

ADDRESS: 5139 WAYNE AVE

Name of Resource: Joseph T. Pearson House

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Wayne Avenue Brothers LP

Nominator: Keeping Society of Philadelphia & SoLo/Germantown Civic Association RCO

Staff Contact: Allyson Mehley, allyson.mehley@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 5139 Wayne Avenue, located in Germantown, as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The building was constructed circa 1852, and was occupied by artist Joseph T. Pearson and his family from 1882 to 1919. Under Criterion A, the nomination argues that the building is associated Pearson's career as a painter and educator. Under Criterion J, the nomination asserts that the property is emblematic of the social and artistic heritage of Germantown and Philadelphia in the early twentieth century. The period of significance begins in 1882, when the Pearson's father purchased the property and ends in 1919, when Pearson relocated to Bucks County, Pennsylvania and sold the property.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 5139 Wayne Avenue, satisfies Criteria for Designation A 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: **5139 Wayne Avenue**

Postal code: **19144**

2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

Historic Name: **The Joseph T. Pearson House**

Current/Common Name: **5139 Wayne Avenue**

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: Dwelling

5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Please attach a narrative description and site/plot plan of the resource's boundaries.

6. DESCRIPTION

Please attach a narrative description and photographs of the resource's physical appearance, site, setting, and surroundings.

7. SIGNIFICANCE

Please attach a narrative Statement of Significance citing the Criteria for Designation the resource satisfies.

Period of Significance (from year to year): from **1882** to **1919**

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: **ca.1857; and ca.1882**

Architect, engineer, and/or designer: **Unknown**

Builder, contractor, and/or artisan: **Unknown**

Original owner: **Joseph T. Pearson, Sr.**

Other significant persons: **Joseph T. Pearson, Jr., Artist**

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 a bibliography.

9. NOMINATOR

Organization: **Keeping Society of Philadelphia & SoLo Germantown Civic Association RCO**

Author: **Oscar Beisert, Architectural Historian**

Date: **31 August 2020** (Edited by PHC staff)

Address: **1315 Walnut Street, Suite 320**

Telephone: **717.602.5002**

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19107

Email: **keeper@keepingphiladelphia.org**

Nominator ☐ is ☒ is not the property owner.

PHC USE ONLY

Date of Receipt: 11 September 2020

☒ Correct-Complete ☐ Incorrect-Incomplete

Date: 24 November 2020

Date of Notice Issuance: ~~24 November 2020~~ New notice sent on 20 January 2021

Property Owner at Time of Notice:

Name: Wayne Avenue Brothers LP

Address: 1304 S 15th St

City: Philadelphia

State: PA

Postal Code: 19146

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

Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission: _____

Date of Final Action: _____

☐ Designated

☐ Rejected

12/7/18

NOMINATION

FOR THE

PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES



Figure 1. The primary (southwest) elevation of the subject property. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2020.

THE JOSEPH T. PEARSON, JR. HOUSE

BUILT CA. 1857, ENLARGED/ALTERED CA. 1882

5139 WAYNE AVENUE
GERMANTOWN
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

*Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, Summer 2020
The Joseph T. Pearson, Jr. House, 5139 Wayne Avenue, Germantown, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*

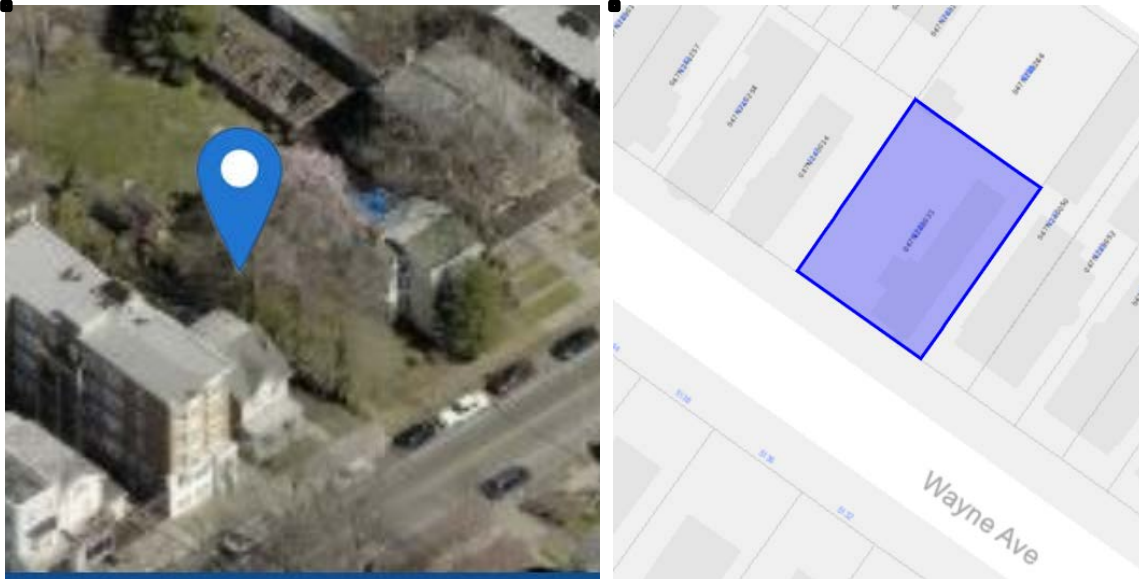


Figure 2. Left: Looking northeast at the subject property. Source: Atlas, City of Philadelphia, 2020.
 Figure 3. Right: The boundary for the proposed designation is delineated in blue. Source: Atlas, City of Philadelphia.

