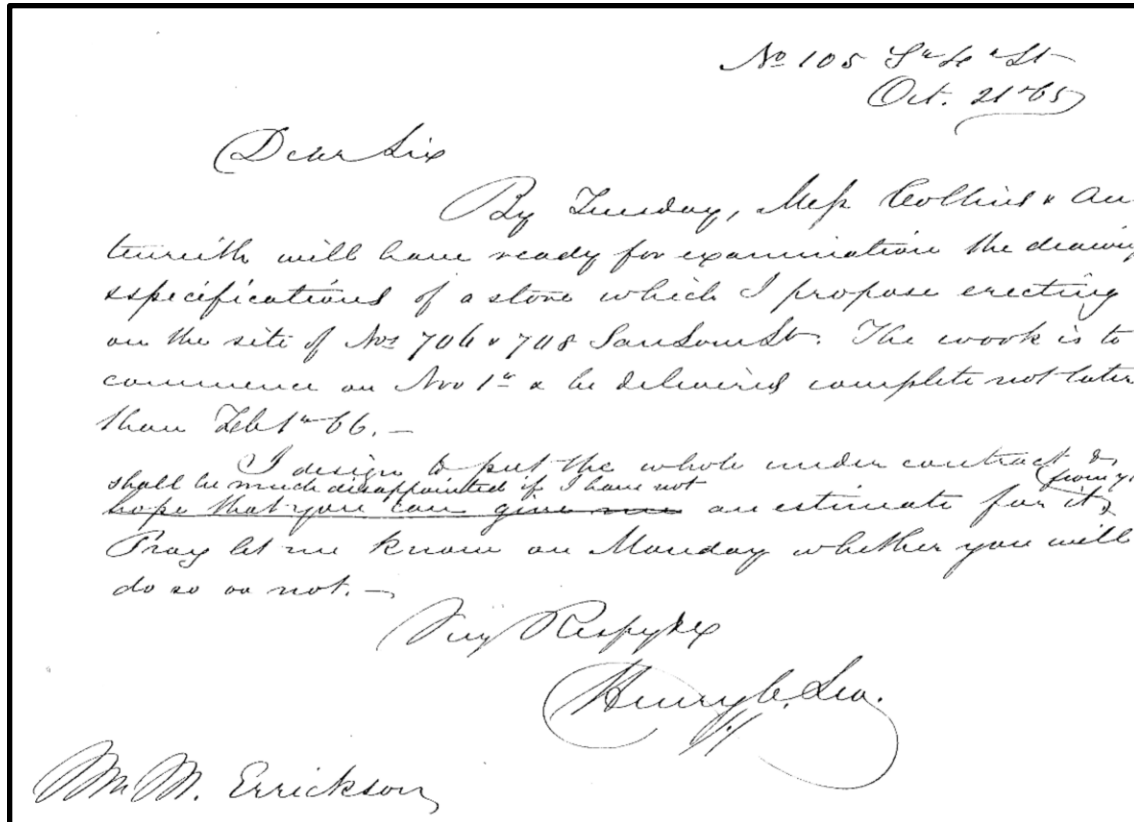
### Historic Context: Construction History of 706-08 Sansom Street

After the dissolution of Lea & Blanchard on September 15, 1865, Henry C. Lea went immediately to work to plan for the construction of a new building in the 700 Block of Sansom Street, where Mr. Forney had recently completed his office building for *The Press*. The process of purchasing the parcel was tedious because it required an Orphans' Court order. Henry C. Lea wrote directly to the tenant in 708 Sansom Street, John Crump:

I make these suggestions not only because I am sincerely desirous that you should be exposed to as little trouble as possible, but because if you could without inconvenience give me possession of No. 708 before Nov. 1<sup>st</sup>, I find that I can probably save some time in taking it down, excavating &c.— I would not suggest any anticipation of the time agreed upon accept it should chance to be entirely convenient to you.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Henry C. Lea to John Crump, 105 S. 4<sup>th</sup> Street, 11 October 1865, Henry Charles Lea Collection, Athenaeum of Philadelphia (hereafter Lea Collection). John Crump, builder, is listed as residing 708 Sansom Street, Philadelphia. *Publishing House of Henry C. Lea & Co., 706-08 Sansom Street, Philadelphia*  
*Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, Fall 2016 – Page 11*

Either Lea had counted Crump's acceptance or it had already happened by the time plans were underway by October 21, 1865. The architectural firm of Collins & Autenrieth were engaged to complete "specifications of a store" at "706 & 708 Sansom St." that month.<sup>2</sup>



No 105 S 4th St  
Oct. 21 1865

Dear Sir

By Tuesday, Messrs Collins & Autenrieth will have ready for examination the drawing & specifications of a store which I propose erecting on the site of Nos 706 & 708 Sansom St. The work is to commence on Nov 1<sup>st</sup> & be delivered complete not later than Feb 1<sup>st</sup> 66. -

I design to put the whole under contract & should be much disappointed if I have not hope that you can give me an estimate for it. Pray let me know on Monday whether you will do so or not. -

Very Respyc  
Henry C. Lea.

M. M. Erickson

Letter: Henry C. Lea to M. Erickson. 105 S. 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Philadelphia: 21 October 1865. Courtesy of the Athenæum of Philadelphia.

Plans were scheduled to be on Lea's desk by the morning of October 24, 1865. He wrote again to John Crump at 708 Sansom Street, but this time inquired as to his interest in the bidding the construction job, after the demolition of his own residence.<sup>3</sup> However, it appears that on the same day he also solicited a bid from Messrs. Yarnall & Cooper of 1635 Barker Street.<sup>4</sup> Yarnall & Cooper picked up a "set of tracing" on October 25, 1865 from Collins & Autenrieth, which allowed them to start their estimate. The final specifications were to be complete the following evening. Yarnall & Cooper had their doubts about Lea's schedule:

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Sansom Street with offices at 211 & 213 Lodge Street (*McElroy's Philadelphia City Directory for 1865* [Philadelphia: A. McElroy, 1865]).

<sup>2</sup> Henry C. Lea to M. Erickson. 105 S. 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Philadelphia: 21 October 1865, Lea Collection-.

