

**ADDRESS: 1946 N 23RD ST**

Name of Resource: Pearl Bailey House

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: William Sharrock

Nominator: Historical Commission staff

Staff Contact: Laura DiPasquale, [laura.dipasquale@phila.gov](mailto:laura.dipasquale@phila.gov)

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property at 1946 N. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the building, constructed in 1882 as part of a larger speculative development project by architect Willis G. Hale, is significant under Criteria for Designation A, D, and E. Under Criterion A, the nomination contends that the property is socially and culturally significant as the family home of actress and singer Pearl Bailey, who described it in her autobiography as the house “where [her] career started.” Under Criterion E, the nomination argues that the property is significant as the work of Willis G. Hale, one of Philadelphia’s most important late nineteenth-century architects, whose work influenced the development of the city, and in particular North Philadelphia, in the third quarter of the nineteenth century. With its intricate brickwork, flamboyant window hoods, and projecting balconettes, the building embodies distinguishing characteristics of Hale’s unusual Victorian eclectic style as applied to speculative rowhouse design, satisfying Criterion D.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1946 N 23<sup>rd</sup> Street satisfies Criteria for Designation A, D, and E.



**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: **1946 N. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street**

Postal code: **19121**

**2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE**

Historic Name: **Pearl Bailey House**

Current 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: Residential

**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): **1882; c. 1935-1970**

Date(s) of construction: **1882**

Architects: **Willis G. Hale, architect**

Builders:

Original owner: **William M. Singerly, developer**

Significant person: **Pearl Bailey, actress/singer**

**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 a bibliography.*

**9. NOMINATOR**

Organization: **Staff of the Philadelphia Historical Commission**

Author: **Laura DiPasquale, historic preservation planner**

Date: **6/17/2021**

Address: **1515 Arch St, 13<sup>th</sup> Fl.  
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Nominator  is  is not the property owner.

**PHC USE ONLY**

Date of Receipt: 6/17/2021

Correct-Complete  Incorrect-Incomplete

Date: 6/18/2021

Date of Notice Issuance: 6/21/2021

Property Owner at Time of Notice:

Name: William Sharrock

Address: 1946 N. 23<sup>rd</sup> St

City: Philadelphia

State: PA

Postal Code: 19121

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

## 5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

All that certain lot or piece of ground with the buildings and improvements thereon erected, Situate on the West side of 23<sup>rd</sup> Street at the distance of 444 feet 2 inches Northward from the North side of Berks Street. Containing in front or breadth on the said 23<sup>rd</sup> Street 19 feet, 5 inches and extending of that width in length or depth Westwardly between parallel lines at right angles with the said 23<sup>rd</sup> Street 87 feet 9 inches.



Figure 1: Location of 1946 N. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, just south of the intersection of N. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street and W. Norris Street. Source: Atlas.phila.gov

## 6. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Constructed in 1882 on a design by Willis G. Hale, 1946 N. 23rd Street is the surviving half of a pair of three-story masonry twins developed as part of a larger project on the 1900 blocks of N. 23<sup>rd</sup> and Judson Streets.<sup>1</sup> The property is situated on a residential block of predominantly three-story masonry twins and rowhouses constructed during the late-nineteenth century speculative development boom in North Philadelphia, and features a three-story main block, two-story rear ell, and one-story rear extension.



Figure 2: 1946 N. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, March 2021. Philadelphia Historical Commission staff.

<sup>1</sup> *The Record of Growth: A Monthly Journal of Material Progress* 1, no. 1 (January 1882), 95. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=njp.32101072336132&view=1up&seq=1>.

The east-facing front facade of the building is an embellished version of the standard two-bay, flat front Philadelphia rowhouse. The first floor features a set of marble steps leading to a wide entrance, which historically would have featured a set of double-doors, but has since been built down to accommodate a single door. The original carved frame remains. Above a non-historic brick porch that obscures the original marble water table and basement window, the first floor features a single, wide, double-hung window. A non-historic awning obscures a beltcourse dividing the first and second floors. The upper-floor windows are contained within carved frames (since capped or removed); decorative wooden "awnings" covered in diamond-shaped shingles shelter the openings; and small "balconettes" extend from the sills.<sup>2</sup> Corbelled vertical elements extend upward from the middle of the second story through the cornice line where they terminate in decorative caps. This vertical emphasis is tempered by horizontal banding which extends across the facade and is composed of lines of both concave bricks and three-dimensional beveled bricks. The building's polychrome brick and marble has been painted. The delicate wood bracketed cornice, visible on other buildings of the same style on the block and in the HABS photographs of the property from 2000, is obscured by metal capping.



