

# 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: 315-317 N. 33<sup>rd</sup> Street

Postal code: 19104 Councilmanic District: 3rd

#### 2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

Historic Name: Marot-McIlvain Residence

Current/Common Name: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 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: Multifamily residential

#### 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 c.1860 to 1901

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: c. 1860

Architect, engineer, and/or designer: Unknown

Builder, contractor, and/or artisan: \_\_\_\_\_

Original owner: Alfred Bunting Justice

Other significant persons: Charles H. Marot; Helen Marot; John Gibson McIlvain

**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

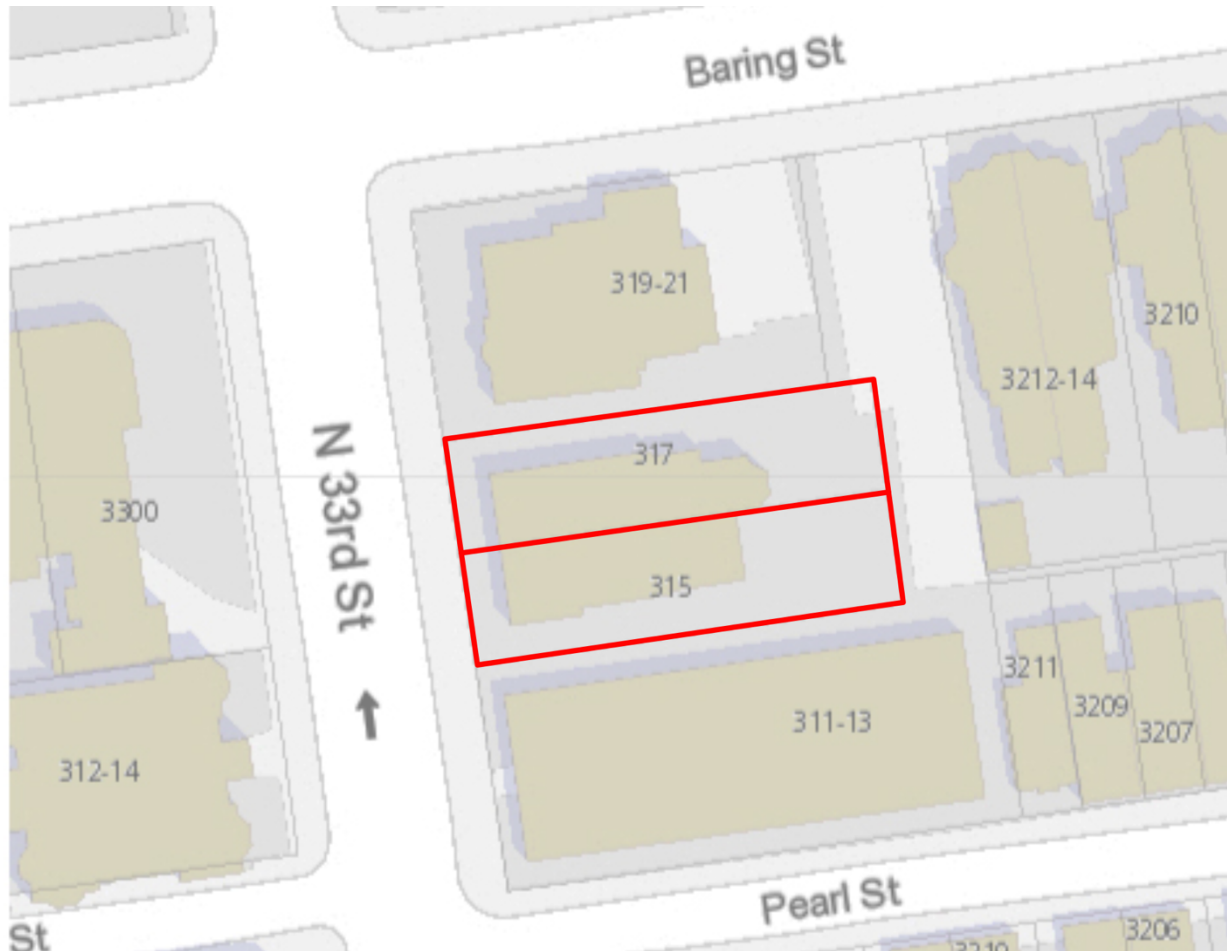
**9. NOMINATOR**

Organization University City Historical Society Date October 18, 2019  
bentleech@gmail.com  
 Name with Title Benjamin Leech, consultant Email cc: info@uchs.net  
 Street Address c/o UCHS, PO Box 31927 Telephone 215-219-4034  
 City, State, and Postal Code Philadelphia, PA 19104  
 Nominator ☐ is ☒ is not the property owner.