5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary for the designation of the subject property is as follows:

ALL THAT CERTAIN lot of piece of ground with the buildings and improvements thereon erected, SITUATE on the Northeasterly side of Wayne Avenue at the distance of 361 feet 7/8 inches northwestwardly from the northwesterly side of Manheim Street, CONTAINING in front or breadth on Wayne Avenue 70ft and extending in length or depth of that width northeastwardly between parallel lines at right angles to Wayne Avenue 96 feet.

BEING known as No. 5139 Wayne Avenue.

The current tax parcel runs street to street, from Wayne Avenue to Henley Street. This nomination proposed to designate the section facing Wayne Avenue only (as shown in Figure 3).

Map Registry No. 047N240033
 OPA Account No. 123215100



Figure 4. The northwest and primary (southwest) elevations of the subject property. Figure 5. The porch at the ground floor of the southwest elevation of the subject property. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2020.

6. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Situated on the northeast side of the 5100 block of Wayne Avenue, the Joseph T. Pearson, Jr. House is three-story masonry building with architectural elements that speak to both its initial construction around 1857 and its later enlargement and alteration ca.1882. One of the oldest houses to survive on Wayne Avenue in Germantown, the building is comprised of a main block and a large rear ell, which occupies a generous open parcel with an ample side yard and shade trees. A cast iron, hairpin fence extends along the front of the property, adding to the historic streetscape.

*Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, Summer 2020
The Joseph T. Pearson, Jr. House, 5139 Wayne Avenue, Germantown, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*

At the core of this building, the main block (Figures 1 and 4) is a classic, three-story detached, but yet row-like house typical of the antebellum period with its simple fenestration featuring frieze windows at the third floor. Both the main block and the rear ell are primarily clad in smooth-faced stucco, while the northwest addition features red brick and wooden shingles. The primary (southwest) elevation is comprised of a semi-symmetrical fenestration with three openings at the ground floor, including a door and two windows. This first floor elevation is shaded by a single-story porch, supported by three wooden posts accented by railings with turned balusters. The windows are comprised of wooden Queen Anne Revival style upper sashes with working paneled shutters. While the door appears to be a six paneled replacement version, it is set within the original architrave with the old, wooden transom above. The second and third floors of this elevation features two windows per floor. The second-floor windows are also accented by working paneled wooden shutters. The third-floor features two frieze windows set within wooden paneling, that accents the entire third floor at the southwest and northwest elevations in the Queen Ann Revival style.

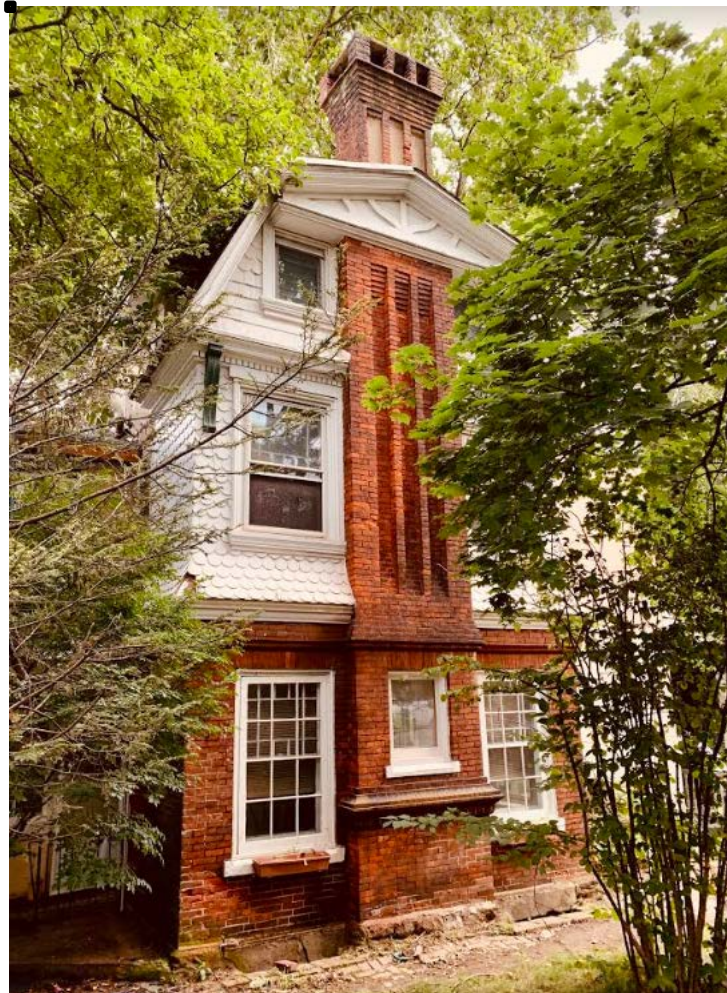


Figure 6. The northwest elevation of the subject property. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2020.