**Figure 3: East-facing front façade along N. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, March 2021. Philadelphia Historical Commission staff.**

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<sup>2</sup> James A. Jacobs, "1900 Block North Twenty-Third Street & Judson Street." Written Historical and Descriptive Data, Historic American Buildings Survey, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 2000. From Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress (HABS No. PA-6684; <https://tile.loc.gov/storage-services/master/pnp/habshaer/pa/pa3800/pa3879/data/pa3879data.pdf> accessed June 9, 2021).



Figure 4: East-facing front façade along N. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, 2000. Source: Joseph Elliot, photographer, Historic American Buildings Survey, HABS PA,51-PHILA,747A-1



Figure 5: Examples of the two styles of twins designed by Willis G. Hale for the 52-property William Singlerly development project on the west side of N. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street and on Judson Street between Berks and Norris Streets in North Philadelphia. Brick details varied between the blocks. Source: Cyclomedia, 2020.

The north elevation of the main block is exposed brick divided by a shallow corbelled chimney. It is visible from N. 23rd Street down a narrow alley closed off by a historic iron gate that is in poor condition. The north elevation of the stuccoed rear ell is also obliquely visible, and features a series of window openings.



Figure 6: Left, the front (west) and north (side) elevations, March 2021. Philadelphia Historical Commission staff. Right, detail of the historic iron gates leading to the alleyways of 1946 N. 23rd Street and its neighbor at 1948 N. 23rd Street, Google Streetview June 2020.

The south elevation is a stuccoed party wall that historically divided the property from its twin.



**Figure 7: Stuccoed south elevation party wall and east front elevation. March 2021. Philadelphia Historical Commission staff.**

The west-facing rear elevation is partially visible from W. Norris Street across rear yards, and from Judson Street, across a parking lot. The first floor features a one-story porch extension, with a stuccoed tripartite bay window above. One second-floor window with a plank frame is also visible on the north elevation of the rear ell.



**Figure 8: Left, partial view of the rear of 1946 N. 23rd St from Norris Street, Cyclomedia, April 2020. Left, partial view of the south and west elevations across a parking lot on Judson Street, March 2021. Philadelphia Historical Commission staff.**

## 7. SIGNIFICANCE

The property at 1946 N. 23rd Street is historically significant and should be listed individually on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The property may also be eligible for designation as part of a larger historic district. Pursuant to Section 14-1104(1) of the Philadelphia Code, the property satisfies Criteria for Designation A, D, and E. The property:

- A. Has significant character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth or Nation or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past;
- D. Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen;
- E. Is the work of a designer, architect, landscape architect or designer, or engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth or Nation.

The surviving half of a twin constructed in 1882 as part of a larger speculative development project by architect Willis G. Hale for businessman and newspaper publisher William M. Singerly, 1946 N. 23rd Street is significant under Criteria for Designation A, D, and E. Under Criterion A, the property is socially and culturally significant as the family home of actress and singer Pearl Bailey, who described it in her autobiography as the house “where [her] career started.”<sup>3</sup> Under Criterion E, the property is significant as the work of Willis G. Hale, one of Philadelphia’s most important late-nineteenth century architects, whose work influenced the development of the city, and in particular North Philadelphia, in the third quarter of the nineteenth century. With its intricate brickwork, flamboyant window hoods, and projecting balconettes, the building embodies distinguishing characteristics of Hale’s unusual Victorian eclectic style as applied to speculative rowhouse design, satisfying Criterion D.

### Criterion A: Pearl Bailey

1946 N. 23rd Street is significant under Criterion A for its association with Pearl Bailey—the show business star honored for her work as a jazz icon, stage actress, television and film star, and later a delegate to the United Nations—who lived in this house during the start of her career.

Born in March 1918 in Newport News, Virginia, Pearl Mae Bailey was the daughter of Ella Mae Ricks Bailey and Joseph James Bailey, a construction worker and evangelical minister who introduced her early in life to song and dance through his lively ‘holy-roller’ services.<sup>4</sup> But Pearl spent most of her formative years in Philadelphia, where she moved with her mother and three older siblings in the early 1930s after her parents divorced.<sup>5</sup>



**Figure 9: Pearl Bailey, c. 1940.**  
Source: John Mosley Collection, Charles L. Blockson Afro American Collection, Temple University.