**PHC USE ONLY**

Date of Receipt: 18 October 2019  
☒ Correct-Complete ☐ Incorrect-Incomplete Date: 4 October 2019  
 Date of Notice Issuance: 5 November 2019  
 Property Owner at Time of Notice  
 Name: Caroline Millett  
 Address: 315 N 33<sup>rd</sup> Street  
 City: Philadelphia State: PA Postal Code: 19104  
 Date(s) Reviewed by the Committee on Historic Designation: 20 May 2020  
 Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission: 12 June 2020  
 Date of Final Action: Designated 12 June 2020/Criteria for Designation C, D, and J  
☒ Designated ☐ Rejected

## 5. Boundary Description



*The subject property consists of two adjacent legal parcels: 315 N. 33rd Street (OPA #241216300) and 317 N. 33rd Street (OPA #241216400).*

**315 N. 33rd Street:** Situate on the East side of Thirty-Third Street at a distance of Ninety-nine feet Southward from the South side of Baring Street, containing in front or breadth on the said Thirty-third Street Thirty-three feet and extending of that width in length or depth Eastward between parallel lines at right angles to the said Thirty-third Street One hundred and Twenty-five feet.

**317 N. 33rd Street:** Situate on the East side of Thirty-Third Street at a distance of Sixty-six feet Southward from the South side of Baring Street, containing in front or breadth on the said Thirty-third Street Thirty-three feet and extending of that width in length or depth Eastward between parallel lines at right angles to the said Thirty-third Street One hundred and Twenty-five feet.

## 6. Description

The subject property at 315-317 N. 33rd Street is a three-story residential twin constructed on two adjacent mid-block parcels on the east side of North 33rd Street between Baring and Pearl Streets in West Philadelphia's Powelton Village neighborhood. The stuccoed brick structure was constructed c.1860 in the Italianate Villa style. Its primary west elevation, framed by shallow front and side yards, faces and is set back from 33rd Street [Fig. 1-4]. The building features a central four-story flat-roofed tower with deep bracketed eaves, mirrored on each side by three-story, two-bay wings. Painted wood brackets feature intricate scroll-cut profiles and turned pendant drops. A wood porch spans the full width of the ground floor, featuring original scroll-cut brackets and chamfered posts. The painted stucco cladding is scored to imitate mortar joints. A pair of wood-framed glass doors at the base of the central tower mark the entrances to each twin, flanked by full-height ground-floor porch windows with panel shutters. Pairs of arched windows light each of the tower's upper floors, with tall second-floor windows accentuated by bracketed hoods. The two flanking wings feature flat-headed second-floor windows with molded lintels and paired, arched third-floor windows.

Minimally visible from the public right-of-way along 33rd Street, both the north side elevation of 317 N. 33rd [Fig. 5] and the south side elevation of 315 N. 33rd [Fig. 6] continue the basic material palettes and fenestration patterns of the front elevation, with deep bracketed eaves crowning a roofline that steps back into a pair of rear ells. The symmetry of the front elevation is less pervasive in the rear, where each half of the twin appears to have experienced its own sequence of minor alterations and additions over time [Fig. 7]. Again minimally visible from the public right-of-way, the rear ell of 317 N. 33rd Street extends past that of its neighbor and features a three-story octagonal end bay over a short one-story shed-roofed enclosed porch. The rear ell of 315 N. 33rd St. stands two stories tall and terminates in a flat rear wall. Both twins feature landscaped front and side yards with mature trees and brick paving; 315 retains a brick sidewalk along 33<sup>rd</sup> Street. A hairpin iron fence with cast iron gate post separates the front yard from the sidewalk [Fig. 3].