The northwest elevation is perhaps the most complex, featuring the main block and the northwest addition (Figures 4 and 6), both facing onto the side yard. The main block is simple with just one

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window per floor within the stucco-clad façade. The southwest, northwest, and northeast elevations of the Northwest Addition feature red brick at the ground floor, wooden shingles at the second floor, and a gambrel roof at the third-, half-story with faux half-timbering. The northwest elevation of the Northwest Addition is two-and-one-half-stories with a side-gabled, gambrel roof. This elevation is centered on a corbeled brick chimney at center that pierces the roofline. The first-floor fenestration features a window within the brick chimney, which is flanked by single, larger windows with upper Queen Anne Revival style wooden sashes set within the red brick façade. The same configuration occurs within the second floor, but without the central window, which is lost to brick detailing within the stack. Delineated by stylized wooden surrounds, the windows that flank the chimney are set within the second-floor façade that is clad in wooden shingles. The second- and third-, half-stories are delineated by a pent roof that projects from the façade. Atop the third floor a gable is introduced, obscuring the masonry chimney, featuring paneling that also speaks to the Queen Anne Revival style. The brick stack rises above the gambrel roof. The facades of the Northwest Addition are continued on the northeast and southwest elevations with single windows on the first and second floors. The northwest elevation of the rear ell is a simple two-story elevation of apertures, which appear to be original wooden sashes from mid-nineteenth century. Part of the first floor is shaded by a single-story porch supported by wooden posts.

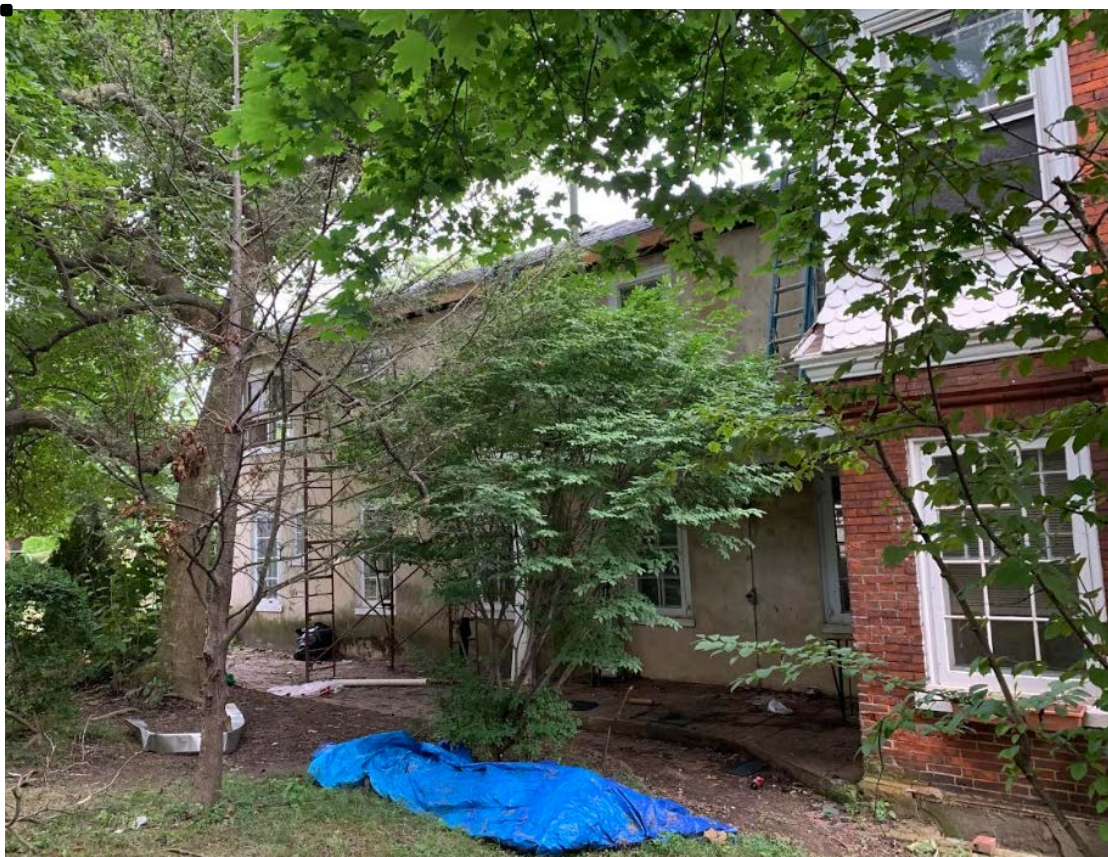


Figure 7. The northwest elevation of the rear ell of the subject property. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2020.

The southeast elevation speaks to both the ca.1857 and ca.1882 periods of design. The first floor of the Main Block features a three-part mullion window with fixed or casement wooden sashes of a twelve-light configuration. The window is set within its original surround. Projecting from the

second floor is a bay window with a heavy cornice. These apertures occupy the front half of the Main Block, while the rear half is largely blind with smaller, round arch windows at the second and third floors. A relatively unadorned rear ell features a varied array of openings with two- and three-part mullion windows, along with single apertures, some of which are original, while others have been replaced. The rear ell features a relatively flat roof.



Figure 8. The primary (southwest) and southeast elevations of the subject property. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2020.



Figure 9. Above: The subject property with members of the Pearson family posing about the building. Source: The Joseph T. Pearson, Jr. and Olive Pearson Shepard Families.

7. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Joseph T. Pearson House (Figure 9) at 5139 Wayne Avenue is 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; and
- (j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.

