

**ADDRESS: 5901-13 AND 5915-41 GERMANTOWN AVE & 61-71 AND 73 E HAINES ST**

Name of Resource: Germantown High School

Proposed Action: Designation

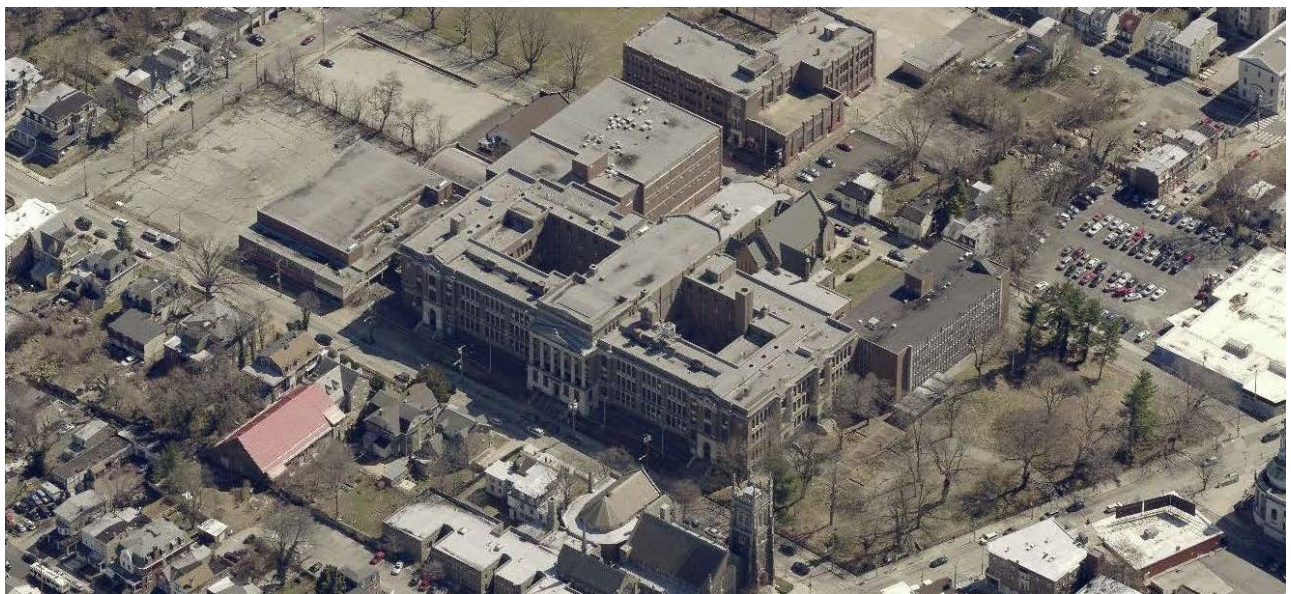
Property Owner: 5301 Germantown Avenue Investment Partners; 5901 Germantown Ave In.

Nominator: Germantown United CDC, The Keeping Society of Philadelphia

Staff Contact: Meredith Keller, meredith.keller@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the properties at 5901-13 and 5915-41 Germantown Avenue and 61-71 and 73 E. Haines Street, four individual parcels that comprise the former Germantown High School, and list them on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the buildings satisfy Criteria for Designation A, C, D, G, H, I, and J. Under Criterion A, the nomination argues that Germantown High School represents a pivotal moment in the history of public education in Philadelphia in response to Pennsylvania's 1914 passing of the Cox Child Labor Law, which restricted work hours for children and allowed them to enroll in secondary schools. Under Criteria C and D, the nomination contends that the original building is a monumental example of Georgian Revival public school architecture and is reflective of the style of other Philadelphia school buildings constructed in the same period. Under Criterion G, the nomination argues that the open space separating the school buildings from Germantown Avenue was intentionally developed into a park-like setting to serve the high school. Under Criterion H, the nomination argues that the open space embodies "an important visual continuum along Germantown Avenue, a singular place that has offered the public a window to architectural and landscape beauty and grandeur since the 1850s." Under Criterion I, the nomination contends that portions of the property that comprise the open space along Germantown Avenue potentially contain archaeological resources related to seventeenth-, eighteenth-, and early nineteenth-century structures. Under Criterion J, the nomination asserts that Germantown High School was inextricably tied to the Germantown community and its students were reflective of the local population and lingering inequalities.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the properties at 5901-13 and 5915-41 Germantown Avenue and 61-71 and 73 E. Haines Street satisfy Criteria for Designation A, C, D, G, H, I, and J.



**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 (CD, EMAIL, FLASH DRIVE)  
ELECTRONIC FILES MUST BE WORD OR WORD COMPATIBLE

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

Street address: 5901-13 and 5915-41 Germantown Avenue; 61-71 and 73 E. Haines Street

Postal code: 19144 Councilmanic District: 8<sup>th</sup>

**2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE**

Historic Name: Germantown High School

Current/Common Name: Germantown High School

**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: Unknown

**5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

Please attach

**6. DESCRIPTION**

Please attach

**7. SIGNIFICANCE**

Please attach the Statement of Significance.

Period of Significance (from year to year): from 1686 to 1968

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: GHS: 1914-15, 1925-26, 1959-60, 1964-65, and 1967-68

Architect, engineer, and/or designer: Henry DeCoursey Richards; and Barney, Banwell, Armentrout & Divvens

Builder, contractor, and/or artisan: Varies per building. Thomas Reilly, Contractor

Original owner: The School District of Philadelphia

Other significant persons: See document for significant persons associated with the property.

**CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION:**

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

- (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,
- (d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen; or,
- (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
- (j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.

**8. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Please attach

**9. NOMINATOR** Germantown United CDC

Organization The Keeping Society of Philadelphia Date 22 April 2019

Name with Title Oscar Beisert, Architectural Historian Email Keeper@keepingphiladelphia.org

Street Address 1315 Walnut Street, Suite 320 Telephone 717.602.5002

City, State, and Postal Code Philadelphia, PA 19107

Nominator  is  is not the property owner.

**PHC USE ONLY**

Date of Receipt: April 22, 2019; Revised August 15, 2019

Correct-Complete  Incorrect-Incomplete Date: September 30, 2019

Date of Notice Issuance: September 30, 2019

Property Owner at Time of Notice  
 Name: 5301 Germantown Avenue Investment Partners (5915-41 Germantown Ave);  
5901 Germantown Ave In. (5901-13 Germantown Ave; 61-71 and 73 E. Haines St)  
 Address: 5301 Germantown Ave IP: 6707 Democracy Blvd, Bethesda, MD 20817  
5901 Germantown Ave I: 1218 Green St, Philadelphia, PA 19123

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Designated  Rejected

# NOMINATION

FOR THE

## PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES



Figure 1. Top: Looking northeast at the southwest elevation of Germantown High School, including the “Grounds,” the 1914–16 Building, and the 1959–60 Addition. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019. Figure 2. Bottom: Looking east at the subject property. Source: Atlas, City of Philadelphia, 2018.

## **GERMANTOWN HIGH SCHOOL**

**ERECTED 1914–16**

**5915–41 GERMANTOWN AVENUE**

**PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19144**

*Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, February 2019*  
*Germantown High School, 5915–41 Germantown Avenue, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*



Easterly side of Germantown Avenue 497.85 feet to the Southeast side of High Street; thence extending along the Southeast side of said High Street North 42 degrees 30 minutes 40 second East 857.07 feet to the Southwest side of Baynton Street; thence extending along the said Baynton Street South 48 degrees 2 minutes and 44 seconds East 366.56 feet to the northwest side of E. Haines Street; thence South 42 degrees 23 minutes 20 seconds West along the Northwesterly side of said Haines Street the distance of 82.94 feet to a point; thence extending North 47 degrees 37 minutes 40 seconds West the distance of 126 feet to a point; thence extending South 42 degrees 23 minutes 20 seconds West the distance of 196.01 feet to a point; thence extending South 47 degrees 37 minutes 40 seconds East the distance of 125.44 feet to a point on the Northwesterly side of said Haines Street; thence extending South 42 degrees 23 minutes 20 seconds West along the Northwesterly side of said Haines Street the distance of 175.49 feet to a point; thence extending North 47 degrees 37 minutes 40 seconds West the distance of 126.13 feet to a point; thence extending South 42 degrees 23 minutes 20 seconds West the distance of 218.21 feet to a point; thence extending South 47 degrees 37 minutes 40 seconds East 126.19 feet to the line of E. Haines Street; thence extending South 42 degrees 23 minutes 20 seconds West along the Northwesterly side of Haines Street 317.37 feet to a point on the Easterly end of the aforesaid diagonal at the Northeast corner of Germantown Avenue and Haines Street; thence South 58 degrees 58 minutes 00 seconds West in a Westerly direction along said diagonal 23.28 feet to the point of beginning.

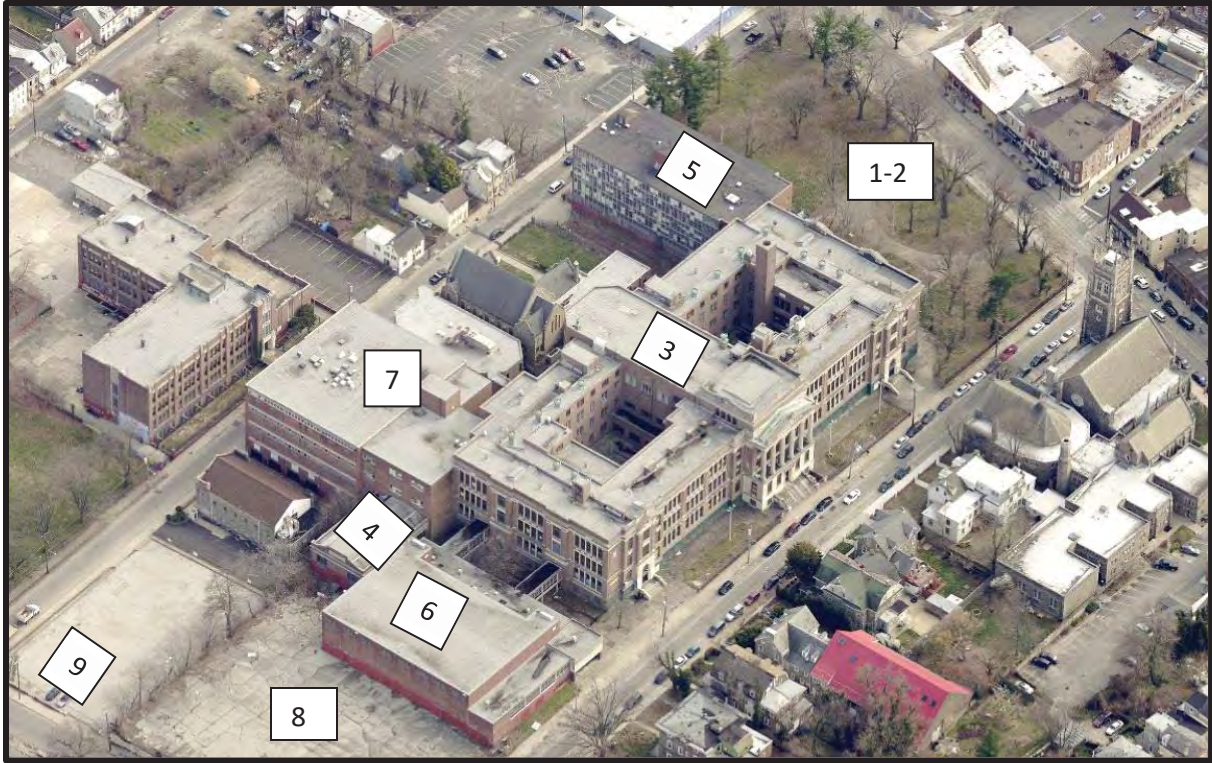


Figure 4. Looking south at the site of Germantown High School with labels that correspond to the list below. Source: Atlas, City of Philadelphia, 2018.

<b>Resource</b>	<b>Status</b>
1. Historical Lots 1, 2, 3, & 4	Contributing
2. Germantown High School (GHS), Park-like area (“Grounds”)	Contributing
3. GHS (1914–16 Building) <sup>1</sup>	Contributing
4. GHS Gymnasium (1925–26 Gymnasium) <sup>2</sup>	Contributing
5. GHS Addition (1959–60 Addition) <sup>3</sup>	Contributing
6. GHS Gymnasium (1964–65 Gymnasium) <sup>4</sup>	Contributing
7. GHS Addition (1967–68 Addition) <sup>5</sup>	Contributing
8. GHS Vacant Lot 1 (Vacant Lot 1)	Non-Contributing
9. GHS Vacant Lot 2 (Vacant Lot 2)	Non-Contributing

<sup>1</sup> Construction of Germantown High School began in 1914 (“Thousands Attend Exercises Marking Birth of New High School,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 27 September 1914, 6). Construction of Germantown High School was completed and the building in use by the close of 1915 (“School Equipment Bids,” *The Evening Ledger*, 12 August 1915).

<sup>2</sup> Construction of the 1925–26 Gymnasium was completed in 1926 (Photographs [40.15], Board of Education Records, Record Group 40, City Archives of Philadelphia, hereafter CAP).

<sup>3</sup> Construction of the 1959–60 Addition began after March 1959 (“Proposals,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 20 March 1959, 28). Construction of the 1959–60 Addition was completed in September 1960 (“At left is the five-story wing built on Germantown High School,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 11 September 1960, 231).

<sup>4</sup> Construction of the 1964–65 Gymnasium began after March 1964. Source: “Proposals,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 25 February 1964, 26; “Proposals,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 3 March 1964, 22). Construction of the 1964–65 Addition was completed by November 1965 (Richard D. Siegel. “Old School Days Recalled By Ex-Germantown Pupils,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 14 November 1965, 217).

<sup>5</sup> Based on historic aerial photography, the subject building was built between 1965 and 1967; however, additional research could determine the precise dates of construction (historicaerials.com).



Figure 5. Top: Looking northeast at the primary (northwest) elevation of Germantown High School. Source: Keeping Society of Philadelphia. Figure 6. Bottom: The same view in 1914. Source: Photographs, Board of Education Records, CAP.

## 6. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Germantown High School is a monumental institutional building designed and constructed in the Georgian Revival style with Classical Revival elements between 1914 and 1915 with subsequent additions constructed in the third quarter of the twentieth century. The original 1914–16 Building is prominently oriented with its primary (northwest) elevation facing onto High Street and a secondary public (southwest) elevation recessed from Germantown Avenue by a park-like area. The subject property includes Site 1; Site 2; Site 3; the “Grounds”; the original 1914–16 Building; the 1925–26 Gymnasium; the 1959–60 Addition; the 1964–65 Addition; and the 1967–68 Addition. Oriented perpendicular to Germantown Avenue, the subject property occupies much of the block bound by Germantown Avenue at the southwest; High Street at the northwest; Morton Street at the northeast; and E. Haines Street at the southeast. Originally, the block was laid out as

roughly three eighteenth-century town lots, the northerly two of which comprises the site of the original 1914–16 Building. The southernmost lot was subdivided into many parcels early in its history and subject to dense commercial and residential development that began in the eighteenth century and continued into the twentieth century with additions to the subject property.



Figure 7. Looking north at the site of Germantown High School. Source: Atlas, City of Philadelphia, 2018.

#### **Historical Lots 1, 2, 3, and 4**

Historical Lots 1, 2, 3, and 4 are within the boundary delineated above by a dashed black line. Lots 1, 2, 3, and 4 also comprise the “Grounds” of Germantown High School. The open park-like area once contained buildings and structures developed in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries that were later demolished. Because there has been no substantial development and/or construction on the site since the nineteenth century, the “Grounds” portion of Historical Lots 1, 2, 3, and 4 may be likely to yield archaeological resources and information important to the settlement and development of Germantown. Historical Lots 1, 2, 3, and 4 are further discussed and delineated in the Statement of Significance under Criterion I.



Figure 8. Looking northeast at the southwest elevation of Germantown High School, including the “Grounds”, the 1914–16 Building, and the 1959–60 Addition. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019.

### **The “Grounds”**

Located at the southwestern portion of the property, the “Grounds” are bound by Germantown Avenue at the southwest, High Street at the northwest, the southwest elevations of the 1914–16 Building and the 1950–60 Addition at the northeast, and E. Haines Street at the southeast. The west corner of the 1914–16 Building is recessed roughly 150 feet from the sidewalk at the west corner of subject parcel, while the southwest elevation of the 1959–60 Addition is recessed by roughly 160 feet from the south corner of the subject parcel. Within the “Grounds” area are numerous matured, specimen trees and other planting with walks and other features, which occupies roughly 265 feet of Germantown Avenue frontage.

The parameter of the “Grounds” are delineated by various curbing types including concrete, granite, and various stone types, all of which contributes to the overall integrity of the site. The curbing is also accompanied with a modern black metal fence that is aesthetically compatible to the “Grounds” and the 1914–16 Building. Along the Germantown Avenue frontage are two sets of granite posts and an additional single post, the latter two of which delineated the northerly and southerly access points of the walkways that lead to the southwest elevations of the 1914–16 Building and the 1959–60 Addition. The sidewalks feature steps and Wissahickon schist retaining walls on each side. At the southerly access point is a pair of nineteenth century gates that are attached respectively to the flanking granite posts. A circular paved concrete path meanders from one gate to the other, providing access to various hardscaped areas in front of the building. The space features a canopy of specimen trees that vary in age. Some of the trees are very poorly

maintained. The space features patchy sod, lighting fixtures, et cetera. There is also a stone marker at the corner of Germantown Avenue and High Street likely related to the Morris-Littell House.

The “Grounds” are a contributing component to the larger historic resource.



Figure 9. Top: Looking north at the southwest elevation of the 1914–16 Building. Figure 10. Bottom: Looking northwest at the First United M.E. Church of Germantown on left and the southwest elevation of the 1914–16 Building on right. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019.



Figure 11. Top: Looking west at the northerly granite post and iron gate for the southerly entrance to the “Grounds” at Germantown High School along Germantown Avenue. Figure 12. Bottom: Looking south at the southerly granite post and iron gate for the southerly entrance to the “Grounds” at Germantown High School along Germantown Avenue. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019.



Figure 13. Top: Looking southeast at across the “Grounds” towards the Germantown Town Hall. Figure 14. Bottom: Looking east through the Germantown Avenue frontage of the “Grounds” with the Germantown Town Hall on right. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019.

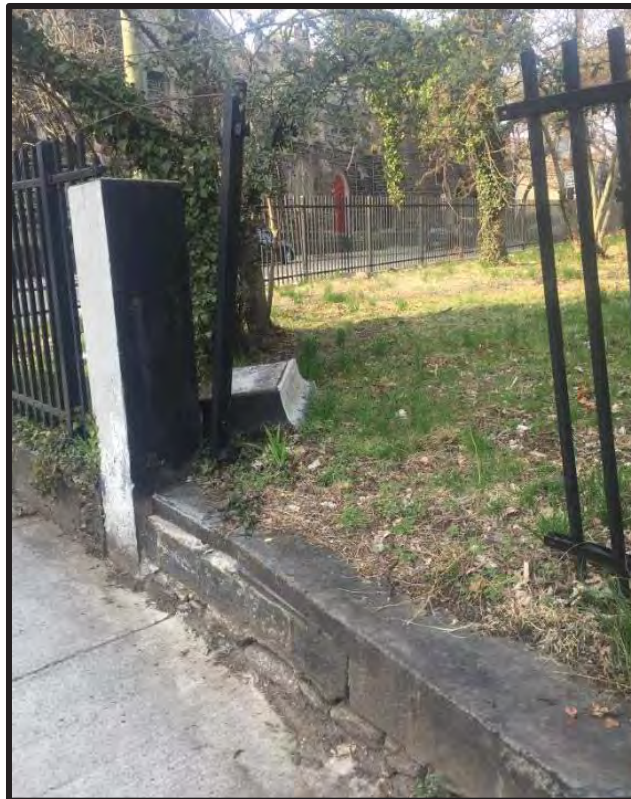


Figure 15. Top: Looking northeast at the stone marker that once housed the plaque about the Morris-Littell House. This feature is contributing to the “Grounds”. Figure 16. Bottom: a granite post and curbing that once served the Morris-Littell House. Source: Oscar Beisert.



Figure 17. Looking northeast at the primary (northwest) elevation of the 1913–14 Building. Source: Nicholas Covolus, 2018.

### **1914–16 Building**

The 1914–16 Building is a symmetrically-designed building based on a central, four-story section, oriented northwest at High Street to southeast near the rear property line, parallel to Germantown Avenue. Four wings extend from this central section, two from the northeast and two from southwest elevations, joining at the northeast and southeast elevations to form a solid rectangular structure with two distinct court enclosures. Other than the central section, the 1914–16 Building is primarily three stories in height. The steel-frame building is clad in red brick laid in a common bond with cast iron, granite, and limestone trim, as well as decorative, soldiered-header brick courses and panels. The basement story, also clad in red brick and limestone, is set largely above grade at the primary and southwest elevations, projecting slightly from the principal elevation, forming a substantial water table.

*Primary (Northwest) Elevation of the 1914–16 Building.* The northwest elevation is dominated by a pavilion in the form of a portico that is at the face of the central section. The basement and first floor of the pavilion is clad in painted granite. The pavilion is accessed by several broad granite steps that are delineated and contained by low granite parapet walls. Decorative, granite ancones serve as wall blocks atop the parapet walls. Gateways are located on each side of the steps and are set between the granite parapet wall and granite posts with spherical finials. The northeastern gateway leads to the recessed frontage along the northwest elevation and the southwestern gateway is a portal to a granite staircase to the basement level. A classical style balustrade guards the basement stairs from the southwest.