Figure 1: West (33<sup>rd</sup> Street) elevation, 315-317 N. 33<sup>rd</sup> Street. 317 stands to the left, 315 to the right.





Figure 2: West elevation tower detail



Figure 3: West elevation porch detail.



Figure 4: West elevation upper story detail.





*Figure 5: North elevation detail, 317 N. 33<sup>rd</sup> Street (obscured view)*



*Figure 6: South elevation detail, 315 N. 33<sup>rd</sup> Street (obscured view)*



*Figure 7: Rear east elevation (obscured view from private property)*

## 7. Significance

Commissioned c.1860 by local hardware merchant and real estate developer Alfred Bunting Justice in a stately Italianate Villa style, the twin residences at 315-317 N. 33rd Street are highly representative examples of the development patterns which transformed Powelton Village into one of Philadelphia's most fashionable neighborhoods in the mid-19th century. Built as speculative investments on two legal parcels, the neighboring homes were sold in the late 1860s to Hugh McIlvain (315 N. 33rd St.) and Charles H. Marot (317 N. 33rd St.), both heads of notable and accomplished families, and remained single-family homes through the middle twentieth century. The two plots have been under single ownership since 1986 and are currently well-maintained as a multi-unit apartment complex. The property is recognized as a contributing resource within the Powelton Historic District, listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1985.

The property likewise meets the following criteria for listing on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places as set forth in the Philadelphia Historic Preservation Ordinance §14-1004 (1):

- C: Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style;
- D: Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen;
- and*
- J: Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.

### **Italianate Villas in the Suburban City**

With its square central tower, deep bracketed eaves, low-pitched roof, round-arched attic and tower windows, and wide porch, 315-317 N. 33rd Street embodies many of the most distinguishing characteristics of the Italianate Villa style, an aesthetic that flourished in America throughout the middle and late nineteenth centuries. Inspired by the rural villas and vernacular farmhouses of Renaissance Italy, proponents of the style included seminal tastemakers Alexander Jackson Davis and Andrew Jackson Downing, whose pattern books, essays and



buildings promoted an idealized semi-rural lifestyle expressed through picturesque architecture and landscape design. The style was especially well-suited for, and widely embraced by, the upwardly mobile classes who decamped from industrialized urban centers for the bucolic new streetcar suburbs of the emerging modern era.

Particularly in West Philadelphia, much of this new suburban development took the form of the semi-detached twin-- a structure erected on two adjacent parcels which shared a uniform design and central party wall. As explained by Philadelphia architect Samuel Sloan, one of the era's most influential designers, twin plans "may give rise to an objection with some, but it certainly has advantages, which a practical man cannot overlook. With the same expense a much more comfortable and handsome building may be erected on this plan, than if each were designed separately; for there is certainly less work and less material required, and hence a difference in cost."<sup>1</sup> Twins were the preferred form for early West Philadelphia developers like Samuel A. Harrison and Nathaniel B. Browne, whose Sloan-designed Hamilton Terrace subdivision of 1856 established something of a speculative archetype for the area's streetcar-fueled growth [Fig. 8].<sup>2</sup>



Figure 8: Hamilton Terrace, 1856, Samuel Sloan.

<https://westphillyhistory.archives.upenn.edu/exhibits/building-west-philadelphia/emergence-suburb>

<sup>1</sup> Sloan, Samuel. *The Model Architect : A Series of Original Designs for Cottages, Villas, Suburban Residences, Etc.* Vol. 1. Philadelphia: E.S. Jones & Co., 1852. Vol. 1, p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> Cowell, Elspeth, "Samuel Sloan, Pattern Books, and the Question of Professional Identity," *American Architects and Their Books, 1840-1915*, Kenneth Hafertepe and James F. O'Gorman, eds. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007, p. 116.

Though no architect has yet been identified for 315-317 N. 33rd Street, the building's design is noteworthy in its similarities to Sloan's work, and also to that of his contemporary John Riddell. Both men were prolific builders in Philadelphia's emerging streetcar suburbs, and both published widely-read architectural pattern books promoting the Italianate Villa style. Sloan's seminal *The Model Architect*, first published in 1852, features a number of Italianate villa designs [Fig. 9], and his 1850 Italianate-Norman mansion for Andrew McCalla Eastwick, Bartram Hall, was the first of its kind in West Philadelphia (and indeed possibly the nation) [Fig. 10]. Similarities to designs published in John Riddell's 1861 *Architectural Designs for Model Country Residences* are perhaps even more striking; his designs featured central towers and strong axial symmetry to a much greater degree than in Sloan's portfolios [Figs. 11-13].