The period of significance dates from the time the subject building was bought by Joseph T. Pearson, Sr. in 1882 to 1919, when it was sold out of the family after Joseph T. Pearson, Jr. moved to Huntingdon Valley in Bucks County.



Figure 10. Left: A portrait of Emily Pearson, painted by Joseph T. Pearson, Jr. of his wife, while living at the subject property. Source: www.tfaoi.com. Figure 11. Right: *Family* of and painted by the artist Joseph T. Pearson, Jr. Source: www.artnet.com

CRITERION A & J

The house and the immediate grounds at 5139 Wayne Avenue in Germantown comprises a significant historic place associated with the artistic career of Joseph Thurman Pearson, Jr. (Joseph T. Pearson, Jr., Figure 12), who was an important professional painter and educator, figuring in the history of art in the Philadelphia region. The subject property meets Criteria A and J for its importance by association with this significant Philadelphian, who was a “supremely talented artist,” and lived and/or worked here from 1882 to 1890 and, most importantly, from ca.1902-04 to 1919.¹ *Pennsylvania Impressionism*, the definitive work on the subject, testifies to Pearson’s achievements and local importance as a painter, who contributed to Philadelphia’s artistic legacy in the early twentieth century.²

¹ Roy Wood, Jr. *Joseph T. Pearson, Jr.: A Painter in the Grand Manner*. (Philadelphia: Woodmere Art Museum), 13.

² Brian H. Peterson, William H. Gerds, Sylvia Yount, and Erika Jaeger Smith. *Pennsylvania Impressionism*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, Incorporated, 2002), 188-191.; and Michael W. Schantz. *Celebrating Philadelphia’s Artistic Legacy*. (Philadelphia: Woodmere Art Museum, 2011), 28-29.



Figure 12. Left: A Self-Portrait of Joseph Thurman Pearson, Jr., 1914, painted while living at the subject property. Source: www.Geni.com. Figure 13. Right: *Over The Hedge* by Joseph T. Pearson, Jr., showing a neighborhood very similar to Germantown. Source: www.paintingstar.com.

HISTORIC CONTEXT: A BIOGRAPHY OF JOSEPH T. PEARSON, JR., ARTIST

Born in 1876 at Germantown to Joseph T. Pearson, Sr. (1850-1920), a box manufacturer, and Annie Virginia Wells Pearson (1848-1902), Joseph T. Pearson, Jr. was just six years old when his father purchased the subject property as a residence for his large family. The sale was effective when William Root sold the property to Joseph T. Pearson, Sr. on September 22, 1882 for \$3,000.³ Several decades earlier, Root had purchased the subject property on March 17, 1857 from a prominent local merchant Jabez Gates, at which time the subject house was likely built.⁴ The form and style of the main block is consistent with an initial construction date in the 1850s. It appears that the Pearsons commissioned improvements to the preexisting house in the form of an addition and other façade enhancements that produced the present Queen Anne Revival style appearance of the 1880s, which they proudly documented in Figure 9. Incidentally, the aesthetic treatment of the subject house is not unlike the work of architect George T. Pearson; however, he does not appear to be a close or known relative of this specific branch of the larger Pearson family. While the Pearsons would ultimately relocate to a larger residence at 5103 Newhall Street (Figures 28 and 29) around 1890, the subject house remained in the family, allowing Joseph T. Pearson, Jr. to make it his family home between ca.1902-04 and 1919.⁵ During this time, the artist produced the majority of his most important, well-known, and exhibited works.

Demonstrating talent in drawing at an early age and disinterested in the family business, Pearson's father encouraged him to join the architectural firm of Wilson Eyre in 1894. Observing his artistic talent at the firm, Eyre ultimately recommended to Pearson that he study painting at the

³ Deed: William Root, ux, to Joseph T. Pearson [Sr.], 22 September 1882, Philadelphia Deed Book J.O.D., No. 50, p. 392.

⁴ Deed: Jabez Gates to William Root, 17 March 1857, Philadelphia Deed Book R.D.W., No. 115, p. 475.

⁵ American Federation of Arts. (1898/1948). *American art annual*. New York: MacMillan Co.; and *Boyd's blue book: a directory from selected streets of Philadelphia and surroundings*. Philadelphia, Pa: C.E. Howe Co.

Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (PAFA). He obtained a scholarship in 1896, which subsidized his education at PAFA through 1901.⁶ During his tenure as a student, Pearson studied under “two icons of American impressionism”: William Merritt Chase (1849-1916) and Julian Alden Weir (1852-1919). Both Chase and Weir were teaching at PAFA at the time, “the latter being a major influence” on Pearson’s work as a painter.⁷ After his tenure as a student, Pearson traveled abroad in Europe, where he was exposed to the work of landscape painters such as Jules Breton, Leon L’Hermitte, and Weir’s teacher in France, Jules Bastien-Lepage. While he was noticeably influenced by these masters, Pearson “Americanized his subject matter, making distinctly personal compositions, such as *Red Sun* (Private Collection) and *Harvesters* (Private Collection of Jim’s Antiques Fine Art Gallery, Lambertville, New Jersey)”.⁸



Figure 14. “Chatter About People and Pictures Interesting to Art Enthusiasts”, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 29 January 1905, 29.