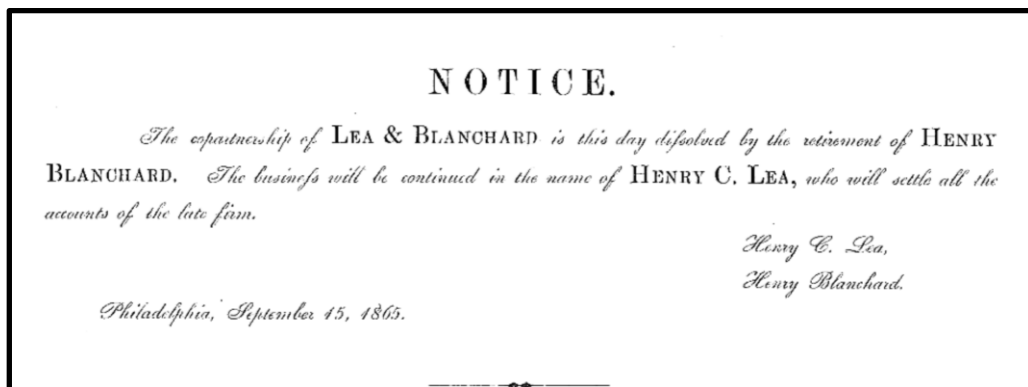
<sup>3</sup> Henry C. Lea to John Crump. 105 S. 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Philadelphia: 23 October 1865, Lea Collection.

<sup>4</sup> Henry C. Lea to Mssrs. Yarnall & Cooper. 105 S. 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Philadelphia: 23 October 1865, Lea Collection.

The probability of making a satisfactory estimate within the coming few days, the accomplishment appears doubtful. – We could carry on the work as rapidly as any builders in the city, but are careful in making our estimates, and it is difficult to disengage ourselves from pressing duties for sufficient time to give this a thorough sifting and make out the calculations. We understand you wish the building completed within three months, which may prove impracticable, as the weather may render it impossible.

The fluctuations that may occur owing to delays occasioned by improper weather, render a contract very much of a lottery.

We cannot contract to finish the building during winter, in a given time. Building that were not under roof when hard freezing commenced last-winter, had to remain stationary at least two months; but, we think this interruption did not occur until after the middle of December. If it is worth while for us to proceed with our estimate entertaining these views, we will do so, endeavoring to have it ready early next-week.<sup>5</sup>



Notice of the Dissolution of Lea & Blanchard, published on September 15, 1865.  
Courtesy the Athenæum of Philadelphia.

On October 26, 1865, Lea wrote to Yarnall & Cooper, letting them know that there were two other bids in the running, but that he hoped for their bids by “early next week” if not sooner.<sup>6</sup> Lea went with Yarnall & Cooper. Crump responded on October 28, 1865, indicating that he was interested and could construct the building by February 1866 for “10 per cent on the Cost—”. Crump also noted the following:

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<sup>5</sup> Yarnall & Cooper to Henry C. Lea. Philadelphia: 25 October 1865, Lea Collection.

<sup>6</sup> Henry C. Lea to Mssrs. Yarnall & Cooper. 105 S. 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Philadelphia: 26 October 1865, Lea Collection.

I believe I am the only person having a full force of all the different branches at work & under my control so as to do a quick job— I shall be pleased to do it on the above terms.<sup>7</sup>

Yarnall & Cooper wrote Lea on October 31, 1865, indicating that the cost based on Collins & Autenrieth's specifications would be \$16,906.71. A caveat was added to the bid, clarifying that if the plans or specifications "varied...to meet the requirements of the building law, the additional cost of any will be appended."<sup>8</sup> Another bid landed on Lea's desk the first of November from Michael Erickson of 1322 Pine Street, also a building contractor:

I propose to erect an complete store on Sansom Street as Described in plans by Messrs. Collins & Autenrieth for the sum of \$20,000 including the Old Materials now on the premises....<sup>9</sup>

On November 1, 1865, Henry C. Lea rejected John Crump's bid via letter, specifying that "you could not make specific proposal" and notifying him that "...concluded on arrangement with Messrs. Yarnall & Cooper, who go to work at once..."<sup>10</sup> Lea also rejected Erickson, letting him know that the bid had been higher than that of the selectee—Yarnall & Cooper.

On November 11, 1865 Henry C. Lea completed the purchase of 706-08 Sansom Street from the estate of William Young Birch.<sup>11</sup> The price of the two houses "clear" was \$12,000. Taxes, water rent, and interest added \$74.35 to the purchase price.

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<sup>7</sup> John Crump to Henry C. Lea, Philadelphia: 28 October 1865, Lea Collection.

<sup>8</sup> Yarnall & Cooper to Henry C. Lea, Philadelphia: 31 October 1865, Lea Collection.

<sup>9</sup> Michael Erickson to Henry C. Lea & Co., Philadelphia: 1 November 1865, Lea Collection.

<sup>10</sup> Henry C. Lea to John Crump 105 S. 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Philadelphia: 1 November 1865, Lea Collection.

<sup>11</sup> Deed Tripartite: Francis McMurtrie, trustee under the will of William Young Birch, of the first part, Francis McMurtrie, administrator of the will annexed of William Young Birch, of the second part, to Henry C. Lea, of the city of Philadelphia, 11 November 1865, Philadelphia Deed L.R.B., No. 127, p. 544, Philadelphia City Archives (CAP).

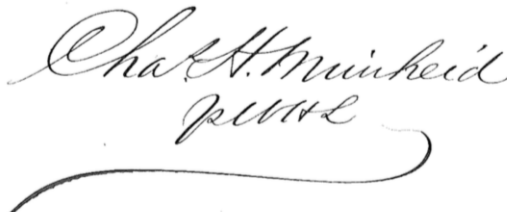


Philad<sup>a</sup> November 11<sup>th</sup> 1865.

Statement for Henry C. Lea Esq  
 relative to purchase of premises No. 706 & 708.  
 Sansom Street, from Francis McMartin Trustee  
 made as of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Inst.

|   |               |
|---|---------------|
| Price of 2 houses clear                               | \$12,000.00 ✓ |
| Taxes on 2 houses for 1865. \$206.30 - 1 mo. 27 days  | \$32.59 +     |
| Water Rent " " \$10 - " "                             | .76 +         |
| Int on \$12,000 - since 3 <sup>rd</sup> Inst - 8 days | 16.00 ✓       |
|   | 49.35         |
|   | \$12,049.35   |
| <br>Amount agreed to be paid to Mr Young              | 25.00         |
|   | \$12,074.35   |

E & O. C.

  
 Chas. H. Minkid  
 J. W. L.