Figure 18. The portico and central pavilion of the primary (northwest) elevation. Source: Nicholas Covolus, 2018.

The basement steps lead to a central doorway flanked by two windows on each side. The doors are set within a granite antepagment further delineated by an elaborate surround and crown in the form of an elaborate granite console. The door surrounds composed of a molded projecting, denticulated cornice with bands of the egg and dart motif and other details, supported by granite brackets or cantilevers. The flanking windows feature flat-arch granite lintels with keystones and sills. The first and second floors are delineated by a limestone frieze with the following engraving: “GERMANTOWN HIGH SCHOOL.”

Set atop the first floor, a portico of six limestone Doric columns with apophyges at the bases support an elaborate pediment. Six brick pilasters with limestone trim mirror the columns of the portico. The pilasters project slightly from the primary (northwest) elevation. Indicative of Classical architecture, the entablature is comprised of a simple architrave; a Doric frieze with triglyphs and metope panels; and a denticulated cornice at the base of the pediment, all of which is articulated in limestone. The massive pediment is defined by another elaborate denticulated horizontal cornice flanked by similar raked cornices. Within the pediment is a limestone sculptural of “Guardian Angel watching over the future of the pupil.”<sup>6</sup> An acroterion, featuring a pedestal at the corners and the peak of the roof supports ornamental figures, including a broad anthemion or

<sup>6</sup> In the pediment of the central portico of the building is an impressive relief panel that was designed by H. de Courcey Richards. The design was conceived by Richards through a drawing he did on the “back of a menu card while he was at breakfast.” While the subject of the panel was a matter of some debate, which included the Battle of Germantown, the final design was of a “Guardian Angel watching over the future of the pupil.” Richards provided a rough plaster model to the sculptor, Louis Milione, who executed the panel.

‘stele’ at center flanked by acroterion at the corners. Also clad in limestone and designed in the Classical style, a fourth level of the building rises beyond the portico.



Figure 19. Top: Looking upwards towards the ceiling of the portico on the primary (northwest) elevation. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2018. Figure 20. Bottom left: Cornice detail on the 1913–14 Building. Figure 21. Bottom right: the architectural details of the central entrance within the primary (northwest) elevation. Source: Nicholas Covolus, 2018.



Figure 22. Top: The pediment within the primary (northwest) elevation. Source: Nicholas Covolus, 2018. Figure 23. Bottom: The northeastern portion of the primary (northwest) elevation. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2018.

Standing at the center of the seven-bay façade, the portico is a powerful feature that contains five apertures at center, which are delineated by the colonnade and pilasters of the second and third floors. All the windows are replacement fixtures. Splayed, red brick lintels crown each opening with limestone keystone at center that extends in an unusual motif to individual decorative features below the third-floor windows. These limestone details connect to the individual bracketed limestone stills. An elaborate coffered ceiling, appearing to be in limestone, decorates the interior porch roof between the primary elevation and the columns.

The two wings of the primary elevation are recessed from the central pavilion extends to the northeast and southwest, each featuring three bays of windows. Each bay of windows features a four-part mullion window set within the continued red brick façade of the first, second and third floors. The granite-clad basement story is painted green and the windows are sheathed by metal grates. A limestone course spans the uppermost portion of the basement level of each wing. The first and second floors are delineated by limestone coursing. The second and third floors are

presented together, being divided into three sections by two-story brick pilasters with limestone capitals and bases. Inset limestone panels, one per window, form spandrels between the second and third floor windows. A limestone course separates the third floor from the cornice, which consists of a largely plain brick with a projecting course of limestone molding at the center. The façade terminates in limestone or concrete coping at the roofline.



Figure 24. Left: The northeastern section of the northwest elevation of the 1914–16 Building. Figure 25. Right: a detail shot of the northeastern entrance within the primary (northwest) elevation. Source: Nicholas Covolus, 2018.

Parallel, but diminutive to the central section, large, three-story rectangular blocks cap and join the wings at the northeast and southwest, forming two central courts. The primary (northwest) elevation of the two blocks are identical, featuring the continued granite-clad basement level and redbrick façade with limestone trimmings. At the center of three bays is a restrained pavilion featuring a granite-clad entryway at the first floor, which is defined by voussiors and stepped arch surround. This section projects from the redbrick façade and features a simple cornice. The second and third floor feature large balcony openings, one per floor, that are set within brick pilasters supporting an open pediment that features a central portal. The first floor is similarly designed as its own entity, delineated by limestone coursing, while the second and third floors are unified in design. The limestone details described before are repeated in these elevations. Recessed from this elevation by a few feet near the west corner of the 1914–16 Building, is a blind brick wall with a one-story decorative brick panel at the first floor and a two-story brick panel at the second and third floors. The lower panel is formed by glazed brick headers and stretchers, featuring a limestone relief near the top. The relief contains three civic wreaths delineated by fluted lamp posts with burning flames. The wreath at center surrounds an open book and is enclosed at the top by the face of an owl. The upper, second and third story panel is also formed by glazed brick headers and stretchers, featuring a central limestone relief with a Greek or Roman-inspired profile.



Figure 26. The southwest end of the primary (northwest) elevation, near the corner of the 1913–14 Building. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2018.



Figure 27. Top: medallion detail. Figure 28. Center: medallion detail. Figure 29. Bottom: Cornerstone. Source: Andrew Palewski, 2019.



Figure 30. The southwest elevation of the 1913–14 Building. Source: Nicholas Covolus, 2018.

The southwest elevation of the 1914–16 Building is a three-story rectangular building component that unites the wings that extend from the central pavilion. The façade is divided into five bays, two of which feature projecting, yet restrained porticos. Clad in granite and limestone, the porticos each feature a double door entrances at the first floor, which are defined by voussiors, stepped arch surrounds, and a short flight of granite steps. The archways are infilled with cast iron posts that support a broken pediment over the doorway with a decorative screen above. This section projects from the redbrick façade and features a simple cornice. The second and third floors feature large balcony openings, one per floor, that are flanked by fluted limestone pilasters in the Doric order. The pilasters support an open limestone pediment that features a central oculus or portal window. The pavilions are connected at the first floor by a limestone cornice and cladding, appearing to be comprised of dentils or triglyph reliefs, delineating the uppermost portion of the limestone-clad first floor of the central bay. The limestone façade is pierced by a large, four-part mullion window that features limestone architraves, including mullions and sills. At the basement level, the central bay, clad in painted granite, features three distinct window openings. The red brick façade on the second and third floors above feature four-part mullion windows that are also delineated by limestone architraves, including mullions and sills. The fenestration is dominated by symmetry with corresponding inset limestone panels between the second and third floor windows.



Figure 31. Top: The southwest elevation of the 1913–14 Building. Figure 32. Bottom: The southwest elevation of the 1913–14 Building. Source: Nicholas Covolus, 2018.



Figure 33. The southwest elevation showing the northwest end of the façade. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2018.

Flanking the pavilions and the central bay, the northwestern- and southeastern-most bays of the southwest elevation feature a heavily fenestrated brick façade. The fenestrations are defined by three floors of five-part mullion windows with splayed arch, brick lintels and various features in limestone, including the mullions, sills, and key blocks. Like the previously described elevations, the second and third floors consist of five-part mullion windows per floor, which are delineated and united by limestone features including the mullions, sills, and key blocks. Limestone coursing separates the basement from the first floor; the first and second floors and the third floor and cornice sections of the building.

The northeast elevation is a similar, but slightly more understated. The southeast elevation is a relatively unadorned, yet complex fenestration of apertures that are largely arranged in four-part mullion window configurations.

The 1914–16 Addition is a contributing component to the larger historic resource.



Figure 34. Above: Looking west at the site of Germantown High School. Source: Atlas, City of Philadelphia, 2018.  
Figure 35. Below: the southeast elevation of the 1913–14 Building, specifically the central portion. Right: The rear (southeast) elevation of the 1913–14 Building, showing the southwest wing. Source: Nicholas Covolus, 2018.



Figure 36. Top: Looking west at the original rear driveway from E. Haines Street to Germantown High School, which is delineated by two brick gateposts. Figure 37. Bottom left: A photograph showing the gateposts and E. Haines Street driveway in 1915. Source: Photographs, Board of Education Records, CAP. Figure 38. Bottom right: Looking west at an original or early gate post related architecturally to the 1913–14 Building. Source: Nicholas Covolus, 2018.



Figure 39. Top: Looking south at 1925–26 Gymnasium in the context of the Germantown High School property. Figure 40. Bottom left: Looking south at the 1925–26 Gymnasium. Figure 41. Bottom right: Looking southwest at the 1925–26 Gymnasium. Source: Atlas, City of Philadelphia, 2018.

### **1925–26 Gymnasium**

Projecting to the northeast from the 1967–68 Addition, the 1925–26 Gymnasium is a modest-sized, one-story-tall gymnasium building rectangular in form with a flat roof. The building is clad in redbrick with lightly-colored limestone or cast-concrete trimmings. The primary (northeast) elevation features a central entrance flanked by large windows, all of which is beneath a parapet, which maintains an engraved plaque that reads: “Gymnasium.” Large openings typical of gymnasiums of the period span the side (northwest and southeast) elevations.

The 1925–26 Gymnasium is a contributing component to the larger historic resource.



Figure 42. Top: the 1925–26 Gymnasium. Source: Photographs, Board of Education Records, CAP. Figure 43. Bottom: The northeast and northwest elevations of the 1925–26 Gymnasium. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019.

*Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, February 2019  
Germantown High School, 5915–41 Germantown Avenue, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*



Figure 44. The southwest elevation of the 1959–60 Addition. Source: Nicholas Covolus, 2018.

### **The 1959–60 Addition**

Recessed from Germantown Avenue by the “Grounds”, the 1959–60 Addition extends from the southeast elevation of the 1914–16 Building. Standing five stories tall, the 1959–60 Addition occupies approximately 160 feet along Germantown Avenue and 70 feet along E. Haines Street with open land to the southwest and James United Methodist Church to the northeast. The 1959–60 Addition was designed to extend towards E. Haines Street rather than into the “Grounds”, which would have required no additional issues with the procurement of land.

The 1959–60 Addition features a structural steel frame with reinforced concrete and is clad in a prefabricated curtainwall sheathing system at the southwest and northeast elevations. The curtainwall system is comprised of a repetitive grid of vertical extruded mullions and horizontal rails and is filled with spandrels and glass that created a colorful fenestration. The south and east corners, as well as the southeast elevation, is a large unadorned red brick façade with an inset central entrance that is open at each level. The brickwork continues at corner of the building nearest the 1914–16 Building, as does the curtain wall system at the center of the northwest elevation.

Appending the southwest elevation near the west corner of the 1959–60 Addition, an awning with a distinctive zig-zag roof projects from the entrance. The primary block of the building features a flat roof. The 1959–60 Addition has undergone very few changes.

The 1959–60 Addition is a contributing component to the larger historic resource.



Figure 45. Top left: Looking north at the 1959–60 Addition. Source: Atlas, City of Philadelphia, 2018. Figure 46. Top right: The southwest and southeast elevations of the 1959–60 Addition. Figure 47. Bottom left: Looking west at the 1959–60 Addition. Source: Atlas, City of Philadelphia, 2018. Figure 48. Bottom: The southeast and northeast elevations of the 1959–60 Addition. Source: Nicholas Covolus, 2018.



Figure 49. Top: Looking south at the 1964–65 Gymnasium. Source: Atlas, City of Philadelphia, 2018. Figure 50. Bottom: Looking south at the northwest elevation of the 1964–65 Gymnasium. Source: Nicholas Covolus, 2018.

### **The 1964–65 Gymnasium**

Situated along High Street, the 1964–65 Gymnasium extends from the northeast elevation of the 1914–16 Building as an entirely separate building connected by two skywalks to the northeast elevation of the 1914–16 Building. Standing one story tall, the 1964–65 Gymnasium occupies approximately 124 feet along High Street with a depth of approximately 164 feet with open land to the northeast and the 1925–26 Gymnasium to the southeast. The building is constructed of structural steel with a redbrick façade at each elevation. At the northwest and southwest elevations, a one-story addition appends the façades at a lower elevation, presenting a heavily fenestrated elevation along High Street with a vestibule at the west corner. The vestibule features a row of doors facing onto high street set within a recessed porch. The corner of the building is clad in lightly colored limestone or cast-concrete.

The 1964–65 Gymnasium is a contributing component of the larger historic resource.

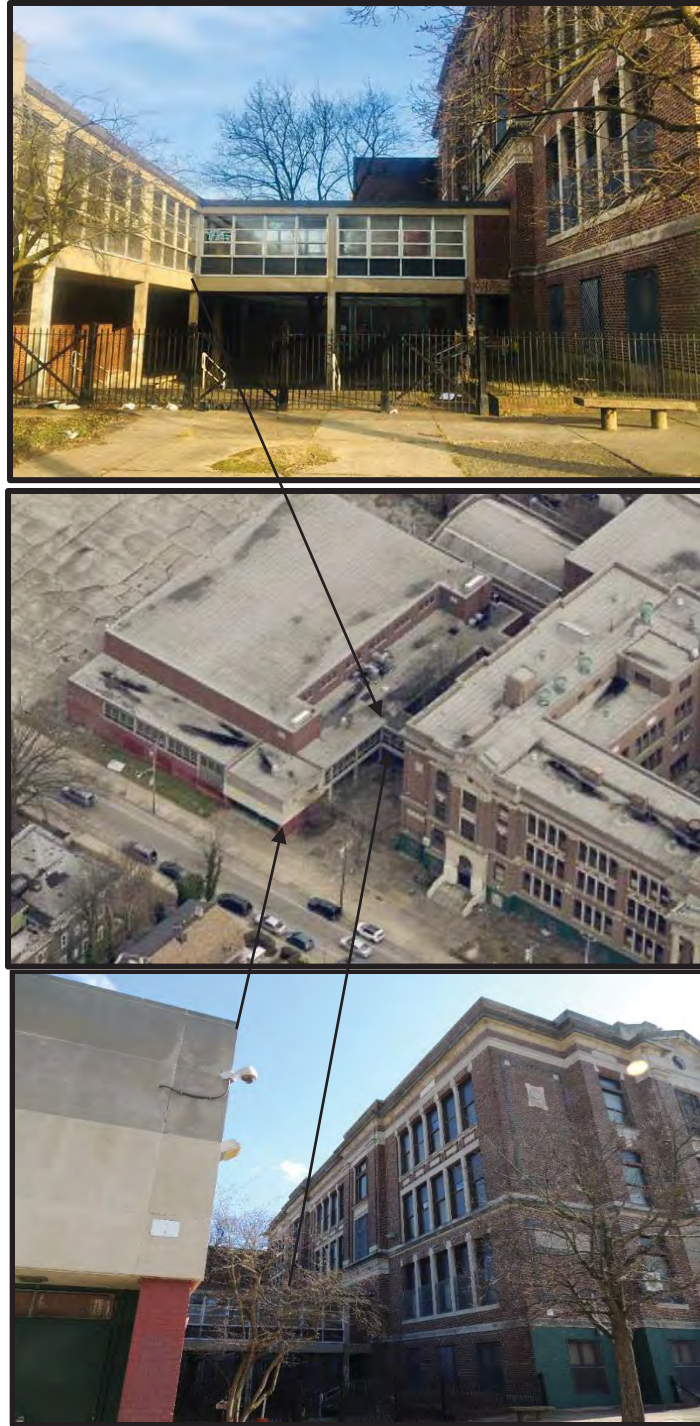


Figure 51. Top: the northwest and southwest elevations within the court of the 1964–65 Gymnasium. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019. Figure 52. Center: Looking east at the northwest and southwest elevations of the 1964–65 Gymnasium. Source: Atlas, City of Philadelphia, 2018. Figure 53. Bottom: The northwest elevation of the 1964–65 Gymnasium. Source: Nicholas Covolus, 2018.



Figure 54. Top: Looking north at the subject property with the southeast elevation of the 1967–68 Addition circled to correspond with the photo displayed immediately above this caption. Figure 55. Bottom: Right: The southeast elevation of the 1967–68 Addition. Source: Nicholas Covolus, 2018



Figure 56. Left: The southwest and east elevations of the 1967–68 Addition from E. Haines Street. Source: Nicholas Covolus, 2018. Figure 57. Right: Looking north at the southwest and southeast elevations of the 1967–68 Addition. Source: Atlas, City of Philadelphia, 2018.

### **The 1967–68 Addition**

Situated along E. Haines Street, the 1967–68 Addition extends from the southeast elevation of the 1914–16 Building. Standing four stories tall, the 1967–68 Addition occupies approximately 127 feet in depth parallel to Germantown Avenue and 127 feet along E. Haines Street with the Providence Baptist Church to the northeast and an addition to the Janes Memorial Methodist Church to the southwest. The 1967–68 Addition features a structural steel frame and is clad in red brick. There is a central entrance at the center of the southeast elevation on E. Haines Street with a narrow bay of windows on each floor above. The southwest and northeast elevations feature rows of short windows within the upper portion of each elevation. The building is largely characterized by unadorned brick expanses.

The 1967–68 Addition is a contributing component to the larger historic resource.



Figure 58. Left: The southeast and northeast elevations of 1967–68 Addition from E. Haines Street. Figure 59. Right: the northeast elevation of the 1967–68 Addition from E. Haines Street. Source: Nicholas Covolus, 2018.



Figure 60. Looking west at the subject property. Source: Atlas, City of Philadelphia, 2018.

### **Vacant Lot 1**

Situated along E. Haines Street at the corner of Morton Street, Vacant Lot 1 is a paved lot that is considered a non-contributing component of the larger historic resource.



Figure 61. Left: Vacant Lot 1. Figure 62. Right: Vacant Lot 2. Source: Nicholas Covolus, 2018.

### **Vacant Lot 2**

Situated along E. Haines Street at the corner of Morton Street, Vacant Lot 2 is a paved lot that is considered a non-contributing component of the larger historic resource.



Figure 63. Looking northwest with the First Methodist Episcopal Church on left and the Southwest Elevation of Germantown High School's 1914–16 Building on right, showing the “Grounds” in 1932. Source: Germantown High School Yearbook (1932), 12.

## **7. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The buildings, structures, and landscape features of Germantown High School comprise a significant historic resource that merits designation by the Philadelphia Historical Commission and inclusion on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The subject property satisfies the following Criteria for Designation, as enumerated in Section 14–1004 of the Philadelphia Code:

- (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;
- (d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen;
- (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;
- (h) Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or City;

- (i) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history; and
- (j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.



Figure 64. The southwest elevation of the 1914–16 Building of Germantown High School set within the “Grounds”.  
Source: Germantown High School Yearbook (1936), 12, U.S., School Yearbooks, 1900–1990, Ancestry.com.

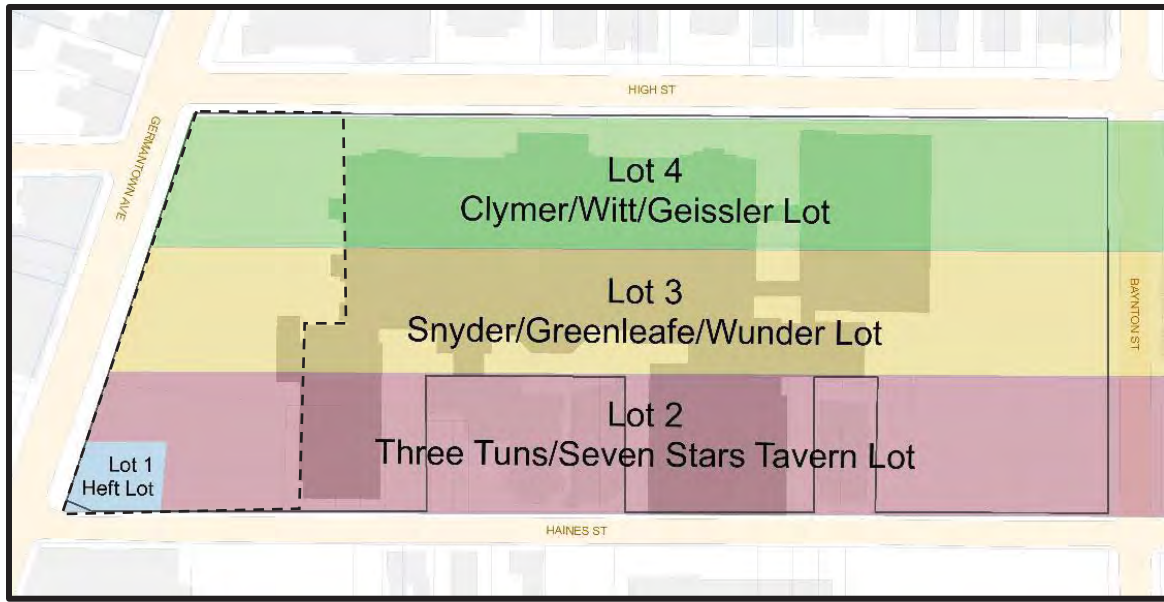


Figure 65. The delineation of Historical Lots 1, 2, 3, and 4 as described for Criteria I. The proposed boundary for potential archaeological resources is delineated in a dashed black line. Source: J.M. Duffin.