On October 7, 1902, Pearson married Emily Fetter, the daughter of David Fetter (1840-1909), a gardener in Germantown, and Mary Jane Cardwell, at Trinity Lutheran Church in Germantown.⁹ Members of the Cardwell and Fetter families were living in the subject house by 1900, which may or may not be how the couple met.¹⁰ He and Emily had been communicating via letter during his travels in Europe.¹¹ Pearson returned to the home of his childhood soon after his marriage to Emily, and it was here that all of their children appear to have been born: Ruth, Joseph T., III, Emilie, Julian, Jane, Virginia, and Justin. During Pearson’s residence at the subject property, Germantown was an idyllic suburb that had developed from an early small town that was largely concentrated on Germantown Avenue.

⁶ *Cyclopedia of American Biography*, 40, p. 176.

⁷ Roy Wood, Jr. *Joseph T. Pearson, Jr.: A Painter in the Grand Manner*. (Philadelphia: Woodmere Art Museum), 13.

⁸ Roy Wood, Jr. *Joseph T. Pearson, Jr.: A Painter in the Grand Manner*. (Philadelphia: Woodmere Art Museum), 20.

⁹ Ancestry.com. *Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Marriage Index, 1885-1951* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2011.

¹⁰ *Boyd's Philadelphia combined city and business directory*. Philadelphia: Various pub.

¹¹ Brian H. Peterson, William H. Gerds, Sylvia Yount, and Erika Jaeger Smith. *Pennsylvania Impressionism*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, Incorporated, 2002), 188-191.



Figure 15. Left: *Emily with Fan*, 1904. Figure 16. Right: *Study in Gray*, painted by Joseph T. Pearson, Jr., 1905. Source: Woodmere Art Museum.

In 1905, Pearson exhibited in PAFA's 100th Anniversary Exhibition, where the "full length portrait of a lady in gray" (Figure 16) was observed as being "a remarkably fine thing, both in arrangement, in values and in dignity of conception."¹² PAFA's 101st Exhibition also included Pearson, his "delicate rendering of sunlight" was exhibited next to the work of his teacher Wier.¹³ He showed again at PAFA's 102nd Annual Exhibition in 1907 with a painting, *Emily with Fan* (Figure 15).¹⁴ That same year he exhibited in the annual show of the National Academy of Design in New York. In 1909, several of Pearson's works were featured in the magazine section of the *Philadelphia Public Ledger*.¹⁵ Also in 1909, his work, displayed in PAFA's Annual Exhibition, led to a brief review in *The New York Times* (Figure 17).

¹² "Choice of Neighbors Hurts Many Pictures On View", *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 29 January 1906, 29.; and Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. (1893). *Catalogue of the ... annual exhibition*. Philadelphia: The Academy.

¹³ "101st Annual Show Represents the Very Best American and European Work", *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 21 January 1906, 2.

¹⁴ "Chatter About People and Pictures Interesting to Art Enthusiasts", *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 29 January 1905, 29.

¹⁵ Roy Wood, Jr. *Joseph T. Pearson, Jr.: A Painter in the Grand Manner*. (Philadelphia: Woodmere Art Museum), 20.

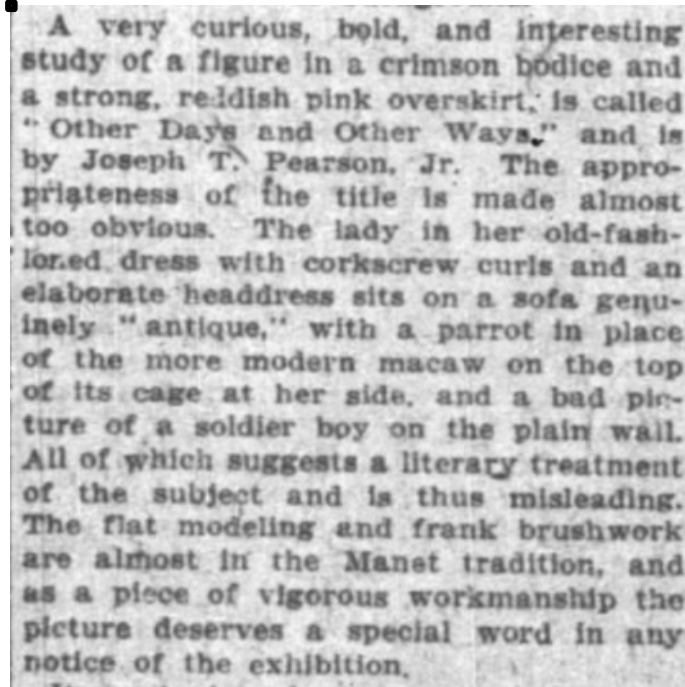


Figure 17. *The New York Times*, 7 February 1909, 58.

It was around this time that Pearson began a twenty-five-year career in art education at PAFA, teaching from 1909 to 1922 and 1922 to 1937.¹⁶ His new position did not prohibit exhibiting at PAFA. As usual, he exhibited a painting, *A Group of Geese*, at PAFA's Annual Exhibition in 1910, at which time the painting appears to have sold.¹⁷ Nevertheless, the *Geese* were shown again in August 1910 on the cover of *Palette and Bench* of St. Louis.¹⁸ He won the Bronze Medal at the International Fine Arts Exposition in Buenos Ayres in 1911.¹⁹ In April 1911, Pearson showed *Ducks in a Marsh* and *Pheasant Hunters* at the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where former won Honorable Mention.²⁰ In 1911, Pearson exhibited a landscape painting, for which won the Jennie Sesnan Gold Medal at PAFA.²¹ That same year he won the Second Hallgarten Prize at the National Academy of Design.²²

¹⁶ Brian H. Peterson, William H. Gerdtz, Sylvia Yount, and Erika Jaeger Smith. *Pennsylvania Impressionism*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, Incorporated, 2002), 188-191.