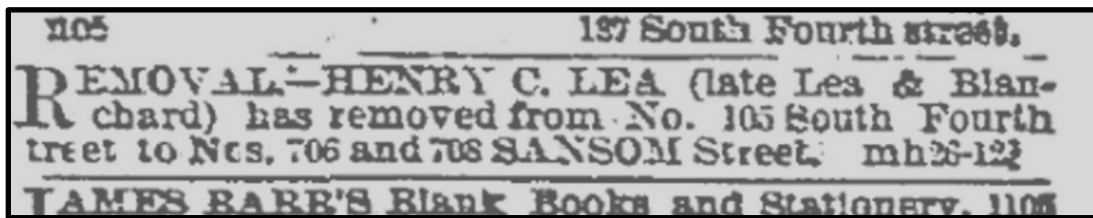
Agreement of Sale for "706 & 708 Sansom Street" dated November 11, 1865.  
 Courtesy the Athenæum of Philadelphia.

Construction likely began in mid-November with the demolition of the two Federal style houses. The *Philadelphia Press* announced that Henry C. Lea & Co. were "tearing down old buildings" at 706 and 708 Sansom Street on November 18, 1865.

...Sansom Street, between Seventh and Eighth streets, where it is one of the widest streets in the city, for the purpose of giving place to the erection of a large new building, designed for the great publishing house of Mr. H.S. Lea, large of the firm of Lea & Blanchard. The Building is to be eighty feet in depth, thirty-six feet front, iron posts and pressed bricks.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> "Forney's Press Building and Sansom street." *The Philadelphia Press*. 18 November 1865. The *Daily Evening Bulletin* had a very account announcing the construction of the building (*Daily Evening Bulletin*, November 4, 1865).

The new building was constructed by contractors, “Messrs. Yarnall & Cooper,” and took a relatively short time to complete.<sup>13</sup> An announcement in the Philadelphia papers indicates that construction of the new building was complete by March 1866.<sup>14</sup>



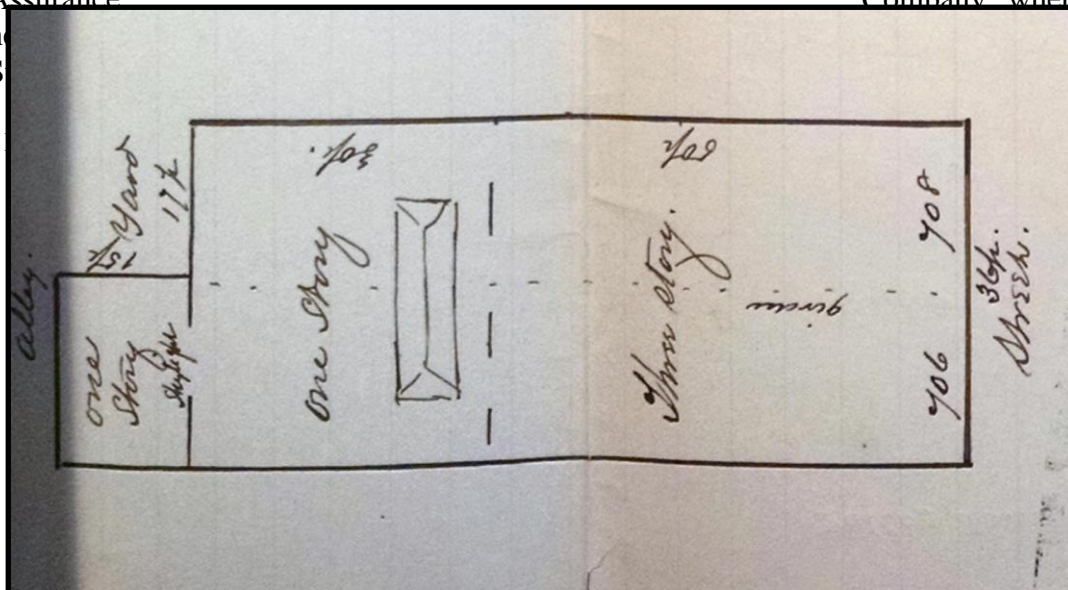
Advertisement of the  
from to 706-08  
in the *Daily Evening*  
Courtesy Proquest

Removal of Henry C. Lea  
Sansom Street. Published  
*Bulletin* in March 1866.  
Historical Newspapers.

Henry C. Lea  
continued insuring  
Assurance

appears to have  
with the Mutual  
Company when the

no  
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som  
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of

<sup>13</sup> “Tearing Down and Building Up,” *Daily Evening Bulletin*, 4 November 1865.

<sup>14</sup> Advertisement. *Daily Evening Bulletin*. 28 March 1866.

<sup>15</sup> Mutual Insurance Policy, HSP.

Survey of the Property situated on the south side of  
 Sansom Street 7<sup>th</sup> St. Nos 706 + 708.  
 Being a three story brick building as per plan.  
 First Story. Front Elevation. Banded & moulded pilas-  
 =ters, cornice, clap base. Four sets of 2 1/2' folding sash doors  
 each with lights & flap 17' 1/2' 3/8'. two light transoms each.  
 Two flat stone windows each with 4 lights & flap 2 1/2' 1/4'.  
 double hung, two light transom sash. wire guards. A  
 Cased fire escape extending depth of building in centre. three  
 iron posts. Placed beyond bull head on windows. one  
 slate mantle. fire place. Brick fire proof iron doors.  
 Stucco cornice. Mosaic Elevator extending from cellar to  
 third story. with platform etc. Continued rail stairs to the  
 second story. 3/4' long. ash steps. turned balustrade.  
 walnut rail newel. circular steps at bottom. railing  
 both sides. Straight stairs to cellar under. yellow pine  
 steps. half pace. Plain railing one side. Communicating  
 opening into 710 with sliding iron lined doors. About  
 30' of this story only one story high. and about 4 1/2' less  
 in height. six light sash in this wall flap 8' 1/2'.  
 iron bars. sash door (double) to yard each with 4 lights  
 & flap 13 1/2' x 28'. crop lined shutters. Doors and windows  
 finished with Pilasters & Wans. Skylight about 8' x  
 25' and 8' high in roof. Casing plastered. sides planed  
 ground boards. eight light sash in ditto flap 12' 1/2' 18'.  
 hung on pivots with rod. iron bars. Cased fire escape extend-  
 =ing depth of one story part in centre. iron posts.  
 Cellar. Brick. four sets of 2 1/2' folding sash doors

Excerpt from the Mutual Assurance survey for 706-08 Sansom Street.  
 Courtesy the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

The final product was designed by Collins & Autenrieth and constructed by Yarnall & Cooper. The main block of the Publishing House was thirty-six feet front by fifty feet deep. Historically, a one-story addition of the same width by thirty feet deep appended the main block, featuring skylights. Appending the southeast corner was a small one-story addition with a depth of roughly fifteen and one half feet. The remaining portion of the lot was an open lot.