*(i) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history.*

### **Criterion I**

The subject property is comprised of two original Germantown town lots of 1686 that were subdivided and improved early in the settlement and development of the area into the lots shown above in Figure 65. The physical development of Germantown Avenue is largely defined by frame, stone, and brick buildings constructed immediately upon or in very close proximity to the main road of the village, a tradition brought to area by German immigrants with the *Strassendorf* settlement form.<sup>7</sup> While the subject property has maintained a park-like area along Germantown Avenue for last century, the frontage was previously developed with buildings, structures, and land features, which were demolished over time. The buildings that once stood on the subject property were largely built from the late seventeenth to early nineteenth centuries. Because there appears to have been little to no development on the Germantown Avenue frontage since these individual demolitions, there is a strong likelihood of highly intact archaeological deposits. , The subject property is likely to yield important archaeological resources and information about the history of the settlement and early development of Germantown, providing a rare potential to study two side-by-side town lots with archaeological potential. In addition, the subject property may also yield information to African American history, as one of the earliest documented sites with the presence of enslaved Africans in Germantown.

The current frontage of the subject property along Germantown Avenue has the highest potential for archaeological resources since it was not disturbed by the construction of either development phases of Germantown High School or by the construction of the E.H. Butler Mansion. The remains of building foundations, support structures and other land features including wells and

<sup>7</sup> All the surviving images and maps of seventeenth and eighteenth century buildings in the core of the Germantown settlement show the houses either directly or a short distance set back from Germantown Avenue.

privies dating between the late-seventeenth through the early-nineteenth centuries are likely preserved in situ between Germantown Avenue and the Germantown Avenue frontage of the subject property. The history of these properties and their archaeological potential is described below.

Overall, the subject property is likely to yield important archaeological resources and information on the historical development of and life in Germantown from the late seventeenth through the twentieth centuries. It should be noted that while the center of the subject parcel has been compromised by the construction of Germantown High School and buildings along Haines Street, the block wide frontage along Germantown has remained relatively undeveloped throughout much of its history. The historic ground surfaces for all of these properties are also likely intact as well beneath fill that was spread across the site during the initial basement excavations for high school. The presence of intact ground surfaces is incredibly rare in Philadelphia, and they provide invaluable information on the daily lives of those who historically occupied the sites.

The delineation of historical development falls into the following lots (see Figure 65):

Historical Lot 1: Heft House;

Historical Lot 2: Three Tons/Seven Stars Tavern;

Historical Lot 3: Snyder/Greenleafe/Wunder House; and

Historical Lot 4: Geissler/Witt/Clymer House and the Morris-Littell House.

A summary of the ownership and known structures on these properties follow in order to provide some historical context into the type of archaeological features that may be found on the subject property. (Vide Appendix A for additional information)

### **Historical Lots 1, 2, and 3**

One of the two original Germantown town lots that comprise the subject property was owned by a Quaker baker, Cornelius Bom, from Rotterdam, who settled on the site with his family around 1686. After his death in 1689, the town lot was purchased by a German Quaker weaver, Paul Kästner (d. 1717), who had recently immigrated to the New World from Hamburg, Germany. Kästner settled on the town lot with his wife and raised four children.<sup>8</sup> In 1731, the property passed to his son Samuel Kästner, who later subdivided the property into five lots in 1738. Three of the new lots were along Germantown Avenue within the bounds of the subject property. These lots are identified above as Historical Lots 1, 2, and 3. There is potential for archaeological remains that may relate to the Kästner house and the early habitation of the site, which may ultimately yield information on the early settlement of Germantown.

### **Historical Lot 1: Heft House**

The lot at the corner of Haines Street (later known as 5901–07 Germantown Avenue) was associated with the Heft family for most of the eighteenth century. Wendell Heft (1711–1775), a German immigrant butcher, purchased this property in 1744. In 1798 there was a one-story stone house 30 by 24 feet, a stone slaughter house 15 by 15 feet, and “old frame stable” 12 by 15 feet on

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<sup>8</sup> J.M. Duffin, ed., *Acta Germanopolis: Records of the Corporation of Germantown, Pennsylvania, 1691–1707* (Philadelphia: Colonial Society of Pennsylvania, 2008), 12, 530–31.

this property, the house mostly likely closer the northwest side of the lot.<sup>9</sup> It is likely that the original house stood at what was later 5905–07 Germantown Avenue.<sup>10</sup> One specific feature on the property is noted as early as 1744 is a well that was located on the rear property line which was shared with the adjacent property owner. The well site now lies entirely within the section of the property proposed for archaeological designation. It appears that the Heft House survived into the 1950s until it was demolished c1959-65 for the enlargement of the grounds of Germantown High School. Although this portion of the lot was developed to contain multiple structures in the nineteenth centuries, it is likely that some archaeological remains of the house and support structures on this portion of the subject parcel are intact beneath the present ground surface. It is also possible that they were incorporated into later structures built on the site, and thus have an expanded history.

### **Historical Lot 2: Three Tons/Seven Stars Tavern**

This lot was the site of the Three Tons Tavern and later the Seven Stars Tavern which are known to have been in operation as early as 1745 under the ownership of Thomas Carvell and later Harmon Stump. In 1798 the buildings on Historical Lot 2 were described as a two-story stone house 27 by 24 feet with a one-story stone kitchen (14 by 14 feet), a one-story frame house (11 by 74 feet), a stone barn (18 by 25 feet), a frame store house (10 by 24 feet), and a stone stable (18 by 24 feet).<sup>11</sup> When the property was subdivided in 1805, the tavern building became part of what was later known as 5909 Germantown Avenue and was acquired by the Butler family in 1870.<sup>12</sup> It appears that the Three Tons/Seven Stars Tavern survived into the 1950s until it was demolished c1959-65 for the enlargement of the grounds of Germantown High School. Although much of the far rear of this lot have been impacted by the construction of the high school and other structures that currently front Haines Street, there is potential for archaeological resources associated with the tavern(s) to be present in the area of the historic lot that now fronts Germantown Avenue, as well as a dense group of other structures that are present on the 1895 and 1910 Bromley Atlas maps of the site.

### **Historical Lot 3: Schnyder/Greenleafe/Wunder House**

The third lot of the Kästner/Castner family, later part of the property known as 5919 Germantown Avenue, occupied most of the frontage of the original Butler family estate. This property was purchased by a widow, Maria Barbara Schnyder, in February 1738.<sup>13</sup> In 1798 the property contained a one-story stone house (30 by 20 feet) with a kitchen (15 by 20 feet), a stone barn (30 by 20 feet) and a stone stable (12 by 24).<sup>14</sup> The house stood on Germantown Avenue and was

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<sup>9</sup> List No. 1, entry 68 and List No. 2, entry 54, Germantown Township, Philadelphia Co. *United States Direct Tax of 1798: Tax Lists for the State of Pennsylvania*. M372, Records of the Internal Revenue Service, 1791–2006, Record Group 58. National Archives and Records Administration.

<sup>10</sup> The deeds for the subdivision of this property suggest that the original house was at this location rather than directly on the corner.

<sup>11</sup> List No. 1, entry 69 and List No. 2, entry 55, *Direct Tax of 1798*.

<sup>12</sup> For the sources and details of the ownership see Appendix A.

<sup>13</sup> Deed of Lease and Release: Samuel Kerstner, of Whitpain Township, yeoman, and Katharine, his wife, to Maria Barbara Schnyderin, of Germantown, widow, for £101, 27 & 28 February 1737/8, PDBK G., No. 3, p. 13, CAP.

<sup>14</sup> List No. 1, entry 73 and List No. 2, entry 56, *Direct Tax of 1798*. The barn and stable were both noted as in “bad repair.”

demolished E.H. Butler not long after he acquired the property in 1856.<sup>15</sup> There is a very high potential that the remains of the house, kitchen and barn, as well as privies, wells and other support structures are present on the subject parcel due to the lack of historic development on the site. The Butler demolition of the site likely resulted only in the removal of above ground resources, leaving foundations, basements, etc. intact beneath the surface.



Figure 66. Left: Looking southwest from Baynton Street at the rear of Historical Lot 4, now the site of Vacant Lot 1 and 2. Source: Photographs, Board of Education Records, CAP. Figure 67. Right: The plaque formerly located at the southeast corner of Germantown Avenue and High Street installed by the Germantown Historical Society. Source: Germantown High School File, Historic Germantown.

#### **Historical Lot 4: Geissler-Witt House, Enslaved African Site and the Morris-Littell House**

The second of the original Germantown town lots that comprises Historical Lot 4 in Figure 65 occupied a frontage of 235 feet at the present-day northeast corner of Germantown Avenue and High Street. Because of the special historical significance of the individuals associated with this property during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and its bearing on Criteria G & H, a detailed history of the individuals associated with as well as ownership and use of the property is presented here. A history of this property “with plans” was included in the cornerstone for Germantown High School.<sup>16</sup>

Laid out in 1686, Historical Lot 4 was sold to Isaac Dilbeck (1655–1736), a weaver from Amsterdam, who came to America in the same ship with Francis Daniel Pastorius (1651–1720).<sup>17</sup> Dilbeck and his wife lived on the property until 1696, when they sold the property to Daniel Geissler. Likely a native of Germany, Geissler appears to have been affiliated with a religious order known as the Chapter of Perfection or the Women in the Wilderness, a millennialist group that formed in the expectation that the Second Coming of Christ would occur in 1694.<sup>18</sup> After

<sup>15</sup> Samuel F. Hotchkin, *Ancient and Modern Germantown, Mount Airy and Chestnut Hill* (Philadelphia: P. W. Ziegler & Co., 1889), 141.

<sup>16</sup> “In Cornerstone,” unknown newspaper, 1914, scrapbook, GHS. The history was prepared by Edwin C. Jellett who wrote a history of gardens and gardeners (such as Witt).

<sup>17</sup> Duffin, *Acta Germanopolis*, 12, 532.

<sup>18</sup> The Chapter of Perfection was a group of radical pietists that had formed in Germany around Rev. Magister Johann Jacob Zimmerman (1642–1693), a Lutheran clergyman, university professor and astronomer. As a result of his

Christ failed to appear, a schism soon occurred and Geissler chose to join the secular world by purchasing Historical Lot 4. He became a citizen of the Borough of Germantown, eventually serving in several borough offices.<sup>19</sup> It appears that Geissler never married, perhaps in keeping with the celibate life prescribed by the original Chapter of Perfection. According to several sources, it was here that Johannes Kelpius (1667–1708) (Figure 68), a German Pietist, mystic, musician, writer, and leader of the Chapter of Perfection, died in 1708. It is also said that Kelpius was buried somewhere on Historical Lot 4 in Geissler’s garden, which could result in the presence of human remains on the present site.<sup>20</sup>

In 1709, Geissler sold Historical Lot 4 to Christian Warmer, who was also a member of the Chapter of Perfection, though it appears that Geissler continued to reside on the lot with Witt until his death in 1745. He was buried in the Warmer family plot at the site of the present-day High Street Church of God property.<sup>21</sup> Warmer was a tailor who came to Germantown in 1694 along with Geissler and lived a short distance up Germantown Avenue on a property he had previously purchased in 1696.<sup>22</sup>

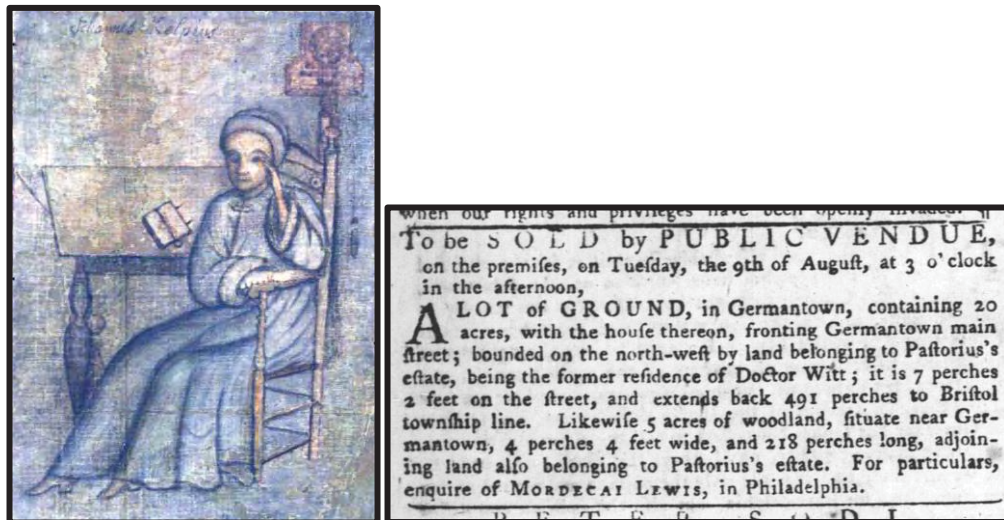


Figure 68. Left: Johannes Kelpius portrait by Dr. Witt (enhanced). Source: HSP. Figure 69. Right: Advertisement for Witt property in 1765. Source: *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 6 July 1774.

astronomical and biblical studies, Zimmerman came to believe that the Second Coming of Christ would occur in 1694. His intelligence attracted a band of like-minded men and women (including the famous Prophetess of Erfurt). Before long Zimmerman had formed the Chapter of Perfection, and he and his followers decided to embark upon the New World in 1694, where they would await the beginning of the Second Coming—much like the “Women in the Wilderness,” referenced in the Book of Revelations. Unfortunately, Zimmerman died in Rotterdam as the group was preparing to travel to America. After a brief stay in London, the group arrived in Philadelphia in 1695, where the Transylvanian-born Johannes Kelpius became their leader. The Chapter of Perfection soon split between those who wanted to carry on a pure monastic life in the Wissahickon and those who wished to live in the secular world. The best modern source describing this group is: Elizabeth W. Fisher, “‘Prophesies and Revelations’: German Cabbalists in Early Pennsylvania,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 109 (1985): 299–334.

<sup>19</sup> Duffin, *Acta Germanopolis*, 55, 58–60, 190.

<sup>20</sup> “Reports of Standing Committees,” *The Pennsylvania Federation of Historical Societies Acts and Proceedings*, 12 (Harrisburg: 1917): 83.

<sup>21</sup> Duffin, *Acta Germanopolis*, 532;`

<sup>22</sup> Duffin, *Acta Germanopolis*, 536.

During Geissler's occupancy of the property, **Dr. Christopher Witt** (1675–1765) came to live with him by 1728.<sup>23</sup> Dr. Witt was a man of many talents.<sup>24</sup> He was a “practitioner of physic,” also known as a doctor, from Wiltshire, England who joined the remnants of the Chapter of Perfection after coming to Germantown.<sup>25</sup> The Rev. Henry Melchior Muhlenberg stated in 1765 that Witt “was famous throughout all America for his *praxis medica*, which he had practiced for over sixty years.”<sup>26</sup> Witt painted a portrait of Kelpius, said to be one of the first in Pennsylvania. Witt was also a botanist who cultivated and studied a wide variety of plants no doubt in a garden on the subject property. He was in close contact with John Bartram (1699–1777), the American botanist, horticulturist, and explorer, and fellow Englishman Peter Collinson (1694–1768), botanist, gardener, and Fellow of the Royal Society. Dr. Witt also made clocks and instruments. He had one of the first virginals (a form of harpsicord) in Germantown. Sometime prior to 1761 Christopher Witt purchased an enslaved man named Dr. Robert Clymer whom he trained to be a doctor and clockmaker. Living to the age of 90, Dr. Witt became a well-known and respected figure in Germantown, but caused a bit of a stir when, later in life, he converted to the Lutheran faith. Like Geissler, Witt too was buried in the Warmer family burial ground.<sup>27</sup>

Figure 70. Will of Dr. Christopher where he manumits Dr. Robert Clymer, 1765

Known as Germantown's first African American doctor, **Robert Clymer** is one of the earliest African American residents of Germantown for whom detailed documentation survives. Having trained Clymer to be a clockmaker and physician, Dr. Witt referred to Dr. Clymer in his will as “my molatoo [sic] servant man Robert (commonly known by the name of Robert Claymer).” At the time of Dr. Witt's death, Dr. Clymer was manumitted and given land on what is now East

<sup>23</sup> The 1729 will of Christian Warmer states that “Messuage building & appurtenances” on the property were in partly in the possession of Witt and Geissler (Philadelphia Will Book E., p. 156).

<sup>24</sup> The information provided here, unless otherwise noted is from: Julius Friedrich Sachse, *The German Pietists of Provincial Pennsylvania, 1694–1708* (Philadelphia: By the author, 1895), 402–18.

<sup>25</sup> Julius Friedrich Sachse, *The Diarium of Magister Johannes Kelpius* (Lancaster, PA: Pennsylvania-German Society, 1917), 97–98.

<sup>26</sup> *The Journals of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg*, trans. Theodore G. Tappert and John W. Doberstein, 3 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1945): 183–84.

<sup>27</sup> Advertisements for the sale of the subject property (former Geissler lot) in the 1760s and 1770s refer to this property as “lately in the Occupation of Dr. Witt, deceased” and “being the former residence of Doctor Witt” (*Pennsylvania Gazette*, 17 October 1765, 6 July 1774). The dates Christopher Witt lived on the subject property are imprecise. He was there by 1728 and continued to live at the location until the early 1760s. At the time of his death Witt was living with the Warmer farther up Germantown Avenue. Witt's 1761 will refers to the building on Historical Lot 4 as his “old house” (Philadelphia Will Book N, p. 278, Philadelphia Register of Wills).

Washington Lane.<sup>28</sup> His inheritance also included “tools instruments ... to the making of clocks,” a “great clock that strikes the quarters,” and all the furniture in Dr. Witt’s “old House” which was located on the subject property.<sup>29</sup>

Dr. Clymer remained in Germantown after gaining his freedom. He married Elizabeth Earnley and had several children. He had sufficient means in 1769 to purchase a house a lot at what is today 6114–20 Germantown Avenue.<sup>30</sup> During the Battle of Germantown, Clymer was in Whitemarsh with the baggage of the Continental Army, while his family remained in Germantown. When the British General Agnew was shot near the Mennonite Meeting House he was brought into the Clymer family home to be treated before being taken to Grumblethorpe. Clymer was arrested by the British and served several months in a Philadelphia jail during the occupation.<sup>31</sup> Clymer and his family moved to Bensalem, Pennsylvania sometime before 1788 and later to the District of Southwark where he died in 1816.<sup>32</sup>

Historical Lot 4 remained in the Warmer family until the 1776, despite two attempts to sell it at auction. The attempted auction was in 1765 at the London Coffee House on Market Street, at which time the property was described as having a house “lately in the Occupation of Dr. Witt, deceased,” an orchard, two meadows, a stone granary, and two springs.<sup>33</sup> The second attempted sale was in 1774, at which time the property was described as “being the former residence of Doctor Witt.”<sup>34</sup> However, Dr. Witt’s celebrity had not brought a purchaser on either occasion, and it was not until 1776 that Historical Lot 4 passed to John Bringham.<sup>35</sup> During Bringham’s ownership, the property was leased to tenants and after his death it was sold to Charles Hubbs in 1795 who made Historical Lot 4 the site of his residence.<sup>36</sup> In 1796 the property was taxed for a “Two Story Dwelling” and one “Frame Stable, & 1 small stone build[in]g.”<sup>37</sup> More details of these buildings are found in the 1798 Direct Tax that described a two-story stone house (25 by 35 feet); a two-

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<sup>28</sup> Deed: Robert Clymer, of Bensalem Township, Bucks County, farmer, and Elizabeth, his wife, to Peter Dedier, of Germantown, stocking weaver, for £245, PDBk T.H., No. 37, p. 506, CAP.

<sup>29</sup> Philadelphia Will Book N, pp. 277–78, Philadelphia Register of Wills.

<sup>30</sup> Deed: Cornelius Angle, of Germantown, cordwainer, and Catharine, his wife, to Robert Clymer, of Germantown, practitioner in physic, for £110, 2 January 1769, PDBk T.H. No. 37, p. 504, CAP.

<sup>31</sup> Letter from George Clymer (son of Robert) to John Clymer, 13 May 1869, typescript copy, Clymer family file, Germantown Historical Society. Several of the George’s stories about his father, like General Agnew being brought into the family house, have been corroborated by other sources (Thomas J. McGuire, *The Philadelphia Campaign* [Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2006] 2: 111–12).

<sup>32</sup> Will Book 6, p. 539, Philadelphia Register of Wills. The estate account lists funeral expense from December 1816 and the will was probated in January 1817 (Philadelphia Orphans’ Court, Estate file).

<sup>33</sup> *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 10 October 1765.

<sup>34</sup> *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 6 July 1774.

<sup>35</sup> Deed: Jacob Harmon and Sarah, his wife, and Elizabeth Collins, widow, to John Bringham, 22 October 1776, PDBk D., No. 45, p. 413, CAP.

<sup>36</sup> Deed: Elizabeth Bringham, George Bringham, James Simmons, John McCullough, Edward Cunant, Isaac Bringham, to Charles Hubbs, for £1,000, 27 April 1795, PDBK D 56.318.

<sup>37</sup> Germantown Township, 1796, p. 10, State Tax Assessment Ledgers, CAP.

story kitchen (16 by 15 feet); a two-story partly brick and stone “back tenement” (30 by 21 feet); a part stone and frame barn (24 by 18 feet); and a one-story stone wash house (12 by 12 feet).<sup>38</sup>

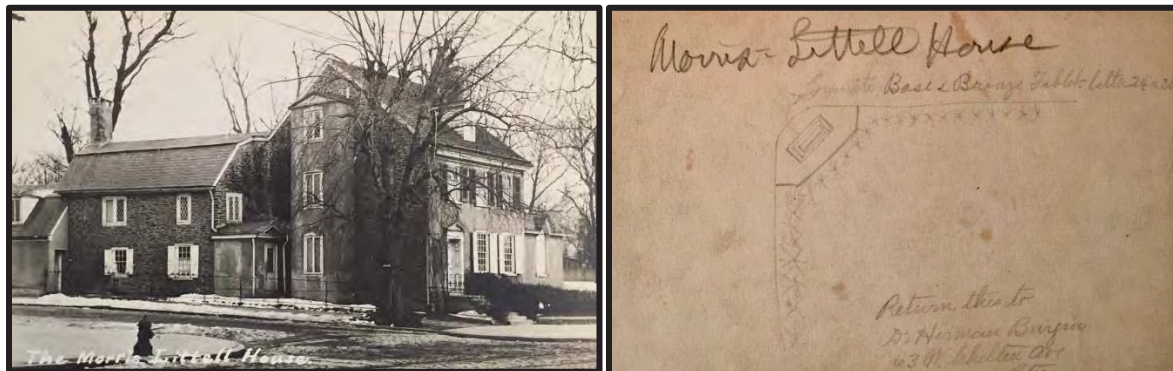


Figure 71. Left: The Morris-Littell House on a post card. Figure 72. Right: A plan for the Morris-Littell House Monument. Source: Germantown High School File, Historic Germantown.