<sup>3</sup> Pearl Bailey, *The Raw Pearl* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1968), 14.

<sup>4</sup> Jacobs, “1946 North Twenty-Third Street.”

<sup>5</sup> Pearl Bailey, *The Raw Pearl* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1968) 6.

Pearl Bailey made her stage debut in 1933 in an amateur talent contest at the aptly-named Pearl Theater, at Ridge Avenue and N. 21<sup>st</sup> Street, not far from the home her family rented on N. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street. Philadelphia in the 1930s was an important hub on the vaudeville circuit, and the Pearl Theater was host to the best African-American musical and vaudeville performers from across the country.<sup>6</sup> Bailey's brother Bill had already made a name for himself as a dancing protégé of Bill "Bojangles" Robinson when Pearl, at the age of 15, entered and won the five-dollar prize at the Pearl Theater competition.<sup>7</sup> After winning another contest



**Figure 10: The Pearl Theater at 21<sup>st</sup> and Ridge Avenue in the late 1940s. Source: John Mosley Collection, Charles L. Blockson Afro American Collection, Temple University.**

in Washington DC that summer, Pearl dropped out of William Penn High School and began touring music halls in small Pennsylvania coal towns and then vaudeville stages across the northeast.<sup>8</sup> Her big break came in 1944, when she was booked as a solo performer at a popular New York club known as the Village Vanguard, where she honed her signature throaty sound and her "endearingly mischievous, suggestive, good-natured chit-chat and bon mots" that became the hallmark of her performances.<sup>9</sup> The following year, Bailey's mother, Ella Mae Bailey, officially purchased the property at 1946 N. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street where she had lived for more than a decade.<sup>10</sup>

Bailey's popularity soared and she began headlining with such big bands as those led by Cootie Williams, Cab Calloway, Duke Ellington, and Count Basie. Over the following half-century, Bailey remained a multi-media star, holding major roles in numerous Broadway shows and films. In 1967, she earned a Tony Award for her performance in the title role of an all-black Broadway rendition of "Hello, Dolly" opposite Cab Calloway. In the 1970s and 1980s, Bailey served as an "ambassador of love" and special delegate to the United Nations for the Ford, Reagan, and Bush administrations. In 1985, she completed a degree in theology from Georgetown University and was given the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Reagan in 1988.<sup>11</sup>

Pearl Bailey married jazz drummer Louie Bellson in 1952, and it is under her married name of Pearl M. Bellson that she executed the sale of her childhood home at 1946 N. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street in 1970 after her

<sup>6</sup> "Pearl Bailey Historical Marker," ExplorePAHistory.com (Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission), accessed June 9, 2021, <https://explorepahistory.com/hmarker.php?markerId=1-A-25C>.

<sup>7</sup> "Pearl Theatre, Ridge Avenue and North 21st Street, Philadelphia, PA, Late 1940s," ExplorePAHistory.com (Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission), accessed June 9, 2021, <http://explorepahistory.com/displayimage.php?imgId=1-2-DE4&epik=dj0yJnU9dHBEYTDvUFFnTDA5cmhfTGUXemZTYnRFZFMc1h4QmEmcD0wJm49RTZZQzdGUDRBTGdaV3ltcWRxU00tUSZOPUFBQUBROFacVM4>.

<sup>8</sup> The Journal News (White Plains, New York), 19 Aug 1990, p. 5. <https://www.newspapers.com/newspage/163403600/>

<sup>9</sup> "Pearl Bailey Historical Marker."

<sup>10</sup> The 1940 Federal Census identifies Ella Bailey as a renter and the head of household at 1946 N. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street. Five lodgers are listed as living with her, and the Census notes that her residence in 1935 was the same. By this time, Pearl Bailey was on the road, the Census identifying her as a singer and lodger in Erie, PA; Philadelphia Deed Book CJP 783, p. 226. Michael and Dorothy Schneider to Ella May Bailey, 1/8/1945.

<sup>11</sup> Jacobs, "1946 North Twenty-Third Street."

mother's death in July 1969.<sup>12</sup> Bailey died of a heart attack in 1990 at a hotel in Philadelphia where she was recovering from knee replacement surgery, but her booming voice and commanding presence endure eternally. In 1992, a historical marker was erected by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission at 1946 N. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street commemorating Bailey's childhood home.