¹⁷ *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 13 March 1910, 14.

¹⁸ "Palette and Bench", *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 9 August 1910, 11.

¹⁹ Carnegie Institute. (1900-1914). *The Catalogue of the ... annual exhibition at the Carnegie Institute*. Pittsburgh, Pa.: The Institute.

²⁰ Harriet Monroe. "Carnegie Prize Winner Owned in Chicago", *Chicago Tribune*, 28 April 1911, 6.; and "Gossip of the Art World", *The Standard Union* (Brooklyn, New York), 30 April 1911, 5.

²¹ *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 5 February 1911, 7.

²² Carnegie Institute. (1900-1914). *The Catalogue of the ... annual exhibition at the Carnegie Institute*. Pittsburgh, Pa.: The Institute.



Figure 18. Left: *The Closed Shutter* by Joseph T. Pearson, Jr., 1915. Source: artsandculture.google.com. Figure 19. *In The Valley* by Joseph T. Pearson, Jr., owned by the University Club, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Source: Neuhaus, Eugen, 1879-1963. *Painters, Pictures And the People*. (San Francisco: Philopolis press, 1918).

In November 1915, Pearson's *In the Gloaming* was exhibited in the 28th Annual Exhibition of the Chicago Art Institute. He also painted *The Closed Shutter* (Figure 18) that same year. In 1916, he was awarded the Norman Wait Harris Silver Medal, which included a \$500 prize.²³ Pearson's *In The Valley* (Figure 19) was exhibited in PAFA's 111th Annual Exhibition in February 1916. For this work, he was awarded the Temple Gold Medal and the Edward T. Stotesbury Prize for decorative painting.²⁴

Perhaps Pearson's most acclaimed work, *The Twins: Virginia and Jane* (Figure 20) was exhibited at PAFA's Annual Exhibition in 1917, earning him the Beck Medal for Outstanding Portraiture—the painting is now one of the most iconic in the permanent collection of the James A. Mischener Art Museum in Doylestown, Bucks County, Pennsylvania. Incidentally this appears to be the last year that he exhibited at PAFA. The *Twins* portrait also won the Potter Palmer Award, a \$1,000 prize, at the Art Institute of Chicago's Annual Exhibition in 1918, and, later, the Gold Medal at the Sesquicentennial International Exhibition of 1926 at Philadelphia.²⁵ Pearson was elected as an associate member of the National Academy of Design in 1917, being elevated to full membership in 1919.

²³ "Annual Exhibition in Chicago", *The American Magazine of Art*, January 1916, 97.

²⁴ "The One-Hundredth-Eleventh Annual Exhibition of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts", *The American Magazine of Art*, March 1916, 180.

²⁵ Brian H. Peterson, William H. Gerds, Sylvia Yount, and Erika Jaeger Smith. *Pennsylvania Impressionism*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, Incorporated, 2002), 188-191.



Figure 20. *The Twins: Virginia and Jane*, 1917, oil on canvas, by Joseph T. Pearson. Source: The James A. Michener Art Museum.

In 1918 Pearson purchased a large old place in an idyllic rural setting at Huntingdon Valley in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, which he eventually named *Pearson's Corner* (Figure 21)—where a few of his descendants continue to reside to-date. His removal from Germantown to Huntingdon Valley marks a turning point in his career, when his artistic output was greatly reduced, as he was “probably spending more of his time restoring and renovating the stone buildings and landscaping the property to his liking.”²⁶ On October 15, 1919, Joseph T. Pearson sold the subject property to William Oliver and Matilda P. Humphreys.²⁷ Pearson spent the rest of his life at Huntingdon Valley, where he died in 1951.²⁸

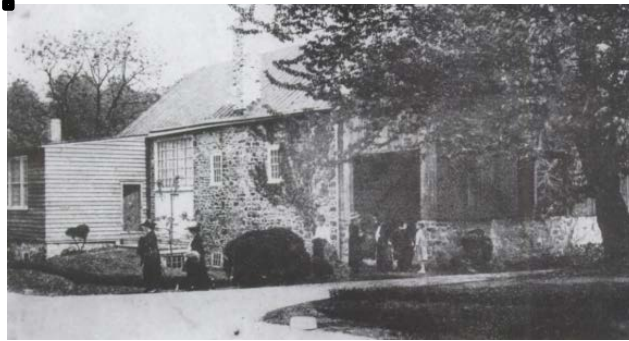


Figure 21. The 1897 barn at Huntingdon Valley, renovated by Joseph T. Pearson, Jr. for use as his studio in 1918. Source: *The Morelands and Bryn Athyn*. (Arcadia Publishing, 2002).

²⁶ Brian H. Peterson, William H. Gerdts, Sylvia Yount, and Erika Jaeger Smith. *Pennsylvania Impressionism*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, Incorporated, 2002), 188-191.