### Historic Context: The Early History of Sansom Row (1790-1876)

Many years earlier, the 700 Block of Sansom Street, a one block long "place" was part of a residential development known as Sansom Row. In the 1790s, Robert Morris, known as the Financier of the American Revolution, owned a large parcel, which included the subject site with Chestnut Street at the north, Walnut Street at the south, Seventh Street at the east and Eighth Street at the West. However, like many investors of the day,

speculation got the better of him and the inflated values associated with the founding of the new nation led many men to financial ruin. Morris' Folly, the financier's unfinished mansion, occupied the site, being designed by Pierre L'Enfant. The house was said to have included the first Mansardic roof in the United States. After Morris went to debtor's prison, the unfinished mansion and lot were sold at public sale. The Philadelphia County Sheriff, Jonathan Penrose, sold the property to William Sansom, the eminent Philadelphia merchant in 1798.<sup>16</sup>

Prior to his death in 1800, William Sansom had commissioned Benjamin Latrobe (1764-1820), the master Philadelphia architect, to design a row of twenty-two townhouses of the "London house plan" to face onto Walnut Street. And, by 1800, Sansom had commissioned Thomas Carstairs (1759-1830) to create a similar row facing north onto the newly established Sansom Street, which from the beginning was paved by the developer himself.<sup>17</sup>

Sansom Row was the first entire group of row houses that had been built simultaneously from a single design. At first, Carstairs' housing solution was criticized as too uniform, but the new neighborhood development mode became increasingly familiar to Philadelphians during the nineteenth century.<sup>18</sup>

And it was in this, the 700 Block of Sansom Street that one of the first blocks of like-row houses were put up, influencing the design of Philadelphia to date. Sansom Row appears to have been constructed about 1800, featuring red brick facades, "...shared marble steps, contiguous belt courses, and parapets between each pair." This row of twenty-two houses was intact until 1865.<sup>19</sup>

The first owners of the houses at 706 and 708 Sansom Street were bricklayers, Dillaplain Ridway and Samuel Shinn.<sup>20</sup> Ridway acquired 706 in 1803 and sold it immediately to merchant Daniel Steinmetz.<sup>21</sup> Steinmetz in turn sold the house to William Young Birch in 1807.<sup>22</sup> The first owner of 708 Sansom Street Samuel Shinn purchased the house in

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<sup>16</sup> Hsin-Yi Ho. "A Proposal for Preserving and Restoring the Streetscape of Jewelers' Row." Master's thesis (University of Pennsylvania, 2004), 13.

<sup>17</sup> George B. Tatum, *Penn's Great Town : 250 years of Philadelphia Architecture Illustrated in Prints and Drawings, Philadelphia* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1961), 47.

<sup>18</sup> Ho. "A Proposal for Preserving and Restoring the Streetscape of Jewelers' Row," 7.

<sup>19</sup> Ho. "A Proposal for Preserving and Restoring the Streetscape of Jewelers' Row," 7.

<sup>20</sup> Deed: William Sansom, of the city of Philadelphia, merchant, to Dillaplain Ridway, of the same, 13 February 1803, Philadelphia Deed Book E.F., No. 18, p. 671; Deed: William Sansom, of the city of Philadelphia, merchant, to Samuel Shinn, of the same, bricklayer, 13 February 1805, Philadelphia Deed Book E.F., No. 27, p. 672, CAP.

<sup>21</sup> Deed: Dillaplain Ridway, of the City of Philadelphia, bricklayer, and Dororthea, his wife, to Daniel Steinmetz, of the same, February 22, 1803, Philadelphia Deed Book E.F., No. 18, p. 673, CAP.

<sup>22</sup> Deed: Daniel Steinmetz, of the City of Philadelphia, merchant, to William Young Birch, of the same, stationer and bookseller, 11 October 1807, Philadelphia Deed Book E.F., No. 27, p. 592, CAP.



1805 and sold to Birch in the same year.<sup>23</sup> Both properties remained in Birch's and his heirs hands until 1865 but by that time they "were very much out repair and ... need[ed] extensive and expensive repairs."<sup>24</sup>

#### **CRITERION A and CRITERION J**

**The Publishing House represents the early and entire commercialization of Sansom Row and the history of Henry Lea & Co., as a major publishing and printing business in Philadelphia and a premier medical and scientific publisher in the United States that transcended two centuries of its commercial history. The building also represents the cultural and economic formation of the publishing and printing community in the neighborhood, as it was a building commissioned by the Leas to serve as their Publishing House.**

#### **The Commercialization of Sansom Row and the Publishing House of Henry C. Lea & Co.**

*The History of Henry C. Lea & Co.* Matthew Carey (1760-1839), the Irish-born publisher and economist, was about twenty-one years old when publishing his anti-dueling pamphlet, as well as his criticism of Parliament, in Dublin got him into trouble with the local authorities. Carey fled to Paris in 1781, where he made the acquaintance of Benjamin Franklin, then the American Ambassador, and worked in his printing office for roughly one year.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Deed: Samuel Shinn, of the City of Philadelphia, bricklayer, and Hannah, his wife, to William Young Birch, of the same place, bookseller stationer, 11 November 1807, Philadelphia Deed Book E.F., No. 27, p. 672, CAP.

<sup>24</sup> Orphans' Court petition recited in Deed Tripartite: Francis McMurtrie, trustee under the will of William Young Birch, of the first part, Francis McMurtrie, administrator of the will annexed of William Young Birch, of the second part, to Henry C. Lea, of the city of Philadelphia, 11 November 1865, Philadelphia Deed L.R.B., No. 127, p. 544, CAP.

<sup>25</sup> Earl Lockridge Bradsher, *Mathew Carey, Editor, Author and Publisher* (New York: The Columbia University Press, 1912).



Matthew Carey (1760-1839) by John Neagle (1796-1865).  
Courtesy the Library Company of Philadelphia.