### **Criterion E: William M. Singerly and Willis G. Hale**

Following the Civil War, Philadelphia witnessed a population boom brought on by a rapid influx of immigrants, the migration of freed slaves northward, and the general movement in the country from an agrarian to an industrial economy. As industry thrived and the population soared, so too did the demand for housing.<sup>13</sup> Until the early 1870s, most construction west of Broad Street terminated at Girard Avenue. In the 1870s, however, advances in passenger streetcar technology and the rapid expansion of the streetcar system made areas north of Girard Avenue more accessible and attractive to a wide range of Philadelphians.

After 1880, the pace of expansion became frantic. Speculative development boomed, with entrepreneurial businessmen and professionals from a variety of backgrounds providing the financial backing for the construction of multiple blocks at a time.<sup>14</sup> Often these same men were involved in the development or administration of the streetcar system as well, conveniently locating their new developments in areas serviced by the lines in which they had an interest. Among the many speculative developers instrumental in the development of North Philadelphia were chemical manufacturer William Weightman, butcher-turned-streetcar magnate Peter A.B. Widener and his partner William L. Elkins, and businessman and newspaper publisher William M. Singerly.



**Figure 11: Left, detail of G.M. Hopkins' 1875 atlas showing the yet undeveloped, but recently-platted, Judson Street, and 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, between Norris and Berks, owned by Joseph Singerly and later his son, William Singerly. Right, the same area in 1895, after extensive development by William Singerly and others. For larger images, see Appendix 1: Maps. Source: Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network.**

<sup>12</sup> Philadelphia Deed Book P.L. McS 019, p. 035, Pearl M. Bellson, exec. of the Will of Ella Mae Bailey, to Mildred Carter, 7/1/1970.

<sup>13</sup> Randal Baron, "Philadelphia Register of Historic Places Nomination Form: Diamond Street Historic District," 1985.

<sup>14</sup> Glenn A. Ceponis, "National Register of Historic Places Registration Form: Lower North Philadelphia Speculative Housing Historic District," 1998.

An 1886 *Builders' Guide* article titled "A Vast Undertaking: the town that Mr. Singerly Has Built," describes in detail the improvements that Singerly undertook in order to develop the area around 1946 N. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street. The article explains that in the early 1870s, William Singerly's father, Joseph Singerly (an early investor in the streetcar system), had purchased 68 acres of land adjacent to the Odd Fellows', Mechanics', and Glenwood Cemeteries with the hope of extending Diamond Street through the cemeteries (see Figure 11 and Appendix 1: Maps). Following his father's death, William Singerly acquired the land and revived his father's dream of developing the area. For the next five years, Singerly "labored with characteristic persistency... to open Diamond, Norris, Dauphin, and Twenty-Second Street through the cemeteries."<sup>15</sup> To accomplish this, Singerly had to negotiate with the cemetery companies and build them new entrances, relocate 5,000 bodies, install new sewers, establish a brickyard and planing mill, and raise the grade of nearly two miles of streets, some by more than 20 feet, before even beginning building construction. Between 1881 and 1886, Singerly was responsible for the construction of more than 700 buildings in the area, the article projecting that number to grow to over 1,500 in the following years.<sup>16</sup>

Singerly, like his *nouveau riche* counterparts including Weightman, Widener, and Elkins, hired architect Willis G. Hale to design many of his speculative development projects, as well as larger individual commissions. Hale, who was born in Seneca Falls, NY, had married into the locally-prominent Weightman family and quickly built up an impressive resume of clients, becoming by the 1880s the principal architect for Philadelphia's burgeoning population of industrialists and businessmen.<sup>17</sup> From the late 1870s through the 1890s, Hale received important commissions from these wealthy clients, including their personal homes, downtown businesses, and speculative development projects in burgeoning parts of the city.

While Hale may be best known for his larger commissions, including the extravagant Chestnut Street National Bank building (better known as the Quaker City National Bank or Commonwealth Title & Trust Company, see Figure 12, right) at 721 Chestnut Street for William Singerly, the bank's second president; the *Philadelphia Record* building at 917-19 Chestnut Street, 1881, also for Singerly (demolished, see Figure 12, left); P.A.B. Widener's mansion at Broad Street and Girard Avenue, 1887 (demolished, see Figure 13); the Hale Building at 1326-28 Chestnut Street, 1889; and the Lorraine Apartments, now known as the Divine Lorraine Hotel, at Broad Street and Fairmount Avenue, 1893, his speculative rowhouse designs have arguably left an even greater mark on the architectural development of Philadelphia, and in particular of North Philadelphia.