²⁷ Deed: Joseph T. Pearson, et. ux. to William Oliver Humphreys, et. ux., 15 October 1919, Philadelphia Deed Book J.M.H., No. 638, p. 338.

²⁸ *Find A Grave*. Find A Grave. <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi>.



Figure 22. Ruins of old studio where Gilbert Stuart painted Washington's portrait [1795]. At Wm. Wynne Wister's, 4622 Main Street, now Germantown Avenue. Source: The Library Company of Philadelphia.
Figure 23. Charles Wilson Peale. *Belfield Garden*, 1816, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

CRITERION J

According to Herbert Welsh (1851-1941), an American artist, local historian, and well-known political reformer, "It is claimed for Germantown that here the first oil painting of the American colonies was produced," a "Philadelphia first" which he offered in his essay, *The Artists of Germantown*. In this overview, Welsh goes on to explain that the *ancient* work was "a portrait of Kelpius by the brush of Dr. Christopher Witt done in the year 1705."²⁹ Two hundred years later supremely talented artists were still creating works in Germantown. The artistic achievements of Joseph T. Pearson, Jr. represent a cultural and social continuum and trend of the Germantown community in Philadelphia, where, while not an art colony, so many artists have been known to work and prosper since the eighteenth century. Some of these artists were decidedly inspired by the architectural and physical characteristics of the area, being that it was both a town built in the eighteenth century and a great mid-nineteenth century suburb that was also a regional center of

²⁹ Herbert Welsh. "The Artists of Germantown", *Germantown History*. (Philadelphia: Germantown Historical Society, 1912), 236-237. Phil

horticulture and landscape architecture.³⁰ Others found a muse in the ever-changing landscape of old Germantown as it modernized in the twentieth century (Figure 27). Beyond these factors, Germantown is in close proximity to Center City, offering large to moderate size houses that are both detached and semi-detached within a suburban landscape that, for many years, changed gradually, featuring historic open space that were increasingly rare in the confines of a dense metropolis.

Among the earliest of these artists, Gilbert Stuart (1755-1828), the eminent American portrait painter, is known to have spent roughly ten years living and working in Germantown. In 1795 he established a studio in an outbuilding (Figure 22) on the property of what was once known as the Wynne Wister House. It is said that George Washington posed for Stuart in his Germantown studio, where the President was also living, between 1795 and 1796.³¹ Another famous artist who lived in Germantown was Charles Wilson Peale (1741-1827), an American painter and extraordinaire, who, in 1810, purchased an estate, which he named *Belfield*, where he cultivated extensive gardens. Peale also painted at *Belfield*, drawing inspiration from Germantown's landscape at the time, being northeast of the Wingohocking Creek (Figure 23). His studio is said to have been in the front room of *Belfield*.³² Several pictures survive that not only document the landscape, but exhibit why Peale chose the name *Belfield*.³³ As is well known, Peale's children were also artists, no doubt similarly inspired by the environs of Germantown. These artists found respite from the dense city through the small town, rural quality of Germantown in that period.



Figure 24. Left: James Reid Lambdin. Portrait of President William Henry Harrison. The White House Historical Association, Washington, D.C. Figure 25. Right: George Cochran Lambdin. Spring Blossoms, 1875. Berry-Hill Galleries, New York.

³⁰ David Spencer, D.D. *Historic Germantown*. (Philadelphia: Horace F. McCann, 1908).

³¹ Gilbert Stuart. *Portrait of George Washington (Athenaeum Type)*, c1800, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

³² Herbert Welsh. "The Artists of Germantown", *Germantown History*. (Philadelphia: Germantown Historical Society, 1912), 239.

³³ Charles Wilson Peale. *Belfield Garden*, 1816, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

While not as famous as Stuart or Peale, the name Lambdin was a significant one of artistic renown in Germantown, representing an era in which the neighborhood was developed as a residential suburb through the establishment of commuter railroad lines. Originally from Pittsburgh, James Reid Lambdin (1807-1889) was an American portraitist and largely known for painting United States presidents (Figure 24). He had purchased a commodious suburban residence on E. Price Street by 1850, where he lived with his family until his death. Perhaps more famous than his father, George Cochran Lambdin (1830-1896) was an American artist of the Victorian era, known best for his paintings of flowers (Figure 25)—specifically roses. Studying at PAFA, the younger Lambdin suffered poor health in his middle age, which allowed him to focus on his painting, which he did for roughly twenty-five years from his father’s home on E. Price Street.³⁴



Figure 26. George Bacon Wood, Jr. *Life and Nature*. (New York: Photogravure Company, 1889).

Another Victorian artist was George B. Wood, Jr., an American painter and photographer, who lived on Germantown Avenue above Upsal Street. Wood was deeply influenced by the Russonian ideal and began to paint according to the precepts of “Truth in Art.”³⁵ In the 1880s and 1890s, Wood mastered the art of photography, as shown in his book, *Life and Nature*.³⁶ One of his striking photographs is shown above in Figure 26 of Germantown Avenue near Upsal Street.

³⁴ Herbert Welsh. “The Artists of Germantown”, *Germantown History*. (Philadelphia: Germantown Historical Society, 1912), 242-243.