After a brief, tumultuous return to Ireland, Carey was again in trouble with the law. Working for Dr. Franklin, Carey had contacts in Philadelphia, which no doubt informed his decision to go under the disguise of women's clothing and illegally boarded a ship to the newly established United States of America in September 1784. When he arrived at Philadelphia, the Marquis de Lafayette funded the establishment of Carey's new printing business and book shop. He began publishing *The Pennsylvania Herald* in 1785; the *Columbian Magazine* in 1786; and the *American Museum*.

Between 1794 and 1796, the firm published the first atlases in America and it was his 1802 Map of Washington, D.C. that first illustrated the newly established United States Capitol. Carey printed the first American version of the Douay-Rheims Bible known as the Carey Bible, which was the Roman Catholic version of the Bible printed in the United States.

His firm evolved over time to include the following formations: M. Carey & Son, 1817-1821; M. Carey & Sons, 1821-1824; and, finally, Carey & Lea, 1824.



Isaac Lea (1792-1886) and Frances Ann Carey (1799-1874).

Courtesy the Library Company of Philadelphia.

In Philadelphia, he was not only successful as a publisher; Carey also married Bridget Flahaven Carey and had eight children. Of the five girls of the Carey household, Frances Ann Carey (1799-1873) married Isaac Lea, who, almost immediately, joined the family business. His father-in-law retired from the publishing business in 1825, leaving the business his sons. Isaac Lea eventually took over certain aspects of the publishing house. In 1833, Lea took on a new partner, William A. Blanchard, eventually changing the name to Lea & Blanchard.

In 1858, Henry Gray completed his book on anatomy, which was first published by J.W. Parker & Son in London. The Lea firm immediately secured rights to publish the American edition of Gray's Anatomy. All of the American editions were published and printed in Philadelphia, and those put out between 1866 and 1922 came from 706-08 Sansom Street. Part of the printing process may also have been contracted to Mumford & Hanson or Hanson Brothers who occupied 704 Sansom Street. This was one of many publications that established the firm as a leading publisher of medical works, including dentistry, pharmacy, and veterinary medicine which was not surprising given Philadelphia's standing as leader in medical education in the nineteenth century.<sup>26</sup>

In John S. Billing's study of medical publications in America from 1776 to 1876, he found that half of all books and journals were published in Philadelphia (only one-fifth in New York) and that the Henry C. Lea publishing house had published a staggering 600

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<sup>26</sup> R. Kenneth Bussy. *Epilogue: The Death of an Imprint, a Supplement to Two Hundred Years of Publishing* (Philadelphia: 1994), 4.

editions of medical books, while the other Philadelphia publishing houses had published between 100 and 200 and the leading New York publisher only 150.<sup>27</sup>

The significance of Lea's publishing house is clearly described in John Tebbel's seminal four-volume history of publishing in America:

HENRY C. LEA

Lea & Febiger is ... the lineal descendant of Mathew Carey, whose business founded in 1802 was the first publishing house in the modern sense in America. The most enduring descendant of the founder was Henry Charles Lea (1825–1909) .... Henry entered the family business under his father, Isaac Lea, in January 1843, became partner in 1851, and carried on the business alone from 1865 until his retirement in 1885. ...

Long before the Civil War, the house had begun to print medical and scientific works, and in 1859 had issued probably the most noted work in the medical literature, Gray's Anatomy. But it was Lea's decision to specialize in medicine and science, and that he was already doing when, in 1865, he began to run the house for the first time without a partner.

Prosperity followed, and the business had to be moved from 105 South Fourth Street, where it had been for some time, to 706–708 Sansom Street, in a building Lea had built for his purposes. There, as his biographer, Edward Sculley Bradley, tells us, he built the list of medical authors and continued his own writing. "None of the traditional hostility which is supposed to exist between writers and publishers is to be observed in the surviving record of his business relationships," Bradley writes. ...

Lea was a publisher who did not believe in the "commission" system, by which authors were compelled to finance their own books, although it was both accepted and fashionable in the trade. Lea opposed this practice because he thought it unfair to authors who could not afford to pay for the stereotyped plates of their work, which the publisher would print from and then sell on commission. He did not believe in publishing a book that did not have the possibility of a good sale.

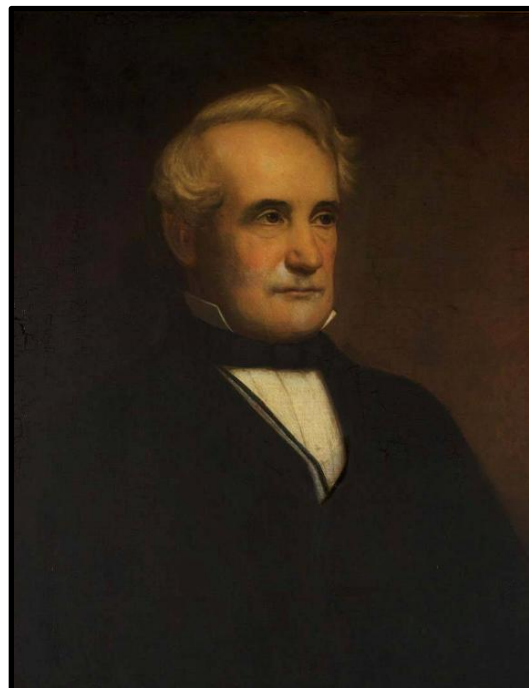
Lea conducted the business under his own name from 1865 until 1880. By that time the house was the largest publisher of medical, surgical and scientific books in the world, and also issued four important medical periodicals. Anticipating his retirement, Lea formed a new organization in 1880, Henry C. Lea's Son & Co., consisting of his second son, who bore his name; Henry M. Barnes; and Christian C. Febiger, his cousin, who had

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<sup>27</sup> R. Kenneth Bussy, *Two Hundred Years of Publishing: A History of the Oldest Publishing Company in the United States Lea & Febiger, 1785–1985* (Philadelphia: Lea & Febiger, 1986), 50–52.



been with the house for several years. The elder Henry stayed on for a time as a special partner, but he retired completely in 1885 and the firm became Lea Brothers & Co., with his youngest son, Arthur H., coming in as a partner. Barnes retired in 1897 and the three remaining partners reorganized as Lea & Febiger, with Arthur Lea as president. Two younger relatives were admitted as partners in 1913, Van Antwerp Lea and Christian Febiger, son of Christian C. These two young men came into sole control of the firm when the older members retired in 1915.<sup>28</sup>



Henry C. Lea, ca. 1845. Courtesy the Library Company of Philadelphia.