Whether 315-317 N. 33rd Street was the work of one of these architects, or an inspired adaptation of pattern book models by others, the significance of the design is clear: the Italianate Villa style was uniquely suited to the tastes and aspirations of the



Figure 9: "Italian Villa (Design VI)," Samuel Sloan, *The Model Architect*, 1852.

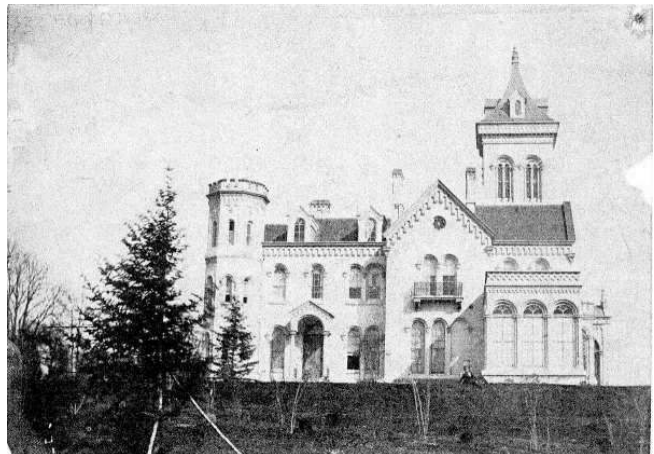


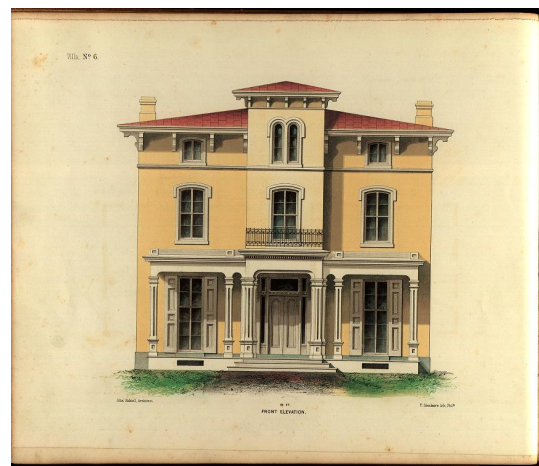
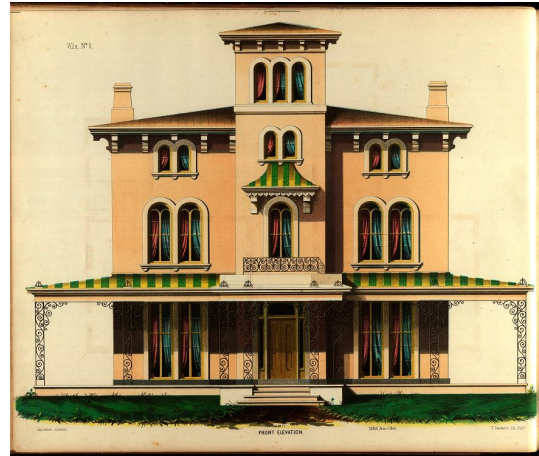
Figure 10: Bartram Hall, John Sloan for Andrew McCalla Eastwick, 1850. Library Company of Philadelphia via <https://westphillyhistory.archives.upenn.edu/exhibits/building-west-philadelphia/emergence-suburb>



era's affluent new suburbanites. This is reflected in both the building's distinguished architectural character and in the biographies of its developer and first residents, who exemplify the cultural, economic, and social heritage of Powelton Village.

### Alfred Bunting Justice

In 1859, hardware merchant Alfred B. Justice purchased a 198-foot by 100-foot plot of undeveloped land from Charles Ingersoll and John Craig Miller, trustees for Henry Bingham Baring.<sup>3</sup> Located at the southeast corner of 33rd and Baring Streets, the land was part of a much larger tract being then being subdivided for residential development, sold with the covenant that “no slaughter house, skin dressing establishment, hose or engine house, blacksmith shop, carpenter shop, glue, soap, candle, or starch manufactory, livery stable or other building for offensive occupation shall at any time be erected” thereon. Justice further divided the lot into four smaller parcels, constructing a large single-family Italianate villa for himself and his family at the corner of 33rd and Baring. Immediately to the south, he constructed the subject twins at 315-317 N. 33rd. He likely envisioned yet another set of twins on the southernmost portion of the parcel, though



Figures 11-13: John Riddell, Villas no. 1, 4 and 6, *Architectural Designs for Model Country Houses*, 1861.

<sup>3</sup> Deed Book ADB 60, p. 234, April 7, 1859. Baring, a British citizen, was the grandson and partial heir to William Bingham, a Philadelphia statesman and landowner considered to be one of the richest men in Colonial Pennsylvania.



ultimately forfeited ownership of this yet-undeveloped piece to sheriff's sale in 1862, the same year that Samuel L. Smedley's *Atlas of the City of Philadelphia* first documents the existence of the adjacent structures [Fig. 14.]<sup>4</sup>

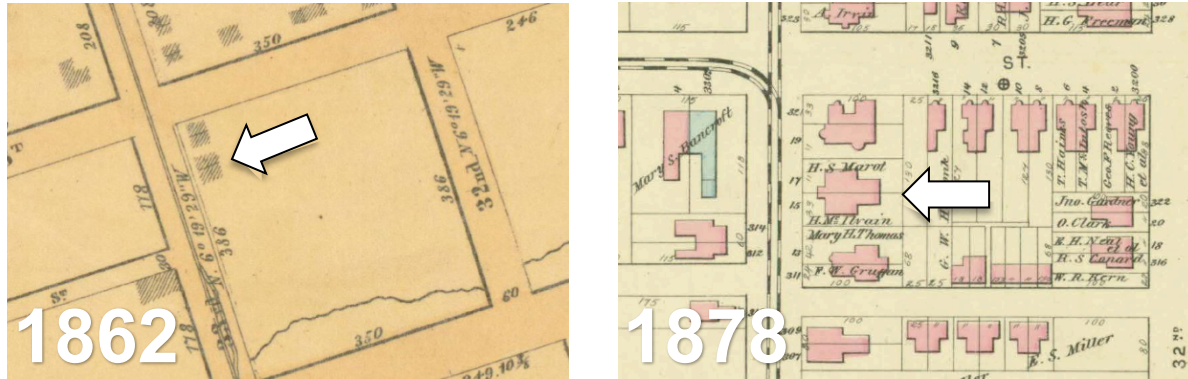


Figure 14 (Left): *Atlas of the City of Philadelphia*, Samuel L. Smedley, 1862, Section 6 (detail)

Figure 15 (Right): *Atlas of the 24<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> Wards, West Philadelphia*, J.D. Scott, 1878, Plate B (detail)

Justice lived at 33rd and Baring (alternately addressed 319-21 N. 33rd Street and 3218 Baring Street) until his death in 1886. In addition to being a successful hardware merchant, he was seemingly a prolific real estate developer as well-- an archetypical member of the landed merchant class so central to the development of Powelton Village. Beyond his holdings at 33rd and Baring, around a dozen other land transactions involving Justice as grantor were recorded in the 1860s, and he owned at least one fire insurance policy for a property at 32nd and Hamilton.<sup>5</sup> Other surviving biographical details corroborate this well-heeled portrait: Justice's brother and former business partner Philip Syng Justice was cofounder of the Midland Steel Company, and his second wife Susan Humphries McIlvain (m. 1853) was the daughter of West Philadelphia lumber baron Hugh McIlvain (see below).<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> "Sheriff's Sales," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Aug. 1, 1862, p. 3; Smedley, Samuel L. *Atlas of the City of Philadelphia*. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1862, section 6.

<sup>5</sup> Philadelphia Contributionship Archives, S10430, 1860.

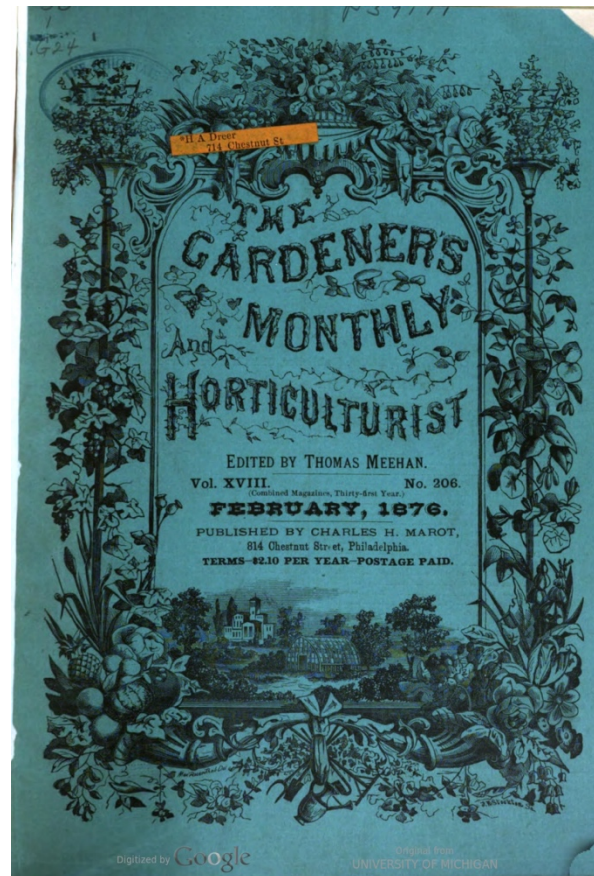
[https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ho\\_display.cfm/803400](https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ho_display.cfm/803400)

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.americansilversmiths.org/makers/silversmiths/175379.htm>;

<http://old.poweltonvillage.org/interactivemap/files/319n33rd.htm>

## Charles H. Marot and Family

Justice almost certainly built the 33rd Street twins as speculative investments modeled after Hamilton Terrace and other idealized suburban enclaves, and by the late 1860s both homes had attracted new owners perfectly suited to this genteel aspiration. The first to sell was 317 N. 33rd, purchased in May 1866 by bookbinder and publisher Charles H. Marot and his wife Hannah, both twenty-six years old at the time. Between 1871 and his death in 1887, Marot published the *Gardener's Monthly and Horticulturist*, a nationally distributed and influential journal “devoted to horticulture, arboriculture, and rural affairs.” A direct successor to Andrew Jackson Downing’s *Horticulturist and Journal of Rural Art and Rural Taste* (1846-1852), *Gardener's Monthly* was edited by the acclaimed botanist Thomas Meehan, the former caretaker of Bartram’s Gardens under Andrew McCalla Eastwick. Of note, the journal’s long-running illustrated cover featured a pastoral tableau that bore striking resemblance to Eastwick’s Sloan-designed Bartram Hall [Figs. 16-17], further evidence of the symbolic resonance of the Italianate style.



Figures 16-17: Cover and detail of The Gardener's Monthly and Horticulturist.

Charles and Hannah raised four children in the home, which they shared with Charles’ sister, mother, and two servants.<sup>7</sup> Four years after Charles’ death in 1887, Hannah purchased the

<sup>7</sup> “317 N. 33rd Street,” <http://old.poweltonvillage.org/interactivemap/files/317n33rd.htm>

adjoining twin and relocated her household next door to 315 N. 33rd Street, continuing to own and rent out 317. Moving with their mother in 1891 were daughters Elizabeth (28), Helen (26), and son William (19). Helen Marot (1865-1940) was an accomplished author, editor, librarian, and labor activist who lived at 315 and 317 until the age of 36 before moving to New York City to investigate child labor practices. While in Philadelphia, Marot served as literary editor for the *Ladies Home Journal* (1895-96), co-founded the Free Library of Economics and Political Science (1897), and published *A Handbook of Labor Literature* (1899). She is perhaps best remembered for helping lead the New York Shirtwaist Strike of 1909-10 (also known as the “Uprising of the 20,000”) her for appointment to a commission that investigated the tragic Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire of 1911, and her editorial work for leftist journals *The Masses* (1916-17) and *The Dial* (1918-20).<sup>8</sup>

### **J. Gibson McIlvain/Hugh McIlvain & Son**

In January 1867, eight months after Charles Marot purchased 317, Alfred Justice sold the neighboring twin at 315 to his brother-in-law Hugh McIlvain Jr., scion of an expansive West Philadelphia lumber empire founded by Hugh McIlvain Sr. The McIlvains had deep roots in the area, having established a lumberyard and homestead near Market Street and Lancaster Road in 1798. The McIlvain lumberyard supplied the construction of the Schuylkill Permanent Bridge in the early 1800s, along with the building boom which followed. In addition to dimensional lumber for house construction, it supplied moldings and ornamental brackets, hardwoods for fine cabinetry, and lumber for myriad industrial uses, including, by the mid-nineteenth century, the construction of J.G. Brill Company streetcars that further fueled West Philadelphia’s growth.<sup>9</sup>

Hugh McIlvain Jr. was born and raised on the family’s Market Street homestead, which he inherited after his father’s death in 1838. After marrying Martha Gibson in 1842, it was here that he raised his own family of eight, including his eldest son John Gibson McIlvain, who would

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<sup>8</sup> Ewbank, Douglas, “The Marot Family - Gardens & Unions.” *Powelton History Blog: A Collective Biography of a Philadelphia Neighborhood*. <https://poweltonhistoryblog.blogspot.com/2011/04/marot-family-gardens-unions.html>

<sup>9</sup> Marsh, William Barton. *Philadelphia Hardwood 1798-1948: The Story of the McIlvains of Philadelphia and the Business They Founded*. Philadelphia: William E. Rudge’s Sons, 1948, pp. 19, 45, 48.



eventually succeed him in the Hugh McIlvain & Son family business. But with the development on the western bank of the Schuylkill at fever pitch by the mid-1860s, the family needed space elsewhere to expand. In 1866, Hugh and Martha relocated to a larger estate near 59th and Elmwood. Shortly thereafter, they also purchased 315 N. 33rd Street for John G., twenty-two years old at the time and about to marry fiancé Elizabeth McIlvaine. The choice of location was a logical one: in addition to the marriage ties between the McIlvains and Justices, Powelton Village was also home to Hugh's brother John McIlvain, who built his own Italianate villa on the opposite corner of 33rd and Baring in 1857.<sup>10</sup>

John and Elizabeth McIlvain lived at 315 for two decades, a tenure which witnessed Hugh Jr.'s death in 1879 and the company's reorganization as J. Gibson McIlvain & Co. It also witnessed the birth of three sons and a daughter, born between 1869 and 1884. By 1891, the family had decamped to "Smoky Ridge Farm," a 300-acre estate near Downingtown, and the house sold to their long-time neighbor Hannah Marot. John lived until 1920, eventually passing ownership of the company to his own sons. Now located in northern Maryland, it remains in business under family ownership to this day.<sup>11</sup>

## Conclusion

Hannah Marot resided at 315 until her death in 1901, whereupon ownership of both 315 and 317 passed to her children. Both properties were rented out as single-family homes until 1920, when each was sold to its respective tenant (dairy owner William Griscom at 315 and librarian Margaret Beecher at 317). By the mid-twentieth century, both had been converted to multi-unit apartments, which they have remained until the present. Since 1986, both have been owned by the current owner of record, Caroline Millett.

The property retains a high degree of architectural integrity and survives as a highly representative example of the development patterns and aesthetic preferences in mid-nineteenth-

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<sup>10</sup> Ujifusa, Steven, "Coleman Sellers, Powelton Village, and the Gilded Age," *The Philly History Blog*, Aug. 31, 2017, <https://www.phillyhistory.org/blog/index.php/2017/08/coleman-sellers-powelton-village-and-the-gilded-age-part-i/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.mcilvain.com/>

century West Philadelphia. The building is the least altered Italianate Villa style building with a central tower in Powelton and it makes an invaluable contribution the rich and diverse collection of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century houses for which the neighborhood is renowned. Given its distinctive architectural form and style (Criteria C and D) and its close association with some of Powelton Village's most notable families (Criteria J), the Italianate twin villa at 315-317 N. 33rd Street clearly merits listing on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

## 8. Bibliography

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