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<sup>15</sup> *The Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide*, v. 1, p. 279, 6/21/1886.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Sandra L. Tatman, "Hale, Willis Gaylord (1848-1907)," [https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar\\_display.cfm/24990](https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display.cfm/24990)

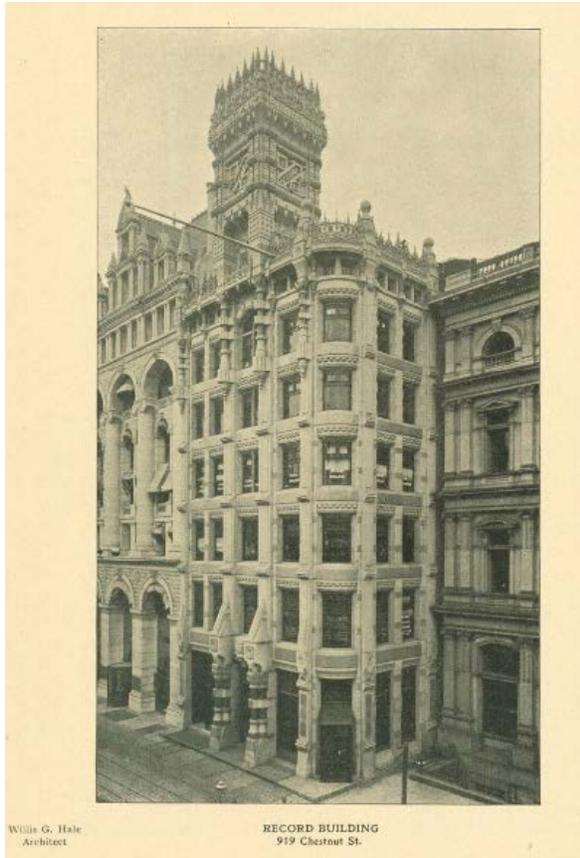


Figure 12: Left, 1899 photograph of the *Philadelphia Record* building, designed in 1882 for William Singerly, constructed in 1886 and enlarged in 1891. Right, Commonwealth Title & Trust Company/Union Trust Company building at 713-21 Chestnut Street, designed by Willis Hale for William Singerly. From Moses King, *Philadelphia and Notable Philadelphians*. New York: Blanchard Press, Isaac H. Blanchard Co., 1901, p. 27. Source: Philadelphia Architects and Buildings website, Athenaeum of Philadelphia.



Figure 13: Left, circa 1895 photograph of the Peter A.B. Widener mansion at the corner of N. Broad Street and Girard Avenue, designed by Willis Hale in 1886. Source: Philadelphia Historical Commission files. Right, the Morris Fleischer house at 2223 Green Street, designed by Hale in 1880. Source: Cyclomedia, 2020.

Although it is likely that Hale had experience designing rowhouses in the 1870s, the written record is incomplete.<sup>18</sup> By the early 1880s, however, specialized real estate publications began to more thoroughly document Philadelphia's construction scene. An 1882 article explained that Hale had designed many of the 254 houses that Widener and Elkins had developed in the preceding five years.<sup>19</sup> The January 1882 edition of the *Record of Growth* reported on several projects by Hale for William Singerly, among others, including four blocks of houses at 7<sup>th</sup> and Diamond Streets, Singerly's new *Record* building, and the development at 23<sup>rd</sup>, Judson, Norris, and Berks, including 1946 N 23<sup>rd</sup> Street"<sup>20</sup> The first edition of the *Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide* in 1886, further documents Hale's prolificity, noting Hale's design of 22 houses for E.H. Flood on Diamond and Fountain; 35 for William Singerly on Van Pelt above Diamond; 32 recently-completed houses on Uber Street above Diamond; 22 on Page Street; 11 on Norris; 11 more on Diamond; the construction of a chapel, gateway, and lodge for the Odd Fellows' Cemetery at 23<sup>rd</sup> and Diamond; a new stone front at 1220 Chestnut Street; a large dwelling in Hagerstown, MD for S.M. Bloom; 29 houses at 17<sup>th</sup> and Jefferson and Bouvier for Widener and Elkins; and extensive alterations to the Temple Theatre.<sup>21</sup>