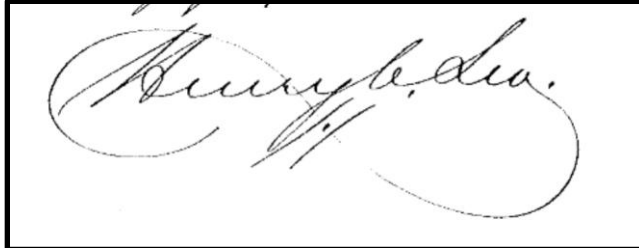
In 1865, Lea & Blanchard dissolved their partnership and Henry C. Lea, Co. was formed. He was then operating at 105 S. Fourth Street, but commissioned a new Publishing House at 706-708 Sansom Street, which was built between November 1865 and March 1866. Collins & Autenrieth were the architects Lea hired to design the building and construction was completed by Yarnall & Cooper.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> John Tebbel, *A History of Book Publishing in the United States*, vol. 2, *The Expansion of an Industry, 1865-1919* (New York: R.R. Bowker, 1975), 283–84.

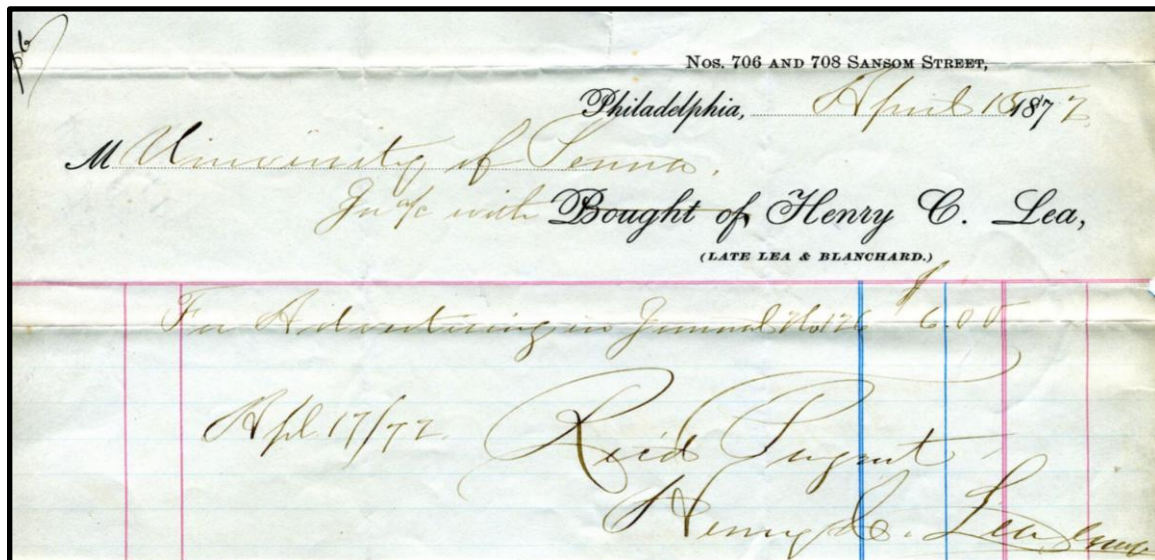
<sup>29</sup> Architect's Plan Book, January 1877-August 1879, Collins and Autenrieth Architectural Works, University of Delaware. There is a reference in this book to designs for Lea.

*Publishing House of Henry C. Lea & Co., 706-08 Sansom Street, Philadelphia*  
*Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, Fall 2016 – Page 23*



The signature of Henry C. Lea. Courtesy the Athenæum of Philadelphia.

Lea expanded his holdings on Sansom Street in 1875 and 1876. In October 1875 he purchased the corner property 700 Sansom Street.<sup>30</sup> In summer of 1876, Lea purchased the properties on both sides of 706-08 Sansom Street, which he used to expand his publishing firm.<sup>31</sup>



Example invoice of Henry C. Lea from 1877. Courtesy the University Archives, University of Pennsylvania.

<sup>30</sup> Deed: Jane Vickers, sole executrix of the will of Abraham B. Rockey, to Henry C. Lea, of the city of Philadelphia, for \$12,000, 2 October 1875, Philadelphia Deed Book F.T.W., No. 235, p. 12, CAP.

<sup>31</sup> 710 Sansom Street – Deed Tripartite: Mary E. Potts, of the city of Burlington, New Jersey, trustee, of first part, Sophia B. Potts, of the same place, widow, of the second part, to Henry C. Lea, of the city of Philadelphia, publisher, for \$11,000, 16 August 1876, Philadelphia Deed Book D.H.L., No. 39, p. 489, CAP; 704 Sansom Street – Alfred William Langdon Elwyn, of the City of Philadelphia, doctor of medicine, and Mary Middleton, his wife, to Henry C. Lea, of the city, publisher, 22 June 1876, for \$11,000, Philadelphia Deed Book D.H.L., No. 30, page 328, CAP.





On January 1, 1908 the firm made its final merger, going into partnership with Christian Carson Febiger, a relative of Henry C. Lea. In 1923, the company removed from its longtime headquarters at 706-708 Sansom Street to a large neo-classical style building on Washington Square designed by E. Nelson Edwards. The firm continued on as a leading medical publishers with competition from W.B. Saunders and “an old rival” J.B. Lippincott. However, the company signed many new authors and continued to succeed. Lea & Febiger continued to publish the second oldest medical journal in America, although it did not make the company much money.<sup>32</sup>

The firm was rather quaint and Dickensian. The company bookkeeper, a Miss Withington, who had been with Lea & Feiger seemingly forever, stubbornly refused to use adding machines up to the time she left in the middle 1940s. The cost books, in which one of the partners meticulously recorded the cost of producing each title, were started in the nineteenth century and were still in use until 1994. There was a stand-up desk of great age in the office that was in every day use.<sup>33</sup>

At the time it closed, Lea & Feabiger was the oldest publisher in America, having been in the hands of blood or marriage since the time of its founding in 1785. In 1994 its publications and assets were sold to Williams & Wilkins, a Baltimore-based medical publisher.<sup>34</sup> R. Kenneth Bussy briefly describes the firm’s importance below:

So ended Lea & Febiger, a remarkable and highly successful firm, which had stayed in the hands of the descendants of the founder by blood or marriage for 209 years, and which had published some of America’s and Britain’s best authors, while contributing mightily to the advance of medicine and related disciplines.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> <sup>32</sup> Bussy. *Epilogue: The Death of an Imprint*, 5.