Sometime around 1800 Charles Hubbs built a new house on Historical Lot 4 to the northwest of the older house that had been occupied by Geissler, Witt, and Clymer. The new house would come to be known as the Morris-Littell House, standing at what would become the northeast corner of High Street and Germantown Avenue. At this time Historical Lot 4 was subdivided into two parcels. Hubbs sold the old Geissler/Witt/Clymer house to a widow named Keturah Clemence.<sup>39</sup> The Morris-Little House was immediately sold to Hugh G. Shaw, a physician, and in 1808 passed to Elizabeth Powell, widow of Philadelphia Mayor Samuel Powell.<sup>40</sup> Elizabeth Powell acquired the former Geissler/Witt/Clymer residence in 1814, thereby reconstituting Historical Lot 4. The Geissler/Witt/Clymer House was later demolished and the spot became open ground which it has remained to the present day.<sup>41</sup> Because no further development has occurred on that portion of the property since the early nineteenth century, there is a high likelihood for archaeological remains related to the house, the outbuildings, and/or habitation of the site. These remains may yield information on the early settlement of Germantown; the occupation of the Geissler family, Dr. Witt, and Dr. Clymer. The information potential may provide a greater understanding of the occupation of Dr. Witt and Dr. Clymer, which could be significant to understanding the history of slavery in Germantown. The history of slavery relates to the economic, social, and historical heritage of the community.

<sup>38</sup> List No. 1, entries 74 & 75 and List No. 2, entry 57, *Direct Tax of 1798*.

<sup>39</sup> Deed: Charles Hubbs, of Germantown, lumber merchant, and Susannah, his wife, to Keturah Clemence, widow of Gerard Clemence, of Germantown, for £1,000, 16 January 1800, PDBk E.F., No. 7, p. 643, CAP.

<sup>40</sup> Deed: Charles Hubbs, of Germantown, and apothecary, and Susanna, his wife, to Hugh G. Shaw, of Germantown, practitioner in physic, 1 April 1802; Deed: William J. Miller, of the city of Philadelphia, merchant, and Frances Bartholomew, his wife, to Elizabeth Powell, of the city of Philadelphia, widow, 26 April 1808, PDBk E.F., No. 28, p. 718, CAP.

<sup>41</sup> Deed: Peter Kline, of Marlborough Township, Montgomery County, yeoman, and Ann, his wife, to Elizabeth Powell, of the city of Philadelphia, widow, for \$2,700, 18 February 1814, PDBk I.C., No. 29, p. 404, CAP. An account in the 1880s from the Littell family states that “on the premises ... near the boundary line of Mr. E.H. Butler stood an old house, once the residence of Fraley ... who was a pupil of Dr. Christopher Witt” (Hotchkin, *Ancient and Modern*, 144).

Elizabeth Powell willed these properties to her niece Ann Willing Morris (1767–1853) for life and after to Ann’s daughters Margaretta Hare Morris (1797–1867) and Elizabeth Carrington Morris (1795–1865).<sup>42</sup> The significance of this site was recognized by the Germantown Historical Society in 1915 when it placed a bronze plaque on this site commemorating the presence of Dr. Witt as well as Elizabeth Morris and Margaretta Hare Morris (Figure 66).<sup>43</sup>



Figure 73. Left: 1895 Philadelphia atlas by G.W. Bromley. Figure 74. Right: 1910 Philadelphia atlas by G.W. Bromley.

The lack of nineteenth and twentieth century development on Historic Lot 4 suggests a great potential for the presence of archaeological resources (see Figure 74). The remains of the Geissler-Witt-Clymer house, as well as its associated outbuildings, are likely to be intact, as are those of the Morris-Little House and its support buildings next door. Again, demolition of the sites likely resulted only in the removal of above ground resources, leaving foundations, wells, privies, etc. intact beneath the surface. This includes surviving intact ground surfaces (i.e. backyards), which have great potential for revealing more about the life of Dr. Robert Clymer, the enslaved African who lived on the site while owned by Dr. Witt. Archaeology in Philadelphia, particularly at the National Constitution Center site and the President’s House site, have revealed that the archaeology of the enslaved and free African communities in Philadelphia are often represented by the most ephemeral archaeological resources, particularly those that represent cultural practices such as the sweeping of yards, as well as cultural artifacts like cowry shells, trade beads, incised animal bone, and modified ceramics and glass. Careful analysis of the archaeological and artifactual resources has better informed our understanding of the lives of the enslaved and free

<sup>42</sup> Hotchkin, *Ancient and Modern*, 144.

<sup>43</sup> “Social and Personal,” *Evening Public Ledger*, 5 April 1915, 9.

African community of Philadelphia. The preservation of the site occupied by Robert Clymer, and the undocumented Africans who likely lived across the subject parcel, should not be compromised due to the invaluable information it could yield on slavery and freedom in historic Germantown

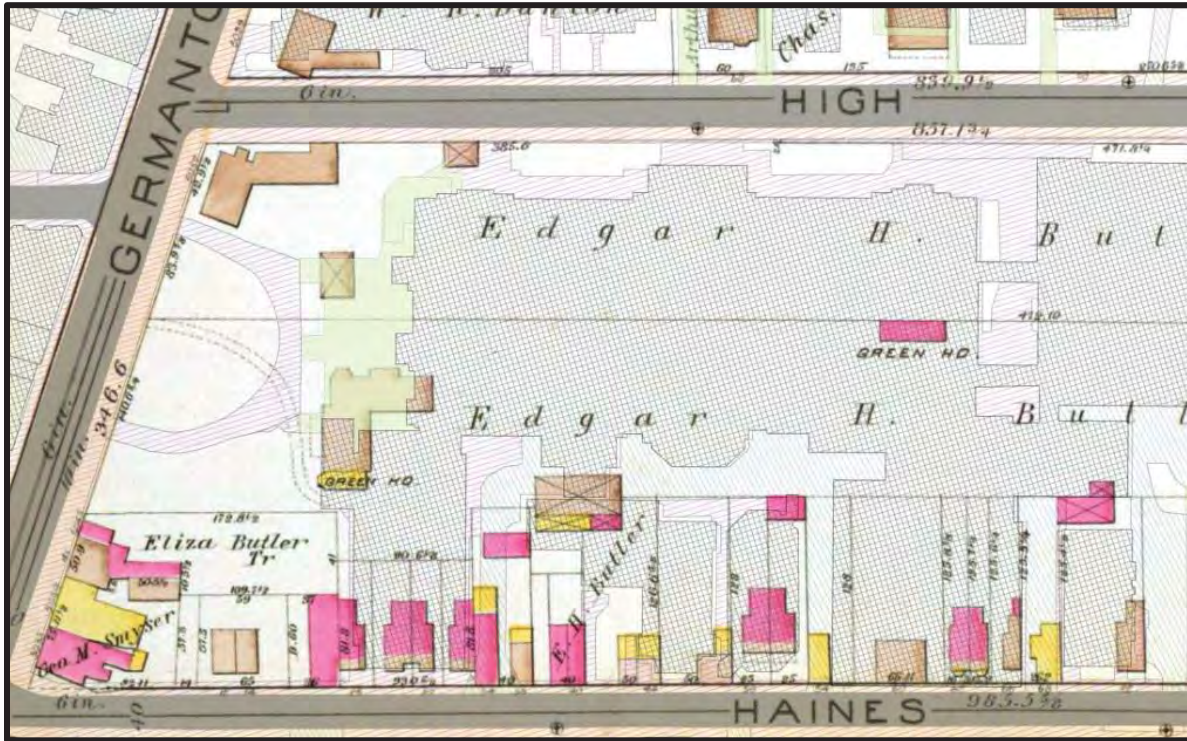


Figure 75. The current footprint of Germantown High School is shown here with the site conditions in 1871, the “Grounds” being on left between Germantown Avenue and both the 1914–16 Building and the 1959–60 Addition. Created by J.M. Duffin.

*(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.*

*(h) Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or City.*

**Period of Significance: 1845 – 1965**

### **Criteria G & H**

Providing an elegant landscape and vista to a monumental public building from Germantown Avenue, the “Grounds” component of the subject property represents both the earlier history of two residential properties that once occupied the site, and the later history of the property as a park-like setting serving the high school. Most importantly, the “Grounds” of Germantown High School, as seen from Germantown Avenue and from both E. Haines and High streets, are a significant civic center and symbol that the school represented which should be preserved as part of an historic, cultural, and architectural motif. The original 1914–16 Building, the 1959–60 Addition, and the “Grounds” together comprise a significant visual feature known as Germantown

High School well known to current and past members of the community from a public perspective and vantage point at Germantown Avenue.

The significance of Germantown High School and its various component resources is both complex and multi-faceted, being a place largely associated with its importance in the realm of public education with ties to the local community and social history. Specifically, the “Grounds” are an integral component resource of the history of Germantown High School, originally providing a clearly intentional verdurous egress for teenage boys and girls to their respective wings of the 1914–16 Building. Throughout the entire history Germantown High School, the “Grounds” have been maintained as a landscaped space with plantings and paths not unlike a park rather than as a commonly paved surface yard or playground. The “Grounds” also embody an important visual continuum along Germantown Avenue, a singular place that has offered the public a window to architectural and landscape beauty and grandeur since the 1850s.<sup>44</sup>



Figure 76. 1851 Map of Germantown. Source: Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network.

The foundational moment of this architectural and landscape prospect began when Historical Lot 3 was conveyed from Francis King, a “gentleman” from the City of Philadelphia, to Frederick Seckel (1793–1849), a brewer in the Philadelphia firm of Smith & Seckel in, on December 22, 1845.<sup>45</sup> Based on the research of late nineteenth-century historian Samuel Fitch Hotchkin, when Seckel purchased the property no such prospect or vista existed. In its stead was the ubiquitous Germantown house type of the eighteenth century, a two-and-one-half story vernacular stone house, which stood immediately upon Germantown Avenue. According to *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, “Seckel lived in this house while building the larger mansion in the center of the grounds.”<sup>46</sup> Seckel died soon after the house was completed in 1849.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Thomas H. Shoemaker describes the landscape in the 1891 in terms that would be clearly recognizable to Germantowners at that as “E.H. Butler’s lawn” (Thomas H. Shoemaker, “A List of the Inhabitants of Germantown and Chestnut Hill in 1809,” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 15, no. 4 [1891]: 463).

<sup>45</sup> *U.S., Find A Grave Index, 1600s–Current* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2012.; and Deed: Francis King to Frederick Seckel, 22 December 1845. Source: Title Papers Relating to E.H. Butler’s Acquisitions.

<sup>46</sup> “Famous Old Rose Estate Has A Lengthy History,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 22 September 1902; Hotchkin, *Ancient and Modern Germantown*, 141.

<sup>47</sup> *Public Ledger*, 4 December 1849, 2. Seckel died in a railroad car during his commute from Germantown to Philadelphia.

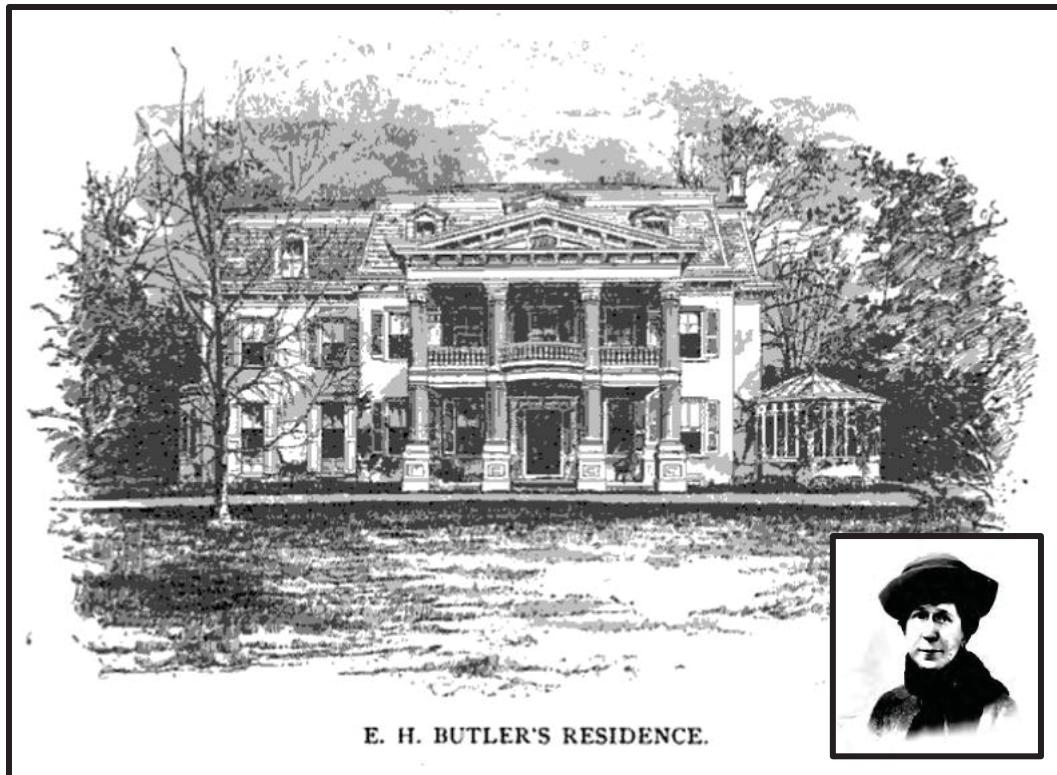


Figure 77. The southwest elevation of the Butler Mansion, referred to in this illustration as “E.H. Butler’s Residence.” Source: Historic Germantown. Right (inset): Mary Shippen Farnum Butler. Source: Ancestry.com.

On June 14, 1856, bookseller and school book publisher Elijah H. Butler purchased Historical Lot 3, at which time Seckel’s house was “enlarged and altered” and the aforementioned **Schnyder-Greenleaf-Wunder House was demolished.**, creating a grander vista to the larger house in the rear, emulating Vernon just a few blocks away<sup>48</sup> The curbing and landscaping complemented the expanded house, creating the central component of the landscape today. Accounts and insurance surveys document the major improvements that were made to house in 1866, 1874, and 1885.<sup>49</sup> After the Butler’s death in 1868, his wife, Eliza Clark Butler (1820–1894) continued to live on the property with her son Major Edgar H. Butler (1849–1918) and his wife Ellen Evans (1849–1882).<sup>50</sup> After the death of Ellen Evans Butler in 1882, Major Butler married Mary Shippen Farnum (1866–1894) in 1887. They had one daughter, Marian Farnum Butler (1892–1973).<sup>51</sup> After the death of his mother in 1894, Major Butler became the owner of Historical Lot 3. The Butler family resided in the Butler Mansion until 1913.

<sup>48</sup> Deed: Samuel W. Thackera and wife to Elijah H. Butler, 14 June 1856, Philadelphia Deed Book R.D.W., No. 81, 495, CAP.

<sup>49</sup> Insurance Survey S11057: Dwelling of E.H. Butler, Philadelphia: Philadelphia Contributionship, 1866.

<sup>50</sup> *U.S., Find A Grave Index.*

<sup>51</sup> *U.S., Find A Grave Index.* Mary Farnum Butler would go on to marry Edward F. R. Wood (1890–1966), a marriage that produced at least one son, Edward Fitz Randolph Wood (1921–2000).

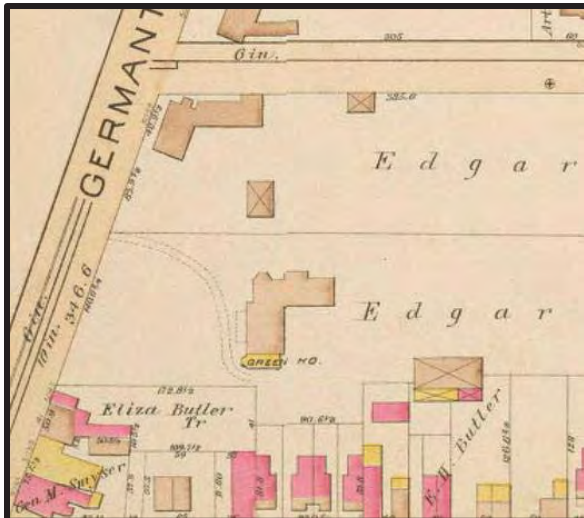


Figure 78. Top: Looking north at the Butler Mansion, now the site of Germantown High School. Source: Photographs, Board of Education Records, CAP. Figure 79. Bottom Left: 1889 Philadelphia atlas, 22<sup>nd</sup> Ward, by G.W. Bromley. Source: Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network. Figure 80. Bottom Right: Looking north at the southerly entry point to the subject property. Source: Google.

Major Butler greatly improved Historical Lot 3 over time “in the way of new conservatories and handsome porticoes, until there was no longer any resemblance to the original homestead...”<sup>52</sup> Among his improvements, Butler installed granite posts and curbing that provided pedestrian and

<sup>52</sup> “Famous Old Rose Estate Has A Lengthy History,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 22 September 1902.

vehicular access to the mansion. Both sets of granite posts appear to date to the residential period of the property, though they may have been relocated at some point.<sup>53</sup>



Figure 81. Left: Insurance Survey S12959: Dwelling of Eliza Butler, Philadelphia Contributionship, 1885). Figure 82. Right: 1871 atlas of Germantown, by George Hopkins.

In 1888, Major Butler purchased Historical Lot 4 from Charles Willing Littell and the other heirs of the Morris family. This property contained the Morris-Littell House, a late eighteenth-century building. Butler clearly saw this building as historic, given that he preserved it for the remainder of his ownership.<sup>54</sup>

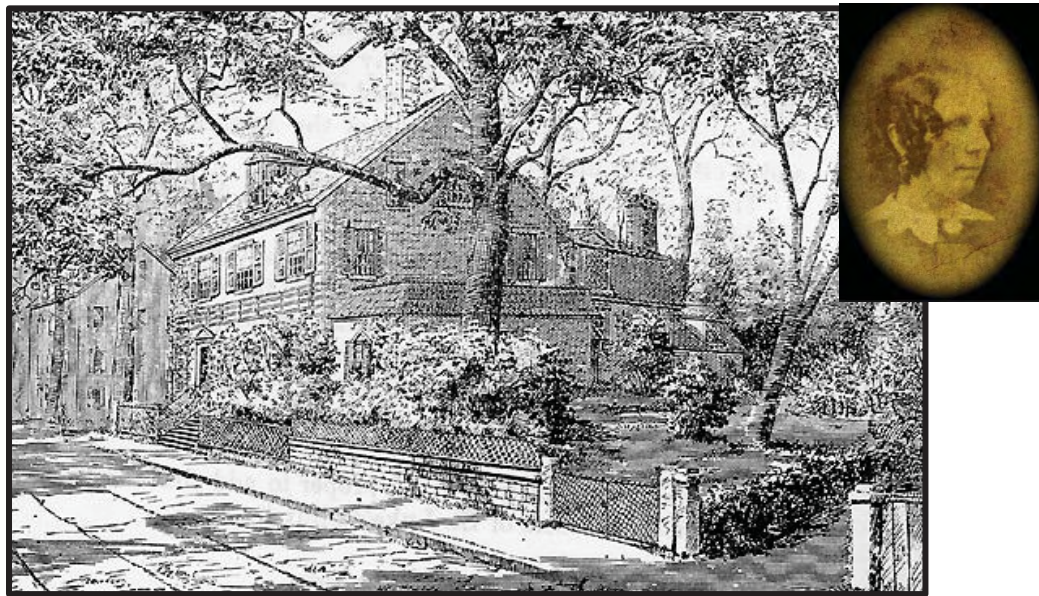


Figure 83. Upper right inset: Elizabeth Carrington Morris. Figure 84. Center: The Morris-Littell House. Source: <https://sparedandshared2.wordpress.com/letters/1823-elizabeth-carrington-morris-to-ann-willing-morris/>

<sup>53</sup> See historic images of the site presented here.

<sup>54</sup> Deed: Charles Willing Littell, et. al. to Edgar H. Butler, 20 March 1888, Philadelphia Deed Book G.G.P., No. 338, 407, CAP.



Figure 85. Looking north at the Morris-Little House in 1915 after the construction of Germantown High School was finished. Source: Marriot Canby Morris, Library Company of Philadelphia.

The Morris-Littell House stood at the southeast corner of Germantown Avenue and High Street, leaving ample ground for the “garden, so protected by its trees and shrubbery as to retain the attractions of its original seclusion.”<sup>55</sup> The Morris-Littell House was the home of Ann Willing Morris (1767–1853) from circa 1812 until her death in 1853. She lived in the house with two of her daughters—Margaretta Hare Morris (1797–1867) and Elizabeth Carrington Morris (1795–1865). The sisters Morris “contributed to the field botany and entomology ... turning their back yard into a laboratory where they made significant discoveries that impacted science and agricultural knowledge in the mid-nineteenth century.”<sup>56</sup> Margaretta Hare Morris was a recognized American entomologist, studying the life histories of insects, especially the Hessian fly and the seventeen-year locust, both being insects of great significance to agriculture.<sup>57</sup> While the house was demolished early on in the history of Germantown High School, the immediate grounds of the Morris-Littell House remain a park-like area, which, in many ways, is a tribute to the “Sister Scientists.”