#### **Criterion D: Hale's Victorian eclectic**

Although criticized by some during his time for work that was often "flamboyantly decorated rather than formally or structurally innovative," Hale's eclectic flair, applied both to his individual commissions as well as to speculative rowhouse and twin projects across North and West Philadelphia during the development boom of the third quarter of the nineteenth century, make his work immediately recognizable.<sup>22</sup> As architectural historian Michael Lewis noted, "Hale's genius was to take... essentially identical rowhouses, with their mass-produced industrial parts and lathe-turned woodwork, and to make them distinctive."<sup>23</sup>

With his architectural eccentricity, Hale rarely worked within any one particular style, borrowing, inventing, and applying ornament as he saw fit. While some of its original features have been painted, obscured, or removed, the property at 1946 N. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street embodies distinguishing characteristics of Hale's high Victorian eclectic style, including polychrome, textured masonry, corbelled brick piers, delicate bracketed cornice and awning details, and masonry balconettes. Hale used similar details applied in unique ways to rowhouse projects across North and West Philadelphia throughout the 1880s, including on other development projects for William Singerly, and his sometimes-partner E.H. Flood, as well as for William Weightman, P.A.B. Widener, and William Elkins, among others.

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<sup>18</sup> Donna J. Rilling, "Philadelphia Register of Historic Places Nomination Form: 1416-32 W Girard Avenue Historic District," 2018. <https://www.phila.gov/media/20190213121620/Historic-District-1416-32-W-Girard-Ave.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> "Attractive Building Improvements," Westcott Scrapbook, Vol. 5, p. 251. Available at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania; "Westcott Scrapbooks," <http://www.brynmawr.edu/cities/archx/04-600/wgh/thompson.html>

<sup>20</sup> The Record of Growth: A Monthly Journal of Material Progress, vol. 1., Philadelphia, January, 1882, p. 95. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=njp.32101072336132;view=1up;seq=26>

<sup>21</sup> The Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide, vol. 1, 1886, pgs. 160, 208, 233, 401.

<sup>22</sup> Kevin McMahon, "Philadelphia Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, 721 Chestnut Street," p. 3.

<sup>23</sup> Michael J. Lewis, "'He was not a Connoisseur': Peter Widener and his House", *Nineteenth Century*, vol. 12, no. 3/4 (1993), p. 28.



Figure 14: Left, the 1700 block of N. 16<sup>th</sup> Street. Willis G. Hale for Joseph S. Albright, 1882, featuring similar delicate bracketed cornices, polychrome brick and stonework, and corbelling. Right, South side of the 600 block of Diamond Street. Willis G. Hale for E.H. Flood and William Singlerly, 1882, featuring similar proportions, corbelled brickwork, and polychrome masonry. Photo sources: Cyclomedia, 2020.



Figure 15: Left, 2100 block of N. Uber Street. Willis G. Hale for E.H. Flood, 1886. Although deteriorated and partially missing, this block features similar masonry balconettes, patterned brick and stonework. The development also featured two types of twins, as in the development along 23<sup>rd</sup> and Judson Streets. Right, smaller-scale rowhouses on the 400 block of Napa Street, with wider but similar window hoods. Willis G. Hale for P.A.B Widener and William Elkins, c. 1882.



Figure 16: Left, N. Marshall Street, south of Diamond Street, showing similar bracket details and polychrome masonry. Willis G. Hale for William Singlerly and E.H. Flood, 1882. Right, speculative twins on the 1500 block of N 17<sup>th</sup> Street, designed by Hale in 1886 for Widener and Elkins.

Constructed in 1882 on a design by renowned architect Willis G. Hale for businessman and developer William Singerly, the property at 1946 N. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street is significant for its architectural merits, but more importantly for its association with actress and singer Pearl Bailey. Even at the height of her fame, Bailey returned often to visit her mother, who lived here until her death in 1969. The nearly 140-year-old building stands as a reminder of Bailey's Philadelphia roots.

## 8. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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Lewis, Michael. "'He was not a Connoisseur': Peter Widener and his House," *Nineteenth Century*, vol. 12, no. 3/4, 1993.

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APPENDIX 1: MAPS