<sup>33</sup> Bussy. *Epilogue: The Death of an Imprint*, 5.

<sup>34</sup> Bussy. *Epilogue: The Death of an Imprint*, 1.

<sup>35</sup> Bussy. *Epilogue: The Death of an Imprint*, 15.



## CRITERION C

### **Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style.**

With its façade of cast iron pilasters and red pressed brick, the architecture of the Publishing House represents the evolution of commercial architecture in nineteenth-century Philadelphia. As the earliest commercial commission on the block, the building's stands as a mid-nineteenth century style commercial building, using both cast iron and red brick, features that represent mid- rather than late-nineteenth century architecture and building fashion. Its presence within the dense mercantile streetscape of Sansom Street is a symbol of the early commercial history of the street. As architectural historians Michael Lewis and Jeffrey Cohen note:

In the middle of the nineteenth century retail architecture began to be set off from the design of offices and warehouses in a way that extended well beyond the enlargement of shop windows. Merchants began to recognize the value of a noticeable, memorable facade that visually broadcast a store's presence to all passersby. Individualistically designed retail buildings on a busy thoroughfare like Chestnut Street could enjoy the kind of public exposure and persistent recognition achieved in more recent times by Madison Avenue jingles and product logos in prime-time television commercials.<sup>36</sup>

The transformation of largely uniform, Federal-era residential rows into polyglot clusters of "noticeable, memorable" mercantile establishments occurred in successive waves and employed a variety of architectural styles and construction materials that oscillated between historicist adaptation and formal experimentation. In very broad terms, one can trace a trajectory between 1850 and 1900 along which architects and clients sought out ever more distinctive (and/or more economical) facade materials, larger windows, and more individualistic architectural features and ornamentation. Many of the city's leading architects engaged in commercial "street architecture" over substantial portions of their careers, including Stephen Decatur Button, Joseph Hoxie, Collins & Autenrieth, John McArthur, Jr., John Notman, Willis Hale, and Frank Furness.

Collins & Autenrieth's design for 706-08 Sansom Street is an important example of a first period commercial building at the beginning of the street's transition in the mid- to late-nineteenth century. As the design of 706-08 Sansom illustrates, their complementary use in this new context served both aesthetic and practical purposes.

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<sup>36</sup> Michael Lewis and Jeffery Cohen, "James E. Caldwell Jewelry Store," *Drawing Towards Building: Philadelphia Architectural Graphics, 1732-1986*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), 112-3.

COLLINS & AUTENRIETH,  
ARCHITECTS,  
410 WALNUT STREET,  
PHILADELPHIA.

*Philadelphia, Oct. 21<sup>st</sup> 1890*

*We hereby certify that Messrs. Kister &  
Oren have finished the work on building  
N<sup>o</sup> 704 Sansom St., and are therefore en-  
titled by their contract of Aug. 23<sup>d</sup> with  
Mr. H. C. Lea, to the first payment on  
account, amounting to Two Thousand  
Five Hundred dollars. \$2500.*

*Collins & Autenrieth*

Letter: Collins & Autenrieth to the Leas. (Philadelphia: 21 October 1890).  
Courtesy the Philadelphia Athenæum.

## CRITERION 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**

The architectural firm of Collins & Autenrieth was an extremely prolific Philadelphia partnership between Edward Collins (1821-1902) and Charles M. Autenrieth (1828-1906), both German-born students of architecture who emigrated to Philadelphia in 1849 following the German Revolution of 1848. Collins first worked as a draftsman in the office of John McArthur, Jr. before establishing an independent practice in 1852. Two years later he was joined by Autenrieth, who had spent his first five years in Philadelphia in the office of Samuel Sloan. The pair's first known design was an incomplete entry for the Academy of Music's 1854 design competition.<sup>37</sup> The firm's output over the following five decades included residential, institutional, and ecclesiastical commissions

<sup>37</sup> Michael Lewis, "Collins & Autenrieth (1854-1904)," *Drawing Towards Building: Philadelphia Architectural Graphics, 1732-1986* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), 105; "Biographical Note," Collins and Autenrieth Architectural Works 1852-1904, University of Delaware Library, Special Collections Department, Newark, DE, <http://www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec/findaids/collins1.htm>; Sandra L. Tatman, "Collins & Autenrieth (fl. 1852-1902)," *American Architects and Buildings Database*, [http://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar\\_display.cfm/23008](http://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display.cfm/23008).

in addition to dozens of major and minor commercial structures. While especially popular within Philadelphia's upwardly-mobile German-American community, Collins & Autenrieth enjoyed a client base that also extended into the upper reaches of the city's established mercantile and civic circles.

In addition to the aforementioned National and Philadelphia Register-listed Lit Brothers building, Collins & Autenrieth also designed the Philadelphia Register-listed Central Presbyterian Church at 704-14 N. Broad Street, c. 1877, and significant alterations to two National Historic Landmarks, the Philadelphia Contributionship for the Insuring of Houses from Loss by Fire (c. 1866-67) and the Wagner Free Institute of Science (c. 1885-95). The firm remained active until Collins' death in 1902; Autenrieth passed away four years later.