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<sup>55</sup> Hotchkin, *Ancient and Modern*, 143–44.

<sup>56</sup> Catherine McNeur. “New Projects,” <http://www.catherinemcneur.com/new-projects>

<sup>57</sup> Marilyn Bailey Ogilvie and Joy Dorothy Harvey, *The Biographical Dictionary of Women in Science: L–Z* (Taylor & Francis, 2000), 917.



Figure 86. The Butler Mansion from Germantown Avenue. Source: *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 1903.

The modern history of the “Grounds” stems from the early 1910s when a longtime fight for the enlargement of public school facilities city-wide and, specifically, for a “Germantown District High School” was nearing its successful end. Between 1912 and 1913, the Philadelphia School Board’s Property Committee began dealings with Major Butler for the purchase of his homestead, which was one of several sites considered for the new facility. Sources indicate that Major Butler was offered \$125,000 for the property and later \$150,000, but he “had no desire to sell,” insisting that “sentimental reasons made him loath to give up the homestead.”<sup>58</sup> After being threatened with condemnation proceedings, Major Butler finally agreed to sell the property for \$150,000, though he had previously countered with \$175,000.<sup>59</sup> Some sources indicate that the community demanded that the trees within the front lawn of the Butler Mansion be preserved, as well as the Morris-Littell House.<sup>60</sup>

While the Morris-Littell House was ultimately demolished, the “Grounds” were not only preserved, but enlarged over time to span the entire frontage of the block on Germantown Avenue between E. Haines and High Streets. On many occasions the School District of Philadelphia considered destroying the “Grounds” forming the visual sweep of Germantown High School from Germantown Avenue. The 1959–60 Addition was one of the first opportunities, but rather than designing an addition along High Street, the new wing was built from the rear of the 1914–16 Building, extending the building line to E. Haines Street. The 1964–65 Gymnasium, the 1967–68 Addition, and the desire for parking overtime could have obliterated this landscape, but, nevertheless, the “Grounds” were preserved and improved upon through c1959-65.

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<sup>58</sup> “To Take Butler Home for New High School,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 10 May 1913, 18.

<sup>59</sup> “Butler Site Bought for High Schools,” unknown publication, May 1913, Newspaper Clippings file, Germantown Historical Society Library, Historic Germantown (hereafter GHS).

<sup>60</sup> “New High School for 2000 Pupils,” *Germantown Independent-Gazette*, 1914, Newspaper Clipping File, GHS.

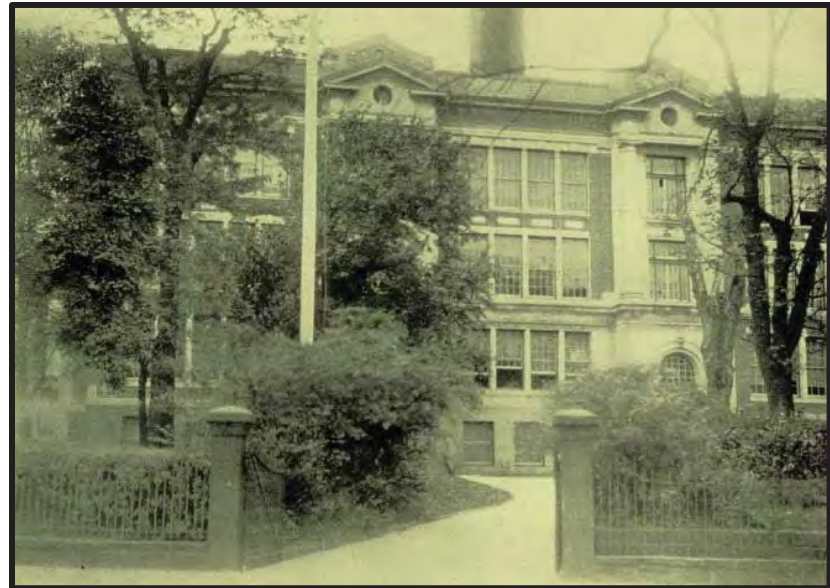


Figure 87. Top: The Seckel-Butler House, Germantown Avenue below High Street, Germantown, which was photographed in 1913 by Marriot Canby Morris in anticipation of its demolition. Source: Library Company of Philadelphia. Figure 88. Center: Looking northeast from Germantown Avenue at the 1914–16 Building. Source: Germantown High School Year Book (1930), 10. Figure 89. Bottom: Looking northeast from Germantown Avenue below High Street at the former Germantown High School. Source: Google.

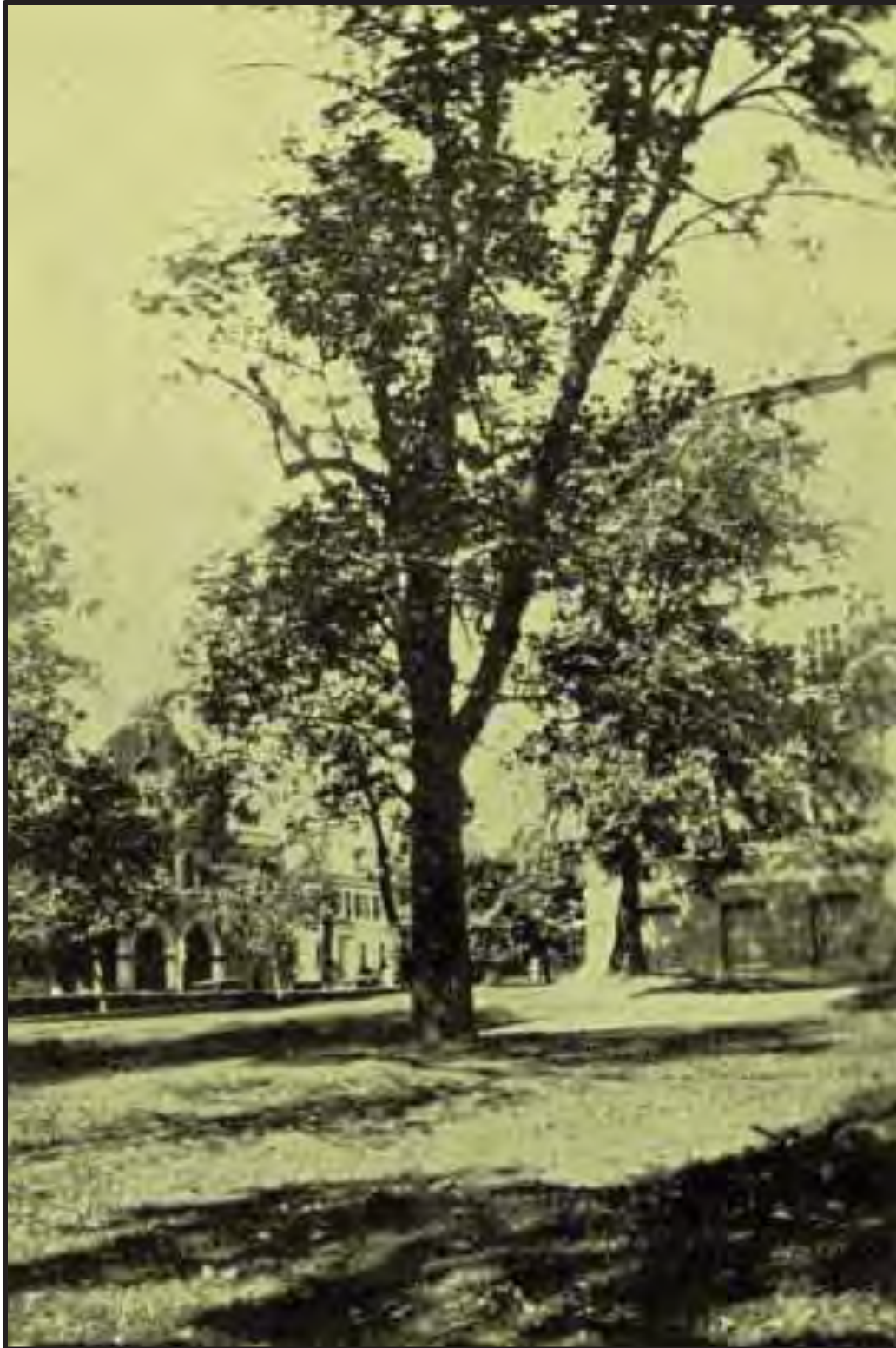


Figure 90. Photo of an old tree on the premises of the “Grounds” featured in the “Boys History,” of the Germantown High School Year Book (1930), 31. Source: Germantown High School Year Book (1930), 31, U.S., School Yearbooks, 1900–1990, Ancestry.com.

*Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, February 2019  
Germantown High School, 5915–41 Germantown Avenue, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*

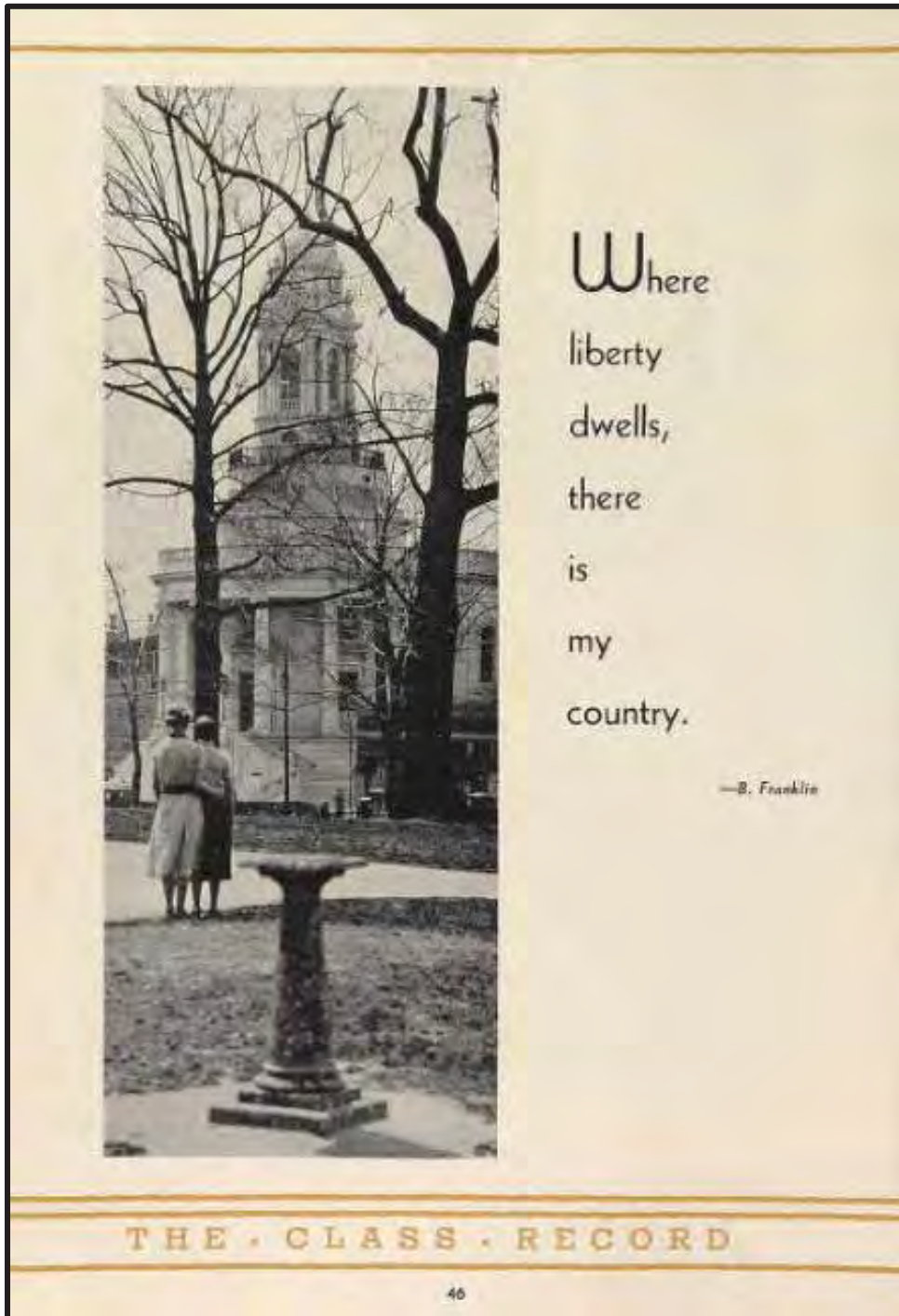


Figure 91. Looking south from the “Grounds” of Germantown High School toward Germantown Town Hall. Source: Germantown High School Yearbook (1936), U.S., School Yearbooks, 1900–1990, Ancestry.com.



Figure 92. Top left: Dallin Aerial Survey Company Photographs, 1931. Source: Hagley Digital Archives. Figure 93. Top right: Looking east at Germantown High School. Source: Atlas, City of Philadelphia, 2018. Figure 94. Bottom: Looking north at Germantown High School with 5041 Germantown Avenue (Three Ton Tavern), and 5043 Germantown Avenue at the bottom right. Taken on 16 December 1923. Source: Morris Collection, National Independence Historic Park.

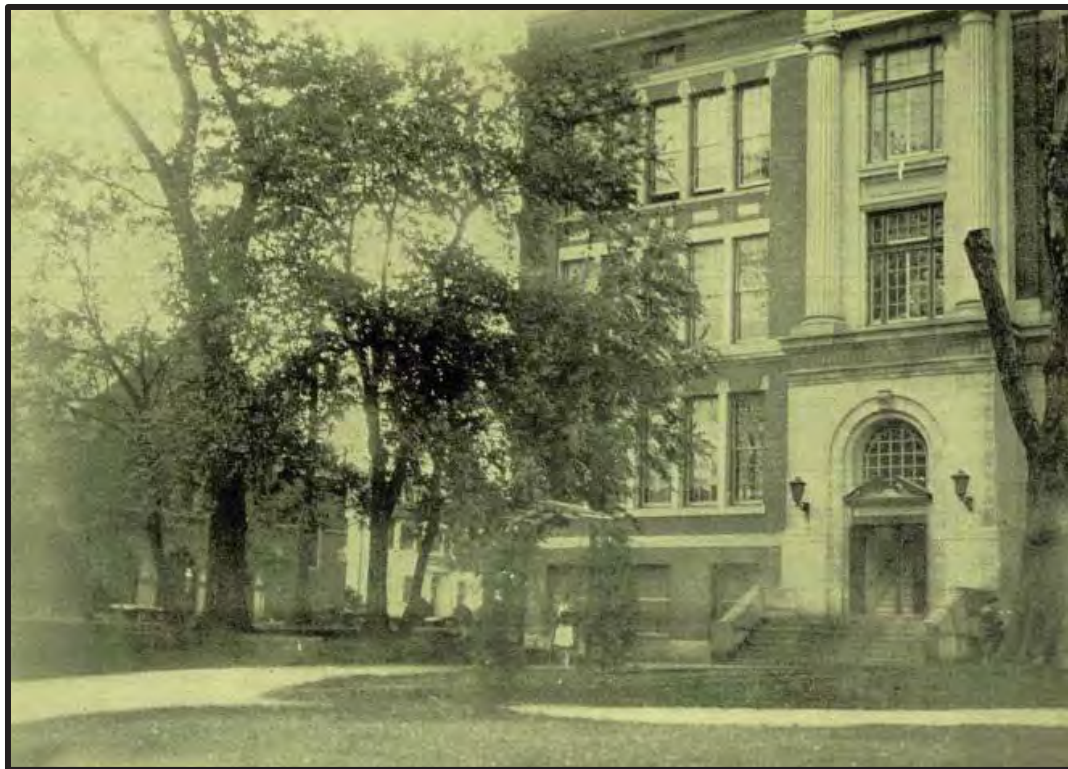


Figure 95. Top: Looking north at the southwest elevation of the 1914–16 Building of Germantown High School with First United M.E. Church of Germantown on left. Figure 96. Bottom: Looking west at the “Grounds” of Germantown High School with the juncture of Germantown Avenue and High Street in the distance. Source: Germantown High School Year Book (1930), 31, U.S., School Yearbooks, 1900–1990, Ancestry.com.



Figure 97. The southwest elevation of 1914–16 Building and the “Grounds” of Germantown High School, shown in the yearbook from 1957. Source: Germantown High School Yearbook (1957), U.S., School Yearbooks, 1900–1990, Ancestry.com.

In 1965 the School District of Philadelphia purchased three properties adjacent to Germantown High School from the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Philadelphia for \$13,075. The properties included what was then known as “Parcel No. 11” at the northwest corner of Germantown Avenue and E. Haines Street. Referred to in this nomination, under the discussion of Criterion I, as Historical Lots 1 and 2, Parcel No. 11 comprised what was formerly four buildings that fronted Germantown Avenue (5901–13 Germantown Avenue) and three buildings along the northwesterly side of E. Haines Street (12, 14, and 20 E. Haines Street).<sup>61</sup> Parcel No. 11 was assembled through Condemnation Proceedings in the Court of Common Pleas No. 3 of Philadelphia County in March 1960 based on the Urban Renewal Plan for the Morton Redevelopment, which was approved in May, 1959.<sup>62</sup> This urban renewal project demolished the buildings on Parcel No. 11 thereby adding more open land that effectively expanded the distinctive park-like area of Germantown High School to E. Haines Street.

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<sup>61</sup> Deed: Redevelopment Authority of the City of Philadelphia to School District of Philadelphia, 30 November 1965, PDBk C.A.D., No. 691, p. 1, CAP.

<sup>62</sup> Deed: Redevelopment Authority of the City of Philadelphia to School District of Philadelphia, 30 November 1965, PDBk C.A.D., No. 691, p. 1, CAP.

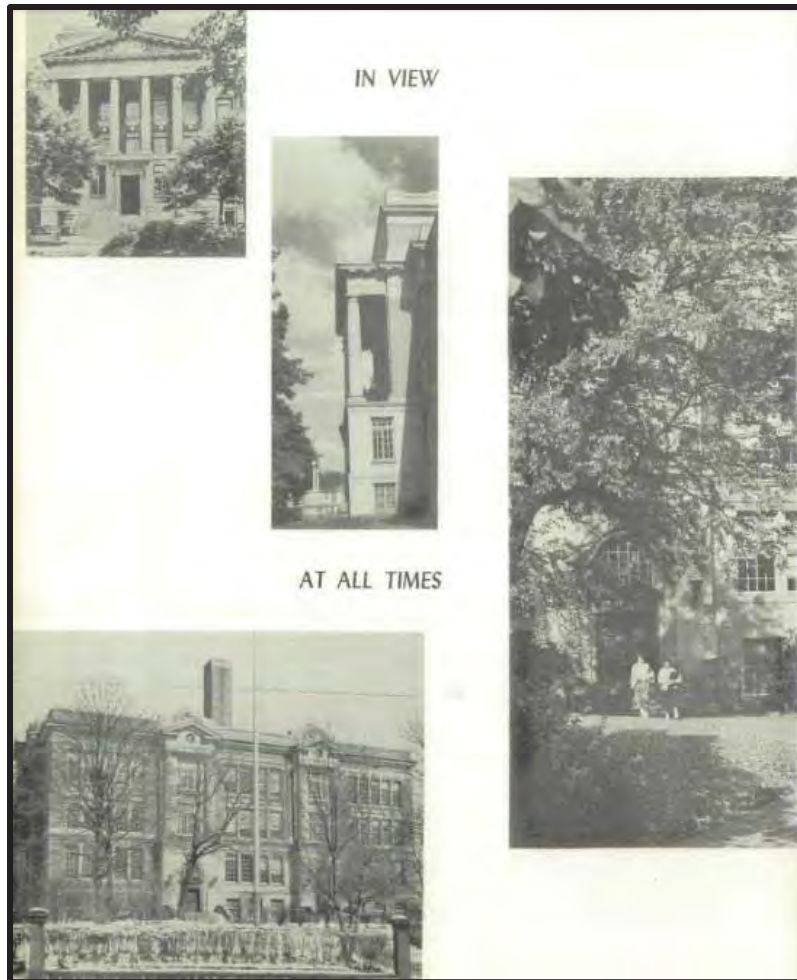


Figure 98. With a theme that relates to the two criteria, this page from the yearbook shows various views of the 1914–16 Building, the one on right showing the landscape in the “Grounds”. Source: Germantown High School Yearbook (1957), 48, U.S., School Yearbooks, 1900–1990, Ancestry.com.

In summary, the “Grounds” are integral to the larger resources, as a distinctive public landscape and place known historically as Germantown High School and even before that as the homestead of several old Germantown and Philadelphia families. Furthermore, the 1914–16 Building, the 1959–60 Addition, and the “Grounds,” constitute a familiar and established visual feature of the community and neighborhood as seen from Germantown Avenue. The students who attended Germantown High School and members of the community clearly valued the “Grounds” as a defining feature of Germantown High School. Evidence of this is documented with photographs of the “Grounds” prominently illustrated in almost every yearbook of the school from the 1920s to the 1980s (see figures). The “Grounds” and its canopy of specimen trees, historic and vintage pavements and improvements, and the southwest facades beyond form a distinctive visual feature of the neighborhood that is characteristic of old Germantown and the aesthetic, cultural, and visual continuum that was preserved by its community.



Figure 99. Two views showing the exterior of Germantown High School's 1914–16 Building, the upper of which illustrates the continued reverence students had for the "Grounds". Source: Germantown High School's Yearbook (1971), 1, U.S., School Yearbooks, 1900–1990, Ancestry.com.



Figure 100. The northwest elevation of the 1914–16 Building of Germantown High School. Source: Historic Germantown.

*(c) Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style.*

*(d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen.*

***Period of Significance: 1914–16 and 1925–26***

The 1914–16 Building is a monumental example of public-school architecture that conveys the investment and status associated with a public education in Philadelphia and the United States in the early twentieth century. The subject building reflects the built environment of Philadelphia in an era characterized by distinctive monumental public school buildings in the Classical and Georgian Revival styles. A grand public-school building, the 1914–16 Building embodies distinguishing characteristics of the Georgian Revival style with Classical Revival characteristics.



Figure 101. The southwest elevation of the 1914–16 Building of Germantown High School. Source: Photographs, Board of Education Records, CAP.

Germantown High School’s 1914–16 Building possesses distinguishing characteristics of the Georgian Revival style, which was influenced by a larger aesthetic movement and ideal that led to grand and architecturally-significant institutional and public edifices in Philadelphia and nationwide. After the Centennial Exhibition of 1876, the history of America as a Republic became more closely admired and celebrated, which resulted in a resurgence of Georgian styles in architecture and design. While these colonial-inspired stylistic roots had never entirely disappeared in Philadelphia, the Centennial certainly fueled the emergence and employment of the Georgian Revival in the design of new buildings, which was part of the larger American Colonial Revival.<sup>63</sup> “The Georgian Revival style is based on details and materials of buildings originally from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, (generally the rule of George I–IV in England),” as adapted to a modern school building in the early twentieth century.<sup>64</sup>

Features of the 1914–16 Building that exhibit distinguishing characteristics of the Georgian Revival include the symmetrical arrangement and design; the use of contrasting red brick with limestone and granite; the employment of double height columns of the Doric order, as well as pilasters and piers throughout; and other features—pedimented doors; broken pediments over doors; and decorative pendants. The southwest elevation facing onto the “Grounds” at

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<sup>63</sup> Leland M. Roth, *American Architecture: A History* (Colorado: Westview Press, 2001), 352–54.

<sup>64</sup> Virginia Kurshan, “New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission Nomination: Jamaica High School, 167–01 Gothic Drive, Jamaica, Queens. New York City,” NYC LPC Research Department, 2009, 6.

Germantown Avenue features retrained porticos with dominant broken pediments within the gable end pairs of massive Doric pilasters set upon a rusticated base.

There is no denying that many Georgian Revival style buildings invoked characteristic features of the Classical Revival, which is largely a result of the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago of 1893, fostering a renewed taste for classical design. By the time Germantown High School was built, monumental public buildings designed in the Georgian Revival style often included elements of classical design. The 1914–16 Building's most dominant feature is its full height portico with a prominent pediment, featuring a sculptural relief. This is most certainly a feature found in both Georgian and Classical Revival style buildings.<sup>65</sup>



Figure 102. The William Penn High School for Girls (1913). Source: Photographs, Board of Education Records, CAP.

Around the time Germantown High School was built, the Philadelphia School District was amidst a greater movement to enlarge the city's educational capacity. Other examples of large and impressive monumental school buildings in the Classical or Georgian Revival styles include the Benjamin B. Comegys School No. 2 (built 1911) on the south side of Upland Street west of 50<sup>th</sup> Street in West Philadelphia; the Dimner Beeber Junior High School (1933) at 59<sup>th</sup> Street and Malvern Avenue in West Philadelphia; the Philadelphia High School for Girls (1933) at 17<sup>th</sup> and Spring Garden in Spring Garden; the William H. Hunter School (1910) at the southeast corner of Dauphin and Mascher Streets in Kensington; and the William Penn High School for Girls (1909) at the northwest corner of 15<sup>th</sup> and Mount Vernon Streets in Spring Garden. Other monumental school buildings include the Frankford High School (1916) on the west side of Oxford Avenue between Harrison and Wakeling Streets on the south side of Frankford; and the West Philadelphia

<sup>65</sup> "Classical Revival Style 1895–1950," in Pennsylvania Architectural Field Guide, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, last modified August 26, 2015, <http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/portal/communities/architecture/styles/classical-revival.html>

High School for Boys and Girls (1912) on the southeast corner of 48th and Walnut Streets in West Philadelphia, both in a somewhat collegiate Gothic style.

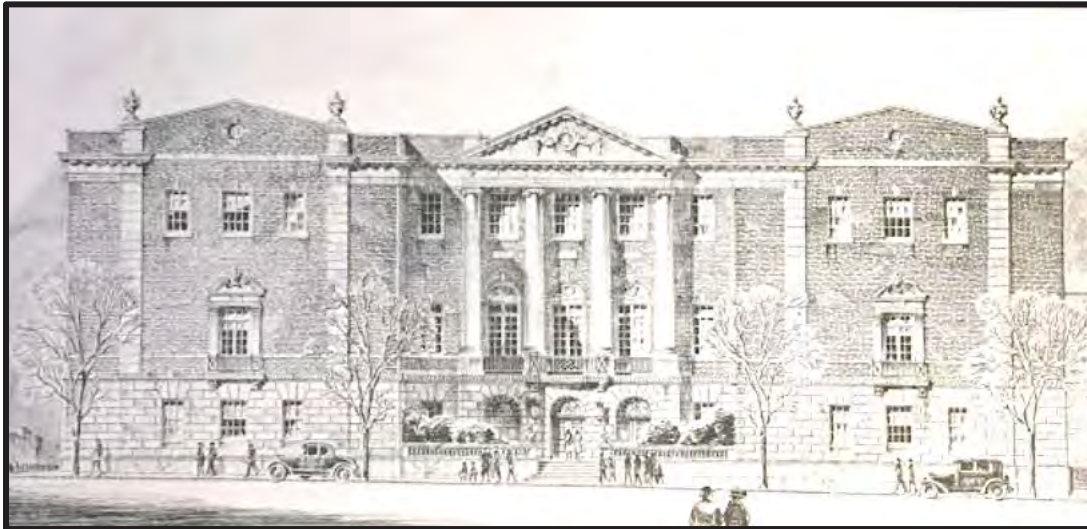


Figure 103. Top: The Dimmer Beeber Junior High School, West Philadelphia. Figure 104. Center: The Philadelphia High School for Girls (1909), Spring Garden. Figure 105. Bottom Left: The William H. Hunter School (1913). Figure 106. Bottom Right: The B.B. Comegys School No. 2 (1913). Source: Photographs, Board of Education Records, CAP.



Figure 107. Top: The West Philadelphia High School for Boys and Girls, West Philadelphia (1915). Figure 108. Bottom: The Frankford High School, Frankford (1916). Source: Photographs, Board of Education Records, CAP.

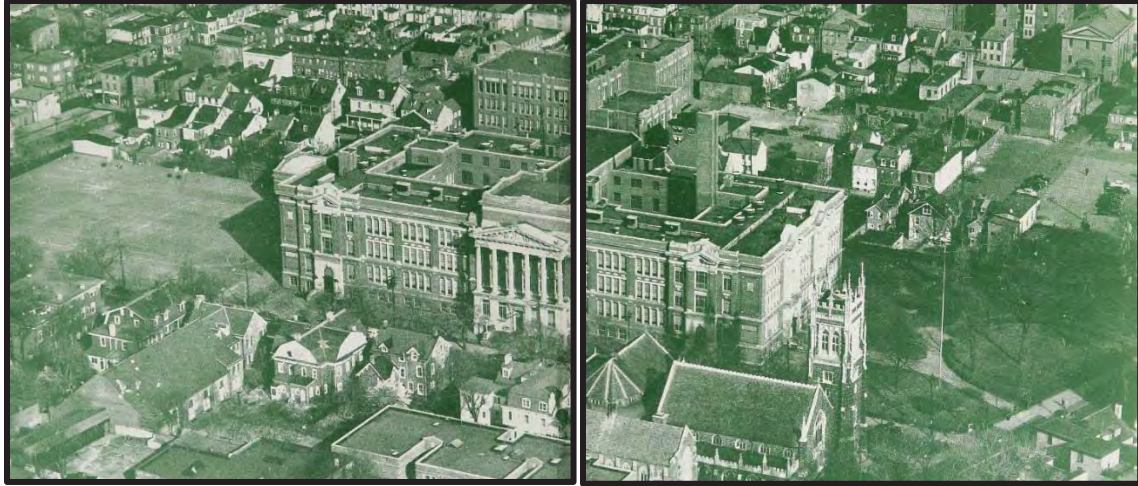


Figure 109. Looking east at the northwest elevation of the 1914–16 Building of Germantown High School. Source: Germantown High School Yearbook (1956), 91, U.S., School Yearbooks, 1900–1990, Ancestry.com.

*(a) Has significant character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the City of Philadelphia.*

*Period of Significance: 1914–1929*

Germantown High School is a building of significant character, interest, and value because it is the product of and represents an important moment in the history not only of Germantown but also Philadelphia and Pennsylvania. Germantown High School in fact represents a pivotal moment in the history of public education in Philadelphia, when the enlargement of the secondary education took place in the first quarter of the twentieth century.

Large scale public school education beyond the primary school level (grades K to 8) is an early twentieth century development. Most children since the introduction of free public education laws in Philadelphia in 1837 only attended primary schools. While Philadelphia has one of the oldest public high schools (Central High School) in the nation, secondary school education was primarily a luxury for the middle class who did not need their teenage children to work. This changed as child labor laws were introduced in Pennsylvania beginning in 1848 for children under the age of 12 in just the textile industry. The extension of these laws to other industries and age categories was a painfully slow process throughout the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century. Many different groups worked long and hard to push for reform. It was not until 1914, that Pennsylvania passed the sweeping Cox Child Labor Law that not only restricted the hours of work for children under the age of 16 but also required that they attend school for a minimum number of hours a week during the school year. In a city like Philadelphia, the third largest in the U.S. at that time, it had profound consequences for the public school system.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> The information in this section is primarily from: Forest Chester Ensign, “Compulsory School Attendance and Child Labor: A Study of the Historical Development of Regulations Compelling Attendance and Limiting the Labor of Children in a Selected Group of States” (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1921), 170–202.

The Philadelphia public school system was in a state of crisis at the beginning of the twentieth century. The city was experiencing population growth of close to 25% every decade since 1870 which the school system was having trouble keep up with. By 1906 the 5,000 new students a year were showing up on the doorsteps of Philadelphia's public schools. Children were seated on window sills between benches sometimes even the floor and in annex buildings. Germantown too also experienced this population boom. Beginning around 1890 its population was increasing by roughly 40% per decade. In the period between 1910 and 1920 the greater Germantown population rose by a staggering 57%.<sup>67</sup> Not only was the public school system unprepared in the dense sections of the city, Germantown was definitely not equipped to serve its population boom. At the root of the problem, however, was management and funding not population growth.

Philadelphia's schools were in the death grip of the boss politics of the Republican Party which ruled Philadelphia and Pennsylvania since the Civil War. Each ward of the city had its own school board ruled by the party ward leaders who had full control over the hiring and firing of janitors, teachers and even principals. Appointments were frequently made on the basis of political concerns and outright bribery. Funding of the schools was intermixed with other City departments and controlled by City Councils and its own patronage. The situation had become so bad that by 1904 Philadelphia was only funding its school system with \$1 million a year, while Boston, with half the population of Philadelphia, committed \$10 million.

Through the efforts of concerned citizens and exposé journalists, the Philadelphia schools finally broke free of direct political control in 1905 when the state legislature took these powers out of the hands of 41 ward school boards and vested it in a single board of education for the entire city. The Philadelphia School Board was initially composed of 21 members who had full power over the hiring and firing of staff. The next important and fundamental change came with the state-wide School Code of 1911. This freed the Philadelphia School Board from the financial control of Councils by giving it the power to levy taxes and borrow money. These reforms had a direct influence on the growth of public high schools in Philadelphia.

These regulatory, organization, and financial changes made it possible for Philadelphia to enlarge its system of public high schools. In 1906 Philadelphia had only four secondary schools (none co-educational) all located near the central part of the city. Philadelphia ranked twenty-third in the number of students attending secondary schools among the U.S's top twenty-four cities.<sup>68</sup> Starting in 1906, Philadelphia School Superintendent (and later governor) Dr. Martin G. Brumbaugh made it his mission to change that statistic. He succeeded in adding three new high schools during his tenure: West Philadelphia High School (1911), Frankford High School (1914), and Germantown High School (1914). All three of these schools followed the new a model called comprehensive high schools, where boys and girls were educated in the same building with curriculum that

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<sup>67</sup> "Total Population of Philadelphia Wards, 1860–1960" in John Daly and Alan Weinberg, *Genealogy of Philadelphia County Subdivisions* (Philadelphia: City of Philadelphia, 1966), 100. These figures represent both the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 42<sup>nd</sup> Wards in 1910 and 1920 since they were both within the catchment area of Germantown High School during this period (before Olney High School was built in 1929). Between 1920 and 1930 the population of this area grew by 66%.

<sup>68</sup> To follow the earlier comparison with Boston, Boston had 15 secondary public schools during this time period.

included academic, commercial and manual arts courses. This established a comprehensive secondary education, which Philadelphia had previously offered, but only in separate schools in a single building. This opened the possibilities of continuing education geographically beyond the central core of the city. This was the beginning of the modern public high school in Philadelphia.<sup>69</sup>

Germantown High School (1914–16 Building) is the physical embodiment of the triumph of progressive politics and citizen action to improve the lives of children in Pennsylvania and Philadelphia at the beginning of the twentieth century. As one of the first three high schools in Philadelphia that resulted from the Pennsylvania Code of 1911 and the curricular reforms of Dr. Brumbaugh, the subject building represents a significant marker in the history of public school education in Philadelphia. The 1925–26 Gymnasium is a continuation of the movement and the structural reforms of comprehensive high school incorporating a full gymnasium into the building which could also meet that needs of the rapidly growing population of greater Germantown. A testament to this achievement is found in 1922 independent survey of Philadelphia’s

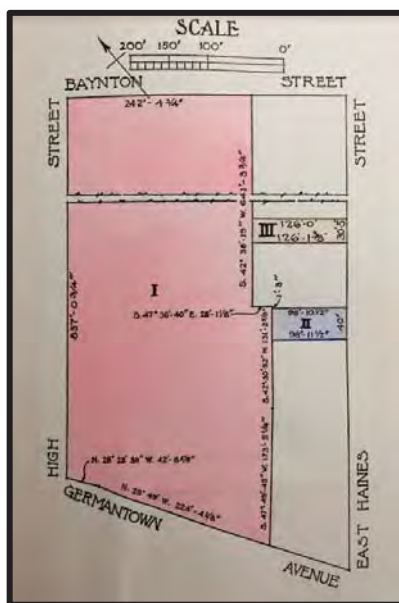


Figure 110. An original plan of the Germantown High School property. Source: Franklin Davenport Edmunds, *The Public School Buildings of the City of Philadelphia from 1908 to 1918* (Philadelphia: The Board of Education, School District of Philadelphia, 1939), 151.

public schools where it ranked Germantown High School number one of all Philadelphia high schools in its evaluation of school buildings and grounds.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>69</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the information in this section is drawn from: Earl C. Kaylor, Jr., *Martin Grove Brumbaugh: A Pennsylvanian’s Odyssey from Sainted Schoolman to Bedeviled World War I Governor, 1862–1930* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1996), 195–237.

<sup>70</sup> Pennsylvania State Department of Public Education, *Report of the Survey of the Public Schools of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: The Public Education and Child Labor Association of Pennsylvania, 1922), 1:62.

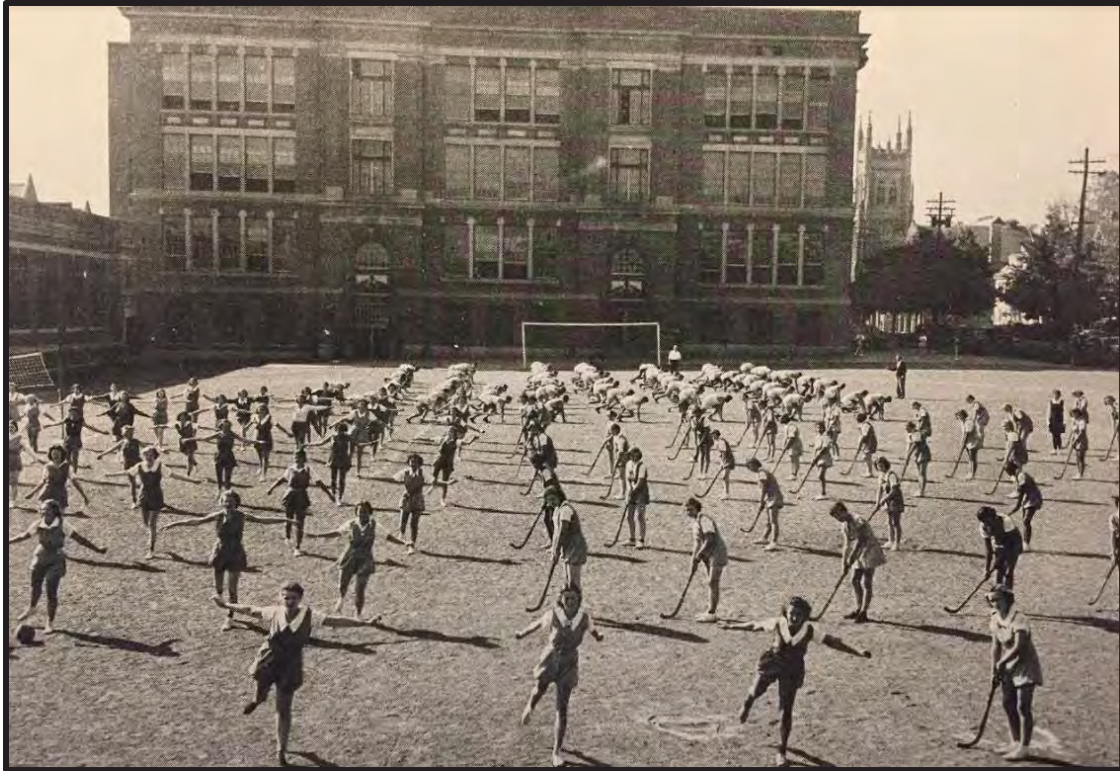


Figure 111. “The Girls” of Germantown High School in the field on the northeast side of the building, where the 1964–65 Gymnasium now stands. Source: Germantown High School File, Historic Germantown.

*(j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.*

***Period of Significance: 1914–1967***

This monumental, Georgian Revival public high school and its modernist additions were built and developed by the School District of Philadelphia between 1914 and 1967 to accommodate the growing population of the neighborhood and the ever-increasing demand for a high school education. Steeped in community pride and history, Germantown is a distinctive community and largely suburban style neighborhood in Northwest Philadelphia. More than any other educational facility in the neighborhood, Germantown High School, comprised of the “Grounds”, the 1914–16 Building, the 1925–26 Gymnasium, the 1959–60 Addition, the 1964–65 Gymnasium, and the 1967–68 Addition, exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, and social heritage of public education in the Germantown community, as secondary education first became geographically representative in the larger city, and accessible to a wider range of the population.



Figure 112. Top: Laying the cornerstone at the subject property on September 26, 1914. Source: Germantown Historical Society. Figure 113. Bottom: “Thousands Attend Exercises Marking Birth of New High School,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 27 September 1914, 6. Bottom left: William T. Tilden. Source: Germantown High School File, Historic Germantown.

After close to seven-year local campaign for a new high school building in Germantown, the subject property was purchased in 1913 and plans for the 1914–16 Building were underway.<sup>71</sup> J. Horace Cook, Superintendent of Buildings of the School Board, worked with Philadelphia architect Henry DeCoursey Richards (who primarily designed school buildings) to prepare the plans for Germantown High School. The proposed designs illustrated a building that would cost a projected \$800,000, measuring 400 by 175 feet, and standing three-stories tall with a raised basement. The building would consist of the west wing devoted to education of girls and the east wing to boys. The wings were to be separated by a central block of administrative offices; an auditorium, designed to seat one thousand two hundred and “...equipped with motion picture

<sup>71</sup> As early as 1904, the Public Education Association of Philadelphia “sought to convince the City Councils and the Board of Education of the need for high schools not only in the center of the city but in the various outlying districts as well.” (“Got High School By 11 Years’ Work,” unknown newspaper, 12 November 1915, scrapbook, GHS). The push for a new high school in the prosperous Germantown neighborhood of northwest Philadelphia was spearheaded by numerous residents, including George P. Darrow, President of Germantown School Board; William T. Tilden, wool merchant and local politician; and Martin G. Brumbaugh, Superintendent of Public Schools and nominee for governor, as well as the following organizations: the Men’s Association of Germantown, and the Germantown and Chestnut Hill Improvement Association. (“New Germantown Club,” [Unknown Newspaper] Scrapbook. (Philadelphia: 1909). Source: Germantown Historical Society.) Nearly one-fifth of Philadelphia’s high school population was supplied from the Germantown district. (“Pleas For More Schools: Germantown Wants A Higher Institution For Its Children,” unknown newspaper, 1912, scrapbook, GHS). Parents concerned that their children, especially daughters, were having to make the long, dangerous trek into Center City and be exposed to unseemly behavior to attend overcrowded and dilapidated schools all pushed hard for a new school in their neighborhood. Many children, due to hardship and the cost to travel to Center City, didn’t attend school at all. (Erika M. Kitzmiller, “The Roots of Educational Inequality: Germantown High School, 1907–2011” [PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2012], 26).

apparatus;”<sup>72</sup> and laboratories to be used alternately by both the boys and the girls.<sup>73</sup> The building was designed to accommodate 2,700 students, 1,500 girls and 1,200 boys,<sup>74</sup> representing “the most modern ideas in school construction [...] Innovations heretofore unknown are being introduced and will be among the finest high schools in the state.”<sup>75</sup>



Figure 114. Looking northeast at the foundation of the 1914–16 Building of Germantown High School. Taken on 28 August 1914. Note: the stable of the Butler Mansion is being demolished on right in the background. Source: Photographs, Board of Education Records, CAP.

On April 9, 1914, the contract for construction of the building was awarded to Thomas Reilly for approximately \$614,927. Additional contracts for utilities including electrical, plumbing, ventilation and totaling over \$177,752 were awarded to S. Faith & Co., William McCoach and the United Electrical Construction Company.<sup>76</sup> The cornerstone was laid on September 26, 1914 in a large public ceremony. Reflecting the community’s great pride in its history and connecting this building with that the majority of the contents of the cornerstone related to various important topics of Germantown history (including an article on Christopher Witt) in addition to a list of pupils, and banknotes and coins from the National Bank of Germantown.<sup>77</sup> School Superintendent Brumbaugh’s speech at the event focused on the historical connections of Germantown and education, starting with Francis Daniel Pastorius who lived next door to the site.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> “High School Opens in Old Quarters,” unknown newspaper, 1915, scrapbook, GHS.

<sup>73</sup> Kitzmiller, “The Roots of Educational Inequality,” 55.

<sup>74</sup> “Bids On High School To Be Asked Today,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 31 May 1914.

<sup>75</sup> “Work On Newest Of High Schools Will Be Hurried,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 9 August 1914.

<sup>76</sup> By 1936, a total of \$792,679 had been spent on the building.

<sup>77</sup> “In Cornerstone,” unknown newspaper, 1914, scrapbook, GHS.

<sup>78</sup> “Brumbaugh Tells of Germantown’s Early Scholars,” unknown newspaper, 1914, Germantown High School Clippings file, GHS.

Construction continued until the building was accepted as complete on November 1, 1915. “Three[-] and One[-] Half Story Brick” of “Reinforced Concrete Construction” with “Limestone Trimmings,” the 1914–16 Building contained 65 classrooms, an auditorium, a gymnasium, an infirmary, a library, lunch and faculty rooms, administrative offices, etc.<sup>79</sup>

Once the building was ruled complete, there was a parade to celebrate the opening.<sup>80</sup> The staff was hired from elite schools to provide students with a first-rate education in Botany, Greek, and Rhetoric.<sup>81</sup> Dr. Harry F. Keller was the first principal and Miss Mary S. Holmes was the first assistant to the principal. While the original date projected for occupation was September 8, 1915, the date was put off at least twice after that. Finally, “on November 1, 1915, [between] 540 [and 550] boys walked through the hand carved archway and up the marble staircase, welcomed in the auditorium and released to class. Then 800 girls received the same.”<sup>82</sup> The boys occupied the east end and the girls occupied the west end. There were twenty-seven boys in the first graduating class of males in 1917.<sup>83</sup> Students went on to attend Yale, Princeton, Harvard, Radcliffe, Wellesley, and Smith Universities.<sup>84</sup>



Figure 115. Left: Early class at Germantown High School, showing an almost entirely white student population. Source: Germantown Historical Society. Figure 116. Right: A female and a male student together on the steps of the northwest elevation of the 1914–16 Building of Germantown High School in 1936. Source: Germantown High School Yearbook (1936), 28–29. U.S., School Yearbooks, 1900–1990, Ancestry.com.

<sup>79</sup> Franklin Davenport Edmunds, *The Public School Buildings of the City of Philadelphia from 1908 to 1918* (Philadelphia: The Board of Education, School District of Philadelphia, 1939), 151.

<sup>80</sup> “School Equipment Bids,” *The Evening Ledger*, 12 August 1915.

<sup>81</sup> Kitzmiller, “The Roots of Educational Inequality,” 2.

<sup>82</sup> Kitzmiller, “The Roots of Educational Inequality,” 81.

<sup>83</sup> Kitzmiller, “The Roots of Educational Inequality,” 81.

<sup>84</sup> “Memorial Tree Planted,” unknown newspaper, 1918, scrapbook, GHS. “Extol Soldiers of High School,” unknown newspaper, 1919, scrapbook, GHS.



Figure 117. The bas relief in the pediment of Germantown High School's 1914–16 Building. Source: "Designer of Fine Panel Inspired at Breakfast," unknown newspaper, 1915, scrapbook. Source: Germantown High School File, Historic Germantown.

At the time of its completion and for most of its history, the 1914–16 Building was also revered as a work of art. The bas relief sculpture or "panel" that is set within the pediment over the primary entrance on High Street was also designed by the architect, H. DeCoursey Richards. After making a rough model in plaster, the architect sent the design of the panel to sculptor Louis Millione (1884–1955). Millione, from Padua, Italy, was a graduate of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, and had completed several sculpture commissions in Philadelphia and elsewhere. He carved the bas relief "Patriotism" over east entrance of Senate Chamber. The bas relief on Germantown High School included "...symbols that would prove of help and inspiration to boys and girls with a central figure in sympathy to both."<sup>85</sup>

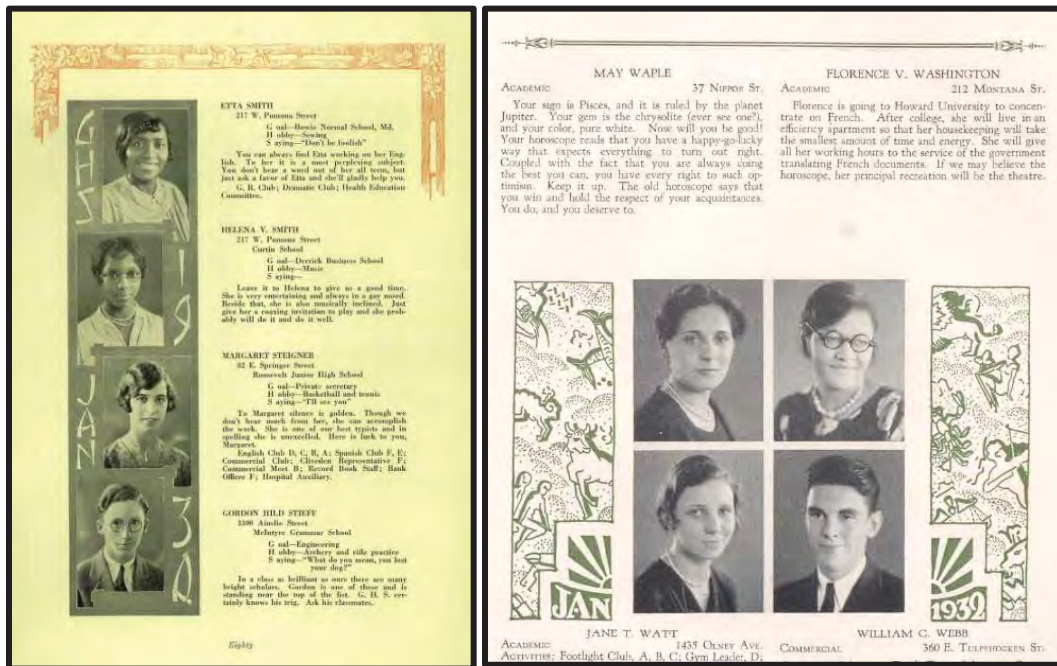


Figure 118. Left: A page from the Germantown High School Yearbook (1930), showing two of the few African American students attending Germantown High School in 1930. Source: Germantown High School Yearbook (1930), U.S., School Yearbooks, 1900–1990, Ancestry.com. Figure 119. Right: A page from the Germantown High School Yearbook (1936), showing Florence V. Washington, representing a very small percentage of the African American student population. Source: Germantown High School Yearbook (1936), 91, U.S., School Yearbooks, 1900–1990, Ancestry.com.

<sup>85</sup> "Designer of Fine Panel Inspired at Breakfast," unknown newspaper, 1915, Germantown High School File, GHS.

After not having sufficient gymnasium facilities for nearly a decade, “Germantown High’s Gym Plan...” totaling \$70,500 was recommended for approval in June 1924. This amount, however, increased by the time the contract was executed in April 1925.<sup>86</sup> The final cost of the building contract was \$77,450, which with extras totaled \$78,220 at the time of its completion.<sup>87</sup> The 1925–26 Gymnasium aligns aesthetically with the 1914–16 Building, though it was never entirely large enough to serve the student body effectively.



Figure 120. A drawing of Germantown High School by Herbert Pullinger, c. 1915–30. Source: Germantown High School File, Historic Germantown.

From the time Germantown High School opened through the Crash of 1929, this important public high school was new and experiencing its “glory days,” bolstered by a strong sense of community involvement, which included community-funded activities, programs, and services. The student body was largely middle to upper-middle class, native-born Philadelphia Caucasians living in Germantown or the larger area of Northwest Philadelphia. While Germantown High School was never segregated, African American students made up a very small percentage of the student body at this time.<sup>88</sup> Whites made up more than 98% of the graduates in 1920. African American graduates from Germantown High School made up roughly 1.4% of the graduating class.<sup>89</sup> Though attending Germantown High School often led black students to a brighter and more promising future, their experience at the school was not without the struggle from being treated like second-class students by their white counterparts and faculty. The 1914–16 Building and the 1925–26 Gymnasium represents this period of racial inequality and injustice in American public school

<sup>86</sup> “Germantown High’s Gym Plan Favored,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 10 June 1924, 3.

<sup>87</sup> Edmunds, *The Public School Buildings*, 151.

<sup>88</sup> David Young, “The Battles of Germantown: Public History and Preservation in America’s Most Historic Neighborhood During the Twentieth Century” (PhD diss., Ohio State University, 2009), 54.

<sup>89</sup> Germantown High School Yearbooks, 1919–1922, GHS; Central High School Yearbooks, 1918–1922, CHS; The Philadelphia High School for Girls Yearbooks, 1919–1922, PHSG; ancestry.com.

systems, which exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of Germantown and the larger community of Northwest Philadelphia from 1914 to 1929.

In her important work on Germantown High School as a case study of American public high schools and inequality through the twentieth century, historian Erika M. Kitzmiller describes the period between 1914 and 1928 as follows:

During this period, the high school served primarily white, native-born middle class youth from the area and provided one of the best educational opportunities in the city. However, the Board of Public Education never had the funding that it needed to support the city's schools. Rather than pressure city officials to provide its schools with the funds they actually needed, Germantown residents subsidized their new institution with private funds to ensure that their children had the educational resources and extracurricular activities that they wanted. This private funding extended beyond the high school and supported a variety of charitable institutions in the community, which augmented the educational and recreational activities available to Germantown's working and middle class youth. The influx of private funding provided these institutions with the resources that they needed and helped to establish their legitimacy, but at the same time, it stratified the city's institutions into those that had to rely solely on the city's inadequate funding streams and those that did not.<sup>90</sup>

In spite of the Great Depression (1929 to 1937) Germantown High School continued its path to academic excellence, with a diminishing, but still impressive array of vocational and extra-curricular activities. While stifled by the economic constraints of the period, Germantown as a community "fared better than many other parts of the city during this period," yet the Great Depression still introduced unprecedented levels of poverty to the local community. This depression weakened and disabled private funding sources that had previously supplemented charitable organizations for certain educational and extracurricular activities and services.<sup>91</sup> The gradual decline in Germantown High School's academic, vocational, and extra-curricular programs represents the economic troubles of the time, which is represented by the 1914–16 Building and the 1925–26 Gymnasium.

Between 1937 and 1945, "Philadelphia emerged from the Great Depression and the nation entered World War II, causing a local 'wartime economic boom' in certain parts of the city." Despite this temporary economic driver and relief, the city still underwent a gradual loss of jobs and residents to the suburbs and beyond. Specifically, the wartime boom to the economy did not directly benefit Germantown; however, there were certainly indirect positive financial gains for its residents. Naturally, the lack of economic opportunities led to less jobs for youth. Since only four percent of high school-age Philadelphians actually attended school in 1900, a figure that rose exponentially by the mid-twentieth century, it is easy to understand most teenagers worked to raise funds for their families rather than attend high school. This changed during the Great Depression with a

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<sup>90</sup> Kitzmiller, "The Roots of Educational Inequality," 11.

<sup>91</sup> Kitzmiller, "The Roots of Educational Inequality," 11–12.

forty-two percent rise in enrollment at Germantown High School alone between 1929 and 1938.<sup>92</sup> The administration and students of Germantown High School did their best to contribute to the war effort, as described by Kitzmiller:

After the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, the high school responded to the nation's call for unity and cooperation. This rhetoric masked the mounting inequalities that existed in the high school and the community. Moreover, the war diverted private funding from the high school to support the war efforts and pulled students from the high school to enlist in the armed services or the wartime industries that existed throughout the city. As historians Goldin and Katz suggest, this created a "lost generation" of youth, and as this chapter demonstrates, these pull factors affected black youth more than their white peers and increased inequality at Germantown and other high schools in the city.<sup>93</sup>

Even though the percent of African Americans in Germantown High School's student body was relatively low during this time, the period between 1925 and 1945 is one of great significance to the history of African American education in Philadelphia. The percentage of black students in public schools increased by 160% between 1925 (10%) and 1945 (26%). However, in 1940, African Americans only represented approximately nine percent of Germantown's population. As a result, Germantown as a community did not see the same rise in the population compared to the number of black students attending Germantown High School. However, there had been a significant rise in context, going from 0.98 % in 1920 to 4% in 1940, which is still relatively low considering African American students made up roughly 12.5% of the student population at Central High School and 17.6% at the Philadelphia High School for Girls.<sup>94</sup>

After World War II, the local community made efforts to address inequalities that existed at Germantown High School through "a variety of community surveys, meetings, and committees." In 1950, the African American population of Germantown High School had risen to 4% of the male and 12% of the female populations.<sup>95</sup> Germantown High School saw an 18% increase in overall enrollment during this period. Kitzmiller described the state of affairs that defined the mid-twentieth century in Germantown:

As scholars suggest, this period was a precursor to the violence and unrest of the 1960s, and as such, it contained its own set of challenges.<sup>96</sup> During the 1950s, Germantown residents worried about increased white flight from the community and the influx of black residents from other parts of the city and nation. These patterns were not evenly distributed in the community and, thus, they impacted some neighborhoods more than others, particularly neighborhoods near the high

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<sup>92</sup> Kitzmiller, "The Roots of Educational Inequality," 169.

<sup>93</sup> Kitzmiller, "The Roots of Educational Inequality," 11–12.

<sup>94</sup> Kitzmiller, "The Roots of Educational Inequality," 233–34.

<sup>95</sup> Kitzmiller, "The Roots of Educational Inequality," 285.

<sup>96</sup> Contosta, *Suburb in the City*; David B. Tyack, *The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), 100–101. Walter Licht, *Getting Work*, 65–67. William H. Issel, "Modernization in Philadelphia School Reform, 1882–1905," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 94, no. 3 (July 1970): 358–383. This footnote was taken directly from the Kitzmiller dissertation.

school. As the community worried about white flight, others raised concerns about a dramatic increase in the levels of juvenile delinquency in the city and the community. Residents argued that the community needed to strengthen its recreational activities and support its youth. However, the private funding that had enabled this in the past had basically vanished. The high school reflected these problems and, as the inequalities increased, female and African American students began to challenge and resist the practices that promoted these inequalities in their high school and community. The 1950s might have seemed like the calm before the storm, but the elements that contributed to student unrest and new forms of violence were already there. The foundation that sustained the high school for decades had already crumbled.<sup>97</sup>

In 1960, graduates of Germantown High School remained predominantly white, representing 72% of the total graduates. However, the percent of African American graduates from Germantown High School had risen. This rise in African American graduates represents a more accurate depiction of the greater Germantown population, with Germantown High School being perhaps at its most diverse and integrated moment. While this shift occurred in Germantown, other schools, such as Simon Gratz High School, had been composed of 98.4 percent African American graduates, making it a truly segregated school.<sup>98</sup> For African Americans in Philadelphia, Germantown High School “represented an attractive educational option for families who wanted to segregate their children in a predominantly white school.”<sup>99</sup>

By 1957, it became clear that the 1914–16 Building, designed for 2,200–2,300 students, was becoming unsuitable for the student population of more than 2,800. Aside from the 1925–26 Gymnasium, the 1914–16 Building went virtually unchanged until the late 1950s. Between 1958 and 1967, a series of changes were made through physical improvements to increase the size of the school, an effort aimed to amplify the quality of education for a growing economic and racial diversity that represented the student body of Germantown High School between 1958 and 1967. During this time, “the community struggled with white flight, racial unrest, and urban renewal.” In 1958 it was decided a new wing was needed. Plans for the 1959–60 Addition to Germantown High School were underway as early as June 1958, when the \$1.1 million addition was announced in *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. Several properties along East Haines Street were acquired in order to accommodate the new school. The table below shows the specific addresses, property owner, and date of purchase.

29 E. Haines Street	Louise Warfield, et. al.	July 17, 1958 <sup>100</sup>
31 E. Haines Street	Marian McCauley	February 13, 1959 <sup>101</sup>

<sup>97</sup> Kitzmiller, “The Roots of Educational Inequality,” 12–13.

<sup>98</sup> Kitzmiller, “The Roots of Educational Inequality,” 361.

<sup>99</sup> Kitzmiller, “The Roots of Educational Inequality,” 361–62.

<sup>100</sup> Deed: Louise Warfield et alia to School District of Philadelphia, 17 July 1958, Philadelphia Deed Book C.A.B., No. 916, p. 234, CAP.

<sup>101</sup> Deed: Marian McCauley to School District of Philadelphia, 13 February 1959, Philadelphia Deed Book C.A.B., No. 992, p. 1, CAP.

33 E. Haines Street	John L. Zimmerman, et. al.	October 28, 1958 <sup>102</sup>
35 E. Haines Street	James Garfield & Eleanor S. Bell	December 16, 1958 <sup>103</sup>



Figure 121. The integrated swimming program at Germantown High School. Source: Germantown High School Yearbook (1958), 73. U.S., School Yearbooks, 1900–1990, Ancestry.com.

<sup>102</sup> Deed: John L. and Lillie S. Zimmerman to School District of Philadelphia, 28 October 1958, Philadelphia Deed Book C.A.B., No. 910, p. 417, CAP.

<sup>103</sup> Deed: James Garfield & Eleanor S. Bell to School District of Philadelphia, 16 December 1958, Philadelphia Deed Book C.A.B., No. 949, p. 323, CAP.



Figure 122. The southwest elevation of the 1959–60 Addition from E. Haines Street. Source: Photographs, Board of Education Records, CAP.

Between 1958 and 1959, the architecture firm of Barney, Banwell, Armentrout & Divvens were commissioned to design a new wing of the building, which extends from the rear of the south corner of the building to the southeast.<sup>104</sup> The addition was executed in a manner that preserved the park-like appearance of the subject property. Academic subjects would be taught in the original building while vocational arts would be taught in the new, an organizational tactic which “separated the student body into distinct buildings based on their curricular placement.”<sup>105</sup> On February 28, 1961, after three years of construction, the east wing opened with thirty-seven modern classrooms. The industrial arts, home economics, and child development departments were located in the basement, visual arts and updated language departments were on the first and second floors and the , a commercial and distributive (which was founded in the 1950s to prepare students for retail positions) programs were on the third and fourth floors.<sup>106</sup> Kitzmiller noted that:

Before construction began, the Board of Education promised the community that this new wing would be equipped with the latest technologies and equipment to prepare Germantown youth for the labor market. When the wing officially opened, Germantown administrators, faculty, and students praised the board of education for its vision and commitment to their neighborhood high school.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Germantown High School (1959), Armentrout Collection, Athenaeum of Philadelphia.

<sup>105</sup> Kitzmiller, “The Roots of Educational Inequality,” 327.

<sup>106</sup> Kitzmiller, “The Roots of Educational Inequality,” 327.

<sup>107</sup> Kitzmiller, “The Roots of Educational Inequality,” 13.



Figure 123. From E. Haines Street, the southwest and southeast elevations of the 1964–65 Addition. Source: Photographs, Board of Education Records, CAP.

Kitzmiller also describes another important aspect of the 1959–60 Addition and its placement of academic students in the original building and vocational students in the new wing:

As one student noted, this new arrangement separated upper and middle class, predominately white students, from the working class, increasingly black students, who attended the neighborhood high school. In other words, even though the students emphasized the “opportunities” that this new wing afforded, the opening of this new wing also increased the level of educational inequality between the students who were in the academic program and those who were not. As students shuffled to their respective parts of the building, the inequality at Germantown High School became much more visible to its faculty and students. Furthermore, the inequality was increasingly based on race and gender. By the end of the decade, many residents withdrew the local support that had sustained their neighborhood high school since its founding. Germantown High School was increasingly regarded as a school for black children who lacked other schooling options in the city’s segregated school system. While this racism had existed in the school for decades, in the 1960s, African American students challenged this inequality publicly and demanded that the faculty

and administrators provide them with the academic education that many of their white peers enjoyed.<sup>108</sup>



Figure 124. The southwest elevation of the 1964–65 Gymnasium. Source: Photographs, Board of Education Records, CAP.



Figure 125. Looking northeast from High Street at the construction of the 1964–65 Gymnasium. Source: Photographs, Board of Education Records, CAP.

Attached and located to the northeast of the 1914–16 Building, the 1964–65 Gymnasium required no additional purchase of land. The completion of the 1964–65 Gymnasium would commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the 1914–16 Building. In fact, *The Philadelphia Inquirer* published an

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<sup>108</sup> Kitzmiller, “The Roots of Educational Inequality,” 13–14.

article on the subject with period photographs.<sup>109</sup> Proposals were requested via *The Philadelphia Inquirer* in February and March 1964.<sup>110</sup> The 1964–65 Gymnasium Addition was completed in 1965.<sup>111</sup>

Additional space, as well as other alterations was required by 1966, when the same architectural firm who designed the 1959–60 addition was again engaged to complete drawing for alterations and additions.<sup>112</sup> However, it was not until May 1967 that the School District of Philadelphia advertised for proposals for “Alterations & Addition To The Germantown High School Philadelphia Pa.”<sup>113</sup> The total cost for the addition was projected at \$1,868,777, providing space for “classrooms and related shops including an automobile repair shop.”<sup>114</sup> Once completed the building would be known as the “Germantown High School Industrial Arts Building.”

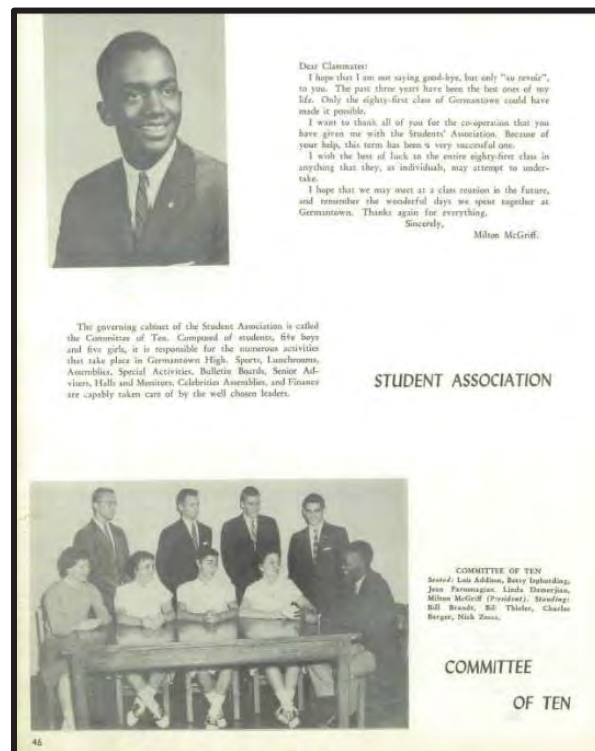


Figure 126. Showing one of the early African American student leaders, Milton McGriff (b. 1939), at Germantown High School in 1956.<sup>115</sup> Source Germantown High School Yearbook (1956), 46, U.S., Yearbooks, 1900–1990, Ancestry.com.

<sup>109</sup> Richard D. Siegel, “Old School Days Recalled By Ex-Germantown Pupils,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 14 November 1965, 217.

<sup>110</sup> “Proposals,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 25 February 1964, 26; and “Proposals,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 3 March 1964, 22.

<sup>111</sup> Richard D. Siegel, “Old School Days Recalled By Ex-Germantown Pupils,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 14 November 1965, 217.

<sup>112</sup> “Mass Protest Threatened on West Oak Lane School Site,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 21 April 1966, 78.

<sup>113</sup> “Proposals,” *Philadelphia Daily News*, 12 May 1967, 67.

<sup>114</sup> “School Annex Must Wait Final Details,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 20 July 1967, 55.

<sup>115</sup> Milton McGriff, a journalist and author, works for the U.S. Census Bureau, and lives in Philadelphia to-date.



Figure 127. Germantown High School Yearbook (1971). Source: U.S., Yearbooks, 1900–1990, Ancestry.com.

Kitzmiller again describes the cultural, economic, social and historical heritage of the period that is represented in the construction of the 1959–60 Addition, the 1964–65 Gymnasium, and the 1967–68 Addition:

For two decades, city planners, local architects, and historical preservationists worked tirelessly to design a revitalization project for Germantown to preserve its finest historical structures and provide a modern shopping mall. They hoped that this plan would attract tourists and commercial development to the once quaint suburban community and curb the negative changes that had occurred over the past several decades. Residents, both black and white, protested these plans, and as they did, they revealed divisions based on race and class that had existed in the community for decades. Germantown High School was in the middle of these debates, and in 1958, the community convinced the Philadelphia Board of Public

Education to fund an addition to the original building. When the new addition finally opened, the school segregated vocational and academic students in separate buildings, which in turn, increased the inequality between students who received a vocational education and those that did not. As this happened, the city and community dodged efforts to desegregate its public schools, and by 1967, Germantown High School was a school transformed.<sup>116</sup>

Germantown High closed in 2013 after years of poor performance and falling attendance. There was a total of 650 students attending the final term.<sup>117</sup>

Throughout its nearly one-hundred years in operation, Germantown High School produced several notable graduates. These include:

- Lynne Marsha Abraham (b. 1941), American lawyer, Philadelphia District Attorney, and mayoral candidate.<sup>118</sup>
- Steve Coleman (b. 1950), American Football Player.<sup>119</sup>
- William T. Coleman (1920–2017), the first African American to clerk for the Supreme Court and served as Secretary of Transportation under President Gerald Ford. One of seven African American students to graduate from Germantown High School in 1939, Coleman was suspended after cursing at his teacher, who, praising his honors presentation said, “Someday, William, you will make a wonderful chauffeur.”<sup>120</sup>
- Bill Cosby (b. 1937), Actor and Comedian.<sup>121</sup>
- Kevin Eubanks (b. 1957), Guitarist and Music Director for Jay Leno’s Tonight Show Band.<sup>122</sup>
- Dwight Evans (b. 1954), State Representative.<sup>123</sup>
- Sam Greenblatt, CTO of HP Dell.<sup>124</sup>
- Rick Lackman (1910–1990), American Football Player.<sup>125</sup>
- Donna Reed Miller, 8th District Councilperson.<sup>126</sup>
- Will Parks, NFL Player.
- Victor Potamkin (1911–1995), American Businessman and Car Dealer.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Kitzmiller, “The Roots of Educational Inequality,” 13–14.

<sup>117</sup> Jared Dent. “Germantown: The Temporary US Capital, Home of Nations Best Tennis Player and Tons of Historic Places,” BillyPenn.com. <https://billypenn.com/2015/04/22/germantown-the-temporary-u-s-capital-home-of-the-nations-best-tennis-player-and-ons-of-historic-places/> Accessed 4 March 2018.

<sup>118</sup> Wikipedia, s.v. “Lynne Abraham,” [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lynne\\_Abraham](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lynne_Abraham).

<sup>119</sup> Wikipedia, s.v. “Steve Coleman,” [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Steve\\_Coleman\\_\(American\\_football\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Steve_Coleman_(American_football)).

<sup>120</sup> Hevesi, Dennis, “William T. Coleman, Jr., Who Broke Racial Barriers in Court and Cabinet, Dies at 96,” *New York Times*, 1 April 2017, A24; Wikipedia, s.v. “William Thaddeus Coleman,” [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William\\_Thaddeus\\_Coleman\\_Jr](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Thaddeus_Coleman_Jr).

<sup>121</sup> Wikipedia, s.v. “Bill Cosby,” [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bill\\_Cosby](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bill_Cosby).

<sup>122</sup> Wikipedia, s.v. “Kevin Eubanks,” [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kevin\\_Eubanks](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kevin_Eubanks).

<sup>123</sup> Wikipedia, s.v. “Dwight Evans,” [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dwight\\_Evans\\_\(politician\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dwight_Evans_(politician)).

<sup>124</sup> Wikipedia, s.v. “Sam Greenblatt,” [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sam\\_Greenblatt](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sam_Greenblatt).

<sup>125</sup> Wikipedia, s.v. “Rick Lackman,” [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rick\\_Lackman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rick_Lackman).

<sup>126</sup> Wikipedia, s.v. “Donna Reed Miller,” [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donna\\_Reed\\_Miller](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donna_Reed_Miller).

<sup>127</sup> Wikipedia, s.v. “Victor Potamkin,” [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victor\\_Potamkin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victor_Potamkin).

- David P. Richardson, Jr. (1948–1995), State Representative and student activist who lead a group of Germantown High School students in a march the Philadelphia Board of Education building to demand the teaching of African American history and increase in the number of African American teachers.<sup>128</sup>
- Frank Kellogg Richardson (1914–1999), American Attorney and Associate Justice of the California Supreme Court.<sup>129</sup>
- Mark Segal (b. 1951), American Journalist.<sup>130</sup>
- Archie Shepp (b. 1937), American Jazz Saxophonist.<sup>131</sup>
- Mike Sojourner (b. 1953), NBA Basketball Player.<sup>132</sup>
- Tammi Terrell (1945–1970), American Recording Artist and Singer.<sup>133</sup>

Germantown High School exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social, or historical heritage of the Germantown and Philadelphia. The history of the shifts and struggles of the student population mirror that of Germantown from 1914 to 1967. It was a building where education, struggle, and inequalities came together to shape the future of Germantown and also public education in Philadelphia.

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This nomination was sponsored in-part by Germantown United and through other donations. The nomination was completed by the Keeping Society of Philadelphia with Kelly Altrichter, Architectural Conservator; Oscar Beisert, Architectural Historian and Historic Preservationist; and J.M. Duffin, Archivist and Historian, as the primary authors. Assistance was also provided by Nicholas Covolus, native of Germantown; Andrew Palewski, Historic Preservation Contractor; and Kelly E. Wiles, Architectural Historian.

The following sites were used to create the nomination:

Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network  
 Historic Germantown  
 Newspapers.com  
 Proquest Historical Newspapers  
 The Historical Society of Pennsylvania

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<sup>128</sup> Wikipedia, s.v. “David P. Richardson (Pennsylvania politician),”

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David\\_P.\\_Richardson\\_\(Pennsylvania\\_politician\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_P._Richardson_(Pennsylvania_politician)); Kitzmiller, “The Roots of Educational Inequality,” 389–90.

<sup>129</sup> Wikipedia, s.v. “Frank K. Richardson,” [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frank\\_K.\\_Richardson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frank_K._Richardson).

<sup>130</sup> Wikipedia, s.v. “Mark Segal,” [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mark\\_Segal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mark_Segal)

<sup>131</sup> Wikipedia, s.v. “Archie Shepp,” [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archie\\_Shepp](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archie_Shepp).

<sup>132</sup> Wikipedia, s.v. “Mike Sojourner,” [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mike\\_Sojourner](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mike_Sojourner)

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Top: Lobby of the 1914–16 Building of Germantown High School. Source: Germantown High School Yearbook (1930), U.S., School Yearbooks, 1900–1990, Ancestry.com. Bottom: A primary hallway in the 1914–16 Building of Germantown High School. Source: Germantown High School Yearbook (1930), U.S., School Yearbooks, 1900–1990, Ancestry.com.



Top: Looking northeast at the northwest and southwest elevations of the 1914–16 Building of Germantown High School. Source: Germantown High School Yearbook (1932), 13. Bottom: The Library of the 1914–16 Building of Germantown High School. Source: Germantown High School Yearbook (1934), 21, U.S., School Yearbooks, 1900–1990, Ancestry.com.

## Appendix A

### Additional Information Related to Criterion I

#### **Historical Lot 1: Heft House**

The lot at the corner of Haines Street (later known as 5901–07 Germantown Avenue) was associated with Heft family for most of the eighteenth century. It was sold to Samuel's brother George Kerstner. In 1744, George sold the property to a butcher Wendell Heft (1711–1775) and his family, recent immigrants from Neckarbischofsheim, Germany.<sup>134</sup> A year before his death, Wendell sold the property his son Casper who was also butcher.<sup>135</sup> The property remained in family's hands until 1826 and then, after a subdivision in 1840, passed through a number of owners for the remainder of its history.<sup>136</sup> In 1798 there was a one-story stone house 30 by 24 feet, a stone slaughter house 15 by 15 feet, and "old frame stable" 12 by 15 feet on this property, the house mostly likely closer the northwest side of the lot.<sup>137</sup> It is likely that the original house stood at what was later 5905–07 Germantown Avenue.<sup>138</sup> One specific feature on the property is noted as early as 1744 is a well that was located on the rear property line which was shared with the adjacent property owner.

#### **Historical Lot 2: Three Tons/Seven Stars Tavern**

The second lot of the Kästner property covered what was later known as 5909 Germantown Avenue. It had a tavern for most of the eighteenth century. Thomas Carvell from Cheltenham Township purchased this property in 1738.<sup>139</sup> Carvell established a tavern on this site by 1745, which became known as the Three Tons Tavern.<sup>140</sup> In 1763 he sold the tavern to Henry Beill who attempted to run a "House of Entertainment or Tavern ... where all Persons may depend on good Usage ... and commodious Entertainment and Room for Man and Horse, and Waggons."<sup>141</sup> Beill's

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<sup>134</sup> Deed: George Kerstner, of Whitpain Township, yeoman, and Elizabeth, his wife, to Wendell Heft, of German Town, butcher, for £55, 2 November 1744, transcription of the original deed in private possession, Marie Kitto Papers, Springfield Township Historical Society; Annette Kunselman Burgert, *Eighteenth Century Emigrants from German-Speaking Lands to North America*, vol. 1, *The Northern Kraichgau* (Breinigsville, PA: The Pennsylvania German Society, 1983), 150.

<sup>135</sup> Deed: Wendell Heft, of Germantown, victualler, and Catherine, his wife, to Casper Heft, their son, of Germantown, victualler, for £200, 8 October 1774, Philadelphia Deed Book (hereafter PDBk) D., No. 23, p. 37, CAP.

<sup>136</sup> Deed: Casper Heft, Jr., surviving administrator of Casper Heft, Sr., to Michael Trumbower, for \$800, 1 April 1826, PDBk A.W.M., No. 20, p. 111, CAP; Deed: John W. Harmer to Joseph G. Benner, 30 March 1840, PDBk R.L.L., No. 50, p. 168, CAP.

<sup>137</sup> List No. 1, entry 68 and List No. 2, entry 54, Germantown Township, Philadelphia Co. *United States Direct Tax of 1798: Tax Lists for the State of Pennsylvania*. M372, Records of the Internal Revenue Service, 1791–2006, Record Group 58. National Archives and Records Administration.

<sup>138</sup> The deeds for the subdivision of this property suggest that the original house was at this location rather than directly on the corner.

<sup>139</sup> Deeds of Lease and Release: Samuel Kerstner, of Whitpain Township, yeoman, and Katherine, his wife, to Thomas Carvell, of Cheltenham Township, yeoman, for £40, 10 shillings, 27 & 28 February 1737/8, PDBk H., No. 18, p. 129, CAP.

<sup>140</sup> *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 2 May 1745.

<sup>141</sup> Deed: Thomas Carvell, now of Middletown Township, Chester County, innholder, and Rebecca, his wife, to Henry Beill, 21 April 1763, recited in Mortgage Book X., No. 8, p. 35, CAP; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 16 April 1767.

was an unsuccessful venture, and the property was sold at sheriff sale in 1767 to Peter Paris, who subsequently sold it a year later to Harmon Stump.<sup>142</sup> First changing the name to the White Swan Tavern, Stump later called his venue the Seven Stars Tavern, which was the longer lasting of the two.<sup>143</sup> Stump ran the tavern until his death in 1776 and his heirs sold the property to a Philadelphia shopkeeper in 1779.<sup>144</sup> While the property passed through a number of hands in the 1790s, in 1798 the buildings on Historical Lot 2 were described as a two-story stone house 27 by 24 feet with one-story stone kitchen 14 by 14 feet, a one-story frame house 11 by 74 feet, a stone barn 18 by 25 feet, a frame store house 10 by 24 feet, and a stone stable 18 by 24 feet.<sup>145</sup> The property was purchased by Thomas Armat in 1805.<sup>146</sup>

Armat subdivided the property in 1805, creating two separate properties: 5909 Germantown Avenue and 5919 Germantown Avenue. The southeastern portion of the lot, known as 5909 Germantown Avenue, included a frontage of 50 feet 10 inches along Germantown Avenue and the Sevens Stars Tavern. The property was purchased by John Trullinger in 1804.<sup>147</sup> The northwestern portion, known as 5919 Germantown Avenue, had a frontage of only 12 feet 10 inches. This property was purchased by John Frank in 1805 and by 1808 was improved with a one-story stone house.<sup>148</sup> Both properties passed through several different owners until they were acquired by Frederick Seckel in 1846.<sup>149</sup> As with the next described property, this was acquired by the Butler family in 1870.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Deed Poll: William Parr, sheriff, to Peter Parish, of the city of Philadelphia, for £780, 26 September 1767, Court of Common Pleas Sheriff Deed Book A-2, p. 139; Deed: Peter Paris, of the city of Philadelphia, to Harmon Stump, of Bristol Township, miller, for £850, PDBK D., No. 2, p. 323, CAP.

<sup>143</sup> *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 13 August 1767, 5 May 1768, 2 March 1774 (which has a detailed description of the inn).

<sup>144</sup> Deed Quadripartite: Catharine Stump, of Germantown, widow of Harmon, of the first part, Catharine Weigart, of Windsor Township, Bucks County, widow and sister of Harmon Stump, of the second part, Elizabeth Prust, of Readingtown, Hunterdon County, New Jersey, sister of Harmon Stump, and Philip Prust, eldest son and heir of Elizabeth Prust, of the third part, to George Guest, of the city of Philadelphia, shopkeeper, for £1,061, 25 February 1779, PDBk D., No. 2, p. 327, CAP.

<sup>145</sup> List No. 1, entry 69 and List No. 2, entry 55, *Direct Tax of 1798*.

<sup>146</sup> Deed: Josiah Lusby, of the city of Philadelphia, and Elizabeth, his wife, to Thomas Armat, 26 January 1805, recited in PDBk R.D.W., No. 86, p. 84, CAP.

<sup>147</sup> Deed: Thomas Armat, of Germantown, gentleman, and Elizabeth, his wife, to John Trullinger, of Germantown, mason, for \$2,600, PDBK R.D.W., No. 86, p. 84, CAP;

<sup>148</sup> Deed: Thomas Armat, of Germantown, gentleman, and Elizabeth, his wife, to John Frank, of Germantown, painter, for \$533.33, 19 March 1805, PDBK A.W.M., No. 83, p. 503, CAP; Germantown Township, 1808, p. 14 (entry under Joshua Butcher), State Tax Assessment Ledgers (1.8), Office of City Commissioners Records, Record Group 1, CAP.

<sup>149</sup> Deed: James Seddon, John Seddon and Sarah Ann, his wife, of the Borough of Frankford, to Frederick Seckel, of the city of Philadelphia, 22 April 1846, PDBk A.W.M., No. 31, p. 241, No. 70, p. 71 and 73, CAP.

<sup>150</sup> Philadelphia Deed Registry Plan 53N2, Plot 18, CAP.

### Historical Lot 3: Schnyder/Greenleafe/Wunder House

The third lot of the Kästner/Castner family, later part of the property known as 5919 Germantown Avenue, occupied most of the frontage of the original Butler family estate. This property was purchased by a widow, Maria Barbara Schnyder, in February 1738.<sup>151</sup> The widow Schnyder probably built a house on the property not too long after her purchase. In 1765 she transferred the property to her daughter Elizabeth Barbara Schnyder Hogermoed, wife of John Adams Hogermoed.<sup>152</sup> The property, however, was seized and sold at sheriff sale in 1767 to the Philadelphia merchant Isaac Greenleafe.<sup>153</sup> A Germantown butcher, George Wunder, purchased it in 1783 and remained the owner until 1814.<sup>154</sup> In 1798 the property contained a one-story stone house 30 by 20 feet with a kitchen 15 by 20 feet, a stone barn 30 by 20 feet and a stone stable 12 by 24.<sup>155</sup> The house stood on or close to Germantown Avenue and was likely demolished around the time Frederick Seckel built what would become the Butler Mansion.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Deed of Lease and Release: Samuel Kerstner, of Whitpain Township, yeoman, and Katharine, his wife, to Maria Barbara Schnyderin, of Germantown, widow, for £101, 27 & 28 February 1737/8, PDBK G., No. 3, p. 13, CAP.

<sup>152</sup> Deed: Maria Barbara Schnyder, widow, to Elizabeth Barbara Adams, her daughter, 9 August 1765, recited in Mortgage Book X., No. 10, p. 190, CAP.

<sup>153</sup> Deed Poll: William Parr, sheriff, to Isaac Greenleafe, for £467, 3 March 1767, Common Pleas Court Sheriff Deed Book A-2, p. 55, CAP.

<sup>154</sup> Deed: Catharine Greenleafe, the younger, of the city of Philadelphia, spinster, to George Wunder, of Germantown, butcher, for £425, 7 January 1783, PDBk D., No. 6, p. 294; Deed: George Wunder, of Northern Liberties, victualler, and An, his wife, to John Rose, of Germantown, victualler, 7 April 1814, PDBk I.C., No. 30, p. 308, CAP.

<sup>155</sup> List No. 1, entry 73 and List No. 2, entry 56, *Direct Tax of 1798*. The barn and stable were both noted as in “bad repair.”

<sup>156</sup> Described as having been on “E.H. Butler’s lawn” (Thomas H. Shoemaker, “A List of the Inhabitants of Germantown and Chestnut Hill in 1809,” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 15, no. 4 [1891]: 463). Samuel F. Hotchkin, *Ancient and Modern Germantown, Mount Airy and Chestnut Hill* (Philadelphia: P. W. Ziegler & Co., 1889), 141.