³⁵ *George Bacon Wood, Jr.* Retrieved on 1 September 2020 from <https://childsgallery.com/artist/george-b-wood/>

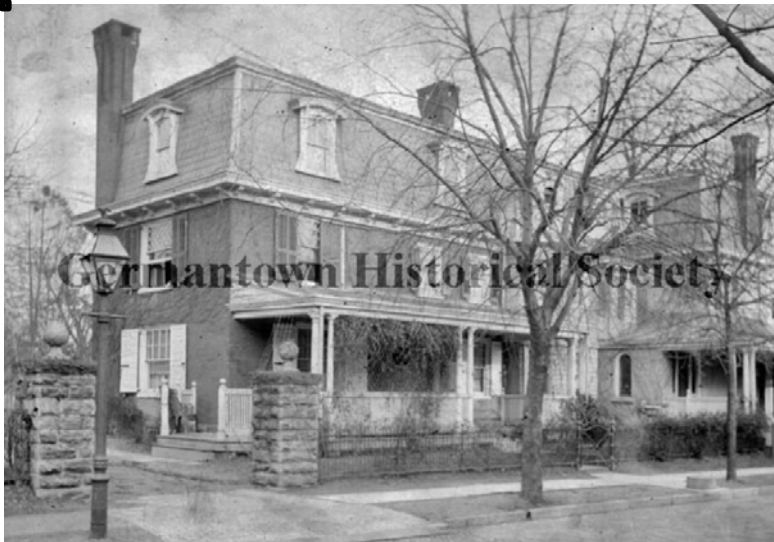
³⁶ George Bacon Wood, Jr. *Life and Nature*. (New York: Photogravure Company, 1889).



Figure 27. Robert Riggs. *Germantown and Cheltenham*, ca.1940s. Woodmere Museum of Art, Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Beyond these earlier and better-known examples, many other local artists found inspiration and respite in Germantown. Representing several generations of artists, the following were from and/or lived in Germantown, where they worked for varying periods of time: Adin Benedict Lacey (1870-c1936), an architect and draftsman; Albert Laessle (1877-1954), an American sculptor and educator; Alice Riddle Kindler (1892-1980), an American painter; Bertha Corson Day Bates (1875-1968), an American painter and illustrator; Charles A. Davis (1856-1933), an American landscape painter; David Wilson Jordan (1859-1935), an American painter; Dorothy Root Schell (b.1892), an American painter; Edith Marian Mann (1882-1957), an American painter; Elfrieda Klauder (b.1901), an American artist; Elsa Koenig Nietzsche (1880-1952), an American portrait painter; Emily Kohler Fisher (1891-1972); Frank Cresson Schell (1857-1942), an American painter; Georgiana Newcomb Harbeson (1894-1980), an American painter and craftsperson; Guernsey Moore (1874-1925), an American illustrator; Guida B. Maxwell (b.1896), an American artist; Herbert Welsh (1851-1941), an American artist and political reformer; Horace H. Burrell (1894-ca.1936), an American architect and draftsman; Jerry Pinkney (b.1939), an American watercolorist; Jessie Willing Gillespie (1888-1972), an American illustrator; John Thompson Willing (1860-1947), an American artist and author; Louis Hanlon (1882-1950), an American illustrator; Marianna Sloan (1875-1954), an American painter; Myrtle Goodwin D'Ascenzo (1864-1954), an American watercolorist and landscape painter; Nicola D'Ascenzo (1871-1954), an American stained glass designer, painter and sculptor; Ralph Shaw Byram (b.1881), an American artist; Rebecca Burd Peale Patterson, an American miniature painter; Robert Riggs (1896-1970), artist and printmaker; Roland Ayers (1932-2017), an American artist and educator; Walter Leighton Clark (1859-1935), a businessman, inventor, and artist; Walter Stuempfig (1914-1970), an American artist, specializing in Romantic realism; William H. Wilcox (1831-1929), an

American painter; and William Newport Goodell (1908-1999), an American artist, craftsman, and educator.³⁷



Both of these photographs show the much-remodeled Thomas Newhall House at 5103 New Hall Street (demolished), which was eventually purchased and occupied for many years by Joseph T. Pearson, Sr. Figure 28. Top: The primary elevation of the Joseph T. Pearson House, Sr. from Manheim Street. Source: The Olive Pearson Shepard Family. Figure 29. The side elevation of the Joseph T. Pearson House from Newhall Street. Source: The Germantown Historical Society.

8. BIBLIOGRAPHY

This nomination was completed by the Keeping Society of Philadelphia with the primary author as Oscar Beisert, Architectural Historian and Historic Preservationist, with assistance from J.M. Duffin, Archivist and Historian, and Kelly E. Wiles, Architectural Historian. The author would

³⁷ *American Art Directory*. (University of Michigan, 1923).

like to recognize the Woodmere Museum of Art in Chestnut Hill for donating a copy of *Joseph Thurman Pearson, Jr., A Painter in the Grand Manner* for the purpose of this nomination. The author would also like to recognize numerous descendants of Joseph T. Pearson, Sr., and Joseph T. Pearson, Jr., for taking the time to search primary source family materials from the period of 1882 to 1919.

The following sites were used to create the nomination:

Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network

Newspapers.com

Philadelphia Museum of Art

Proquest Historical Newspapers

Woodmere Art Museum



Figure 30. Olive Pearson Shepard and Julian Pearson in front of the subject property. Source: Anne Pearson, a descendant of Joseph T. Pearson, Sr.

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