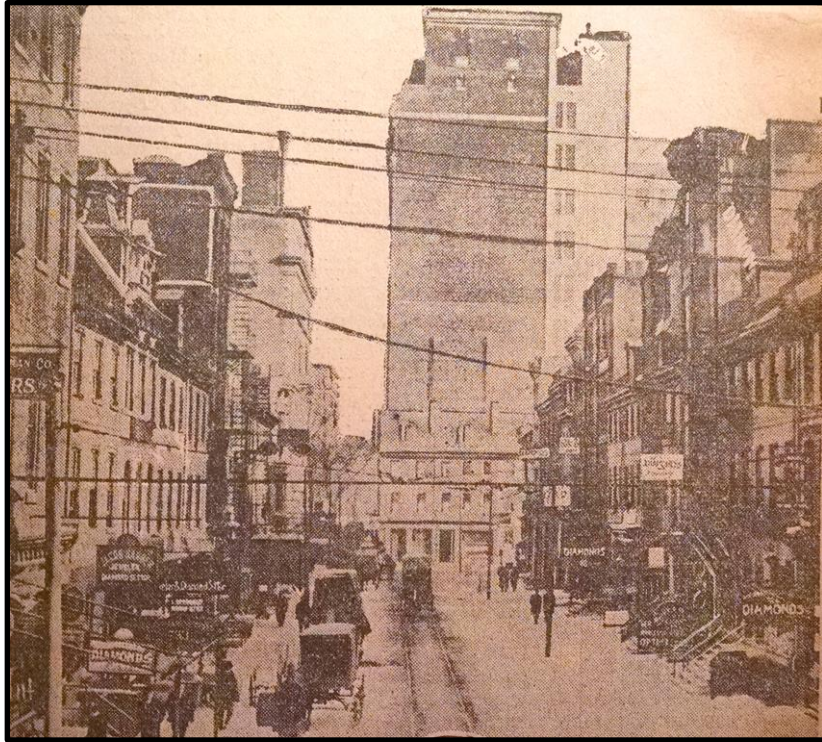
One of the firm's most influential patrons was Henry Charles Lea. Together with his brother Matthew Carey Lea and sons Charles M. and Arthur H. Lea, the extended Lea family accounted for as many as two dozen Collins & Autenrieth commissions over the course of five decades, ranging from personal residences and commercial endeavors like 722 Chestnut Street and 704 Sansom Street. One of the earliest known commissions was a Publishing House for Henry C. Lea & Co. at 706-08 Sansom Street. This was a building of its day, being of cast iron and pressed red brick, the building as considered large in its day.

In an 1891 letter to Henry Lea, Collins wrote to thank Lea for the "many acts of kindness shown to our firm.... I trust that the opportunities for you to continue your kindness, [and] for us to endeavor to deserve it, may be many yet."<sup>38</sup> The majority of these commissions, especially in the later decades of the century, were commercial structures along Center City's major commercial corridors. An extensive (and likely incomplete) list of Collins & Autenrieth-designed for Lea includes projects at 112-114 N. 7th Street, 122-30 S. 7<sup>th</sup> Street, 6th and Arch Streets, 701-709 Arch Street, 12th and Arch Streets, 13th and Arch Streets, 911-15 Market Street, 1020-24 Market Street, 1219-21 Market Street, 1319 Market Street, 19-23 S. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, 606-608 Sansom Street, 700 Sansom Street, 704 Sansom Street, 706-08 Sansom Street, 710 Sansom Street, 712 Sansom Street, 720-22 Sansom Street, 927 Sansom Street, 822 Chestnut Street, 900 Chestnut Street, 11-13 S. Bank Street, and 428-432 Walnut Street.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Edward Collins to Henry C. Lea, December 31, 1891, folder 278, box 5, Henry Charles Lea Papers, University of Pennsylvania Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

<sup>39</sup> *Philadelphia Architects and Buildings*, s.v. "Collins and Autenrieth Architectural Works 1852-1904," by Sandra L. Tatman, accessed August 14, 2016, [https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar\\_display.cfm/23008](https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display.cfm/23008)



Jewelers' Row published in the *Philadelphia Telegraph* in February 1912.  
Courtesy the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

## CRITERION 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.**

The dynamic architectural transformation of the subject block of Sansom Street experienced in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is uniquely reflected in the surviving fabric of its 700 block, which today presents an architectural palimpsest reflecting two centuries of economic and cultural transformation. This concentration of relatively intact, small-scale commercial structures dating from the middle nineteenth through the early twentieth centuries is virtually unmatched by any other extant block outside of Chestnut Street, particularly east of Broad Street. Though the 700 block is noteworthy, the area is not included in any local historic district and currently contains only three properties individually listed on the Philadelphia Register: 700 Sansom Street, 701-07 Sansom Street, and 730-32 Sansom Street.

The Publishing House of Henry C. Lea also exemplifies the economic and social heritage of a larger surrounding mercantile district that comprises Jeweler's Row, much of which was also owned by Lea. Originally developed at the turn of the eighteenth century as one of the city's first speculative row house developments, the 700 block of Sansom Street by the turn of the twentieth century was home to a large concentration of jewelers and engravers. Under Lea's ownership, the building served as the Publishing House of his family's firm. The building at 706-08 is the second commercial building on the block, representing the development of this block as a commercial and publishing center of



American and specifically in Philadelphia. The following was said at the time of the Publishing House's construction:

The improvement [706-08 Sansom Street], together with The Press Building of Mr. Forney has given quite an impetus to the renovation and improvement of the old buildings in this locality, and will add much to the beauty and usefulness of the street. Chestnut and Seventh streets, Sansom and Walnut streets, have become the very centre and focus of our business mart, and seem likely to outrival other places of business.<sup>40</sup>

This business mart came to fruition and the neighborhood became one of the great publishing centers in America, being a special place of pride and industry in Philadelphia. After Lea's death in 1909, the deed was transferred to his heirs.

*The Formation of Jewelers' Row.* According to Hsin-Yi Ho's thesis on Jewelers' Row, "the majority of Jewelry or Jewelry Manufacturing businesses listed in the City Business Directory were located on Sansom Street by 1925." Eight buildings were reconstructed and/or renovated substantially before the Great Depression for use in Jewelry sales and/or manufacturing. This includes the Jewelry Trades Building, a large structure on multiple-lots at the southeast corner of Eighth and Sansom Streets.<sup>41</sup>

The Publishing House is one of numerous buildings that comprise the 700 Block of Sansom Street that contribute to the East Center City Commercial Historic District, listed on the NRHP in 1984. The building satisfies Criterion G, as it is part of and related to a distinctive area, which should be preserved according to an historic cultural and architectural motif, as prescribed by the NRHP.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> "Forney's Press Building and Sansom street," *The Press*, Philadelphia: 18 November 1865.

<sup>41</sup> Ho. "A Proposal for Preserving and Restoring the Streetscape of Jewelers' Row," 11-13.

<sup>42</sup> "National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form for the West Philadelphia Streetcar Suburb Historic District." National Register of Historic Places. (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 5 February 1998), \30.

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### Contributors.

Sponsored by the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia, with assistance from the Keeping Society of Philadelphia, this nomination was a collaborative effort that was written by Oscar Beisert, J.M. Duffin, and Aaron Wunsch. Several sections of the nomination were written by and/or influenced by Ben Leech, Historian. Rachel Hildebrandt also provided photographs. All authors as well as Paul Steinke reviewed this document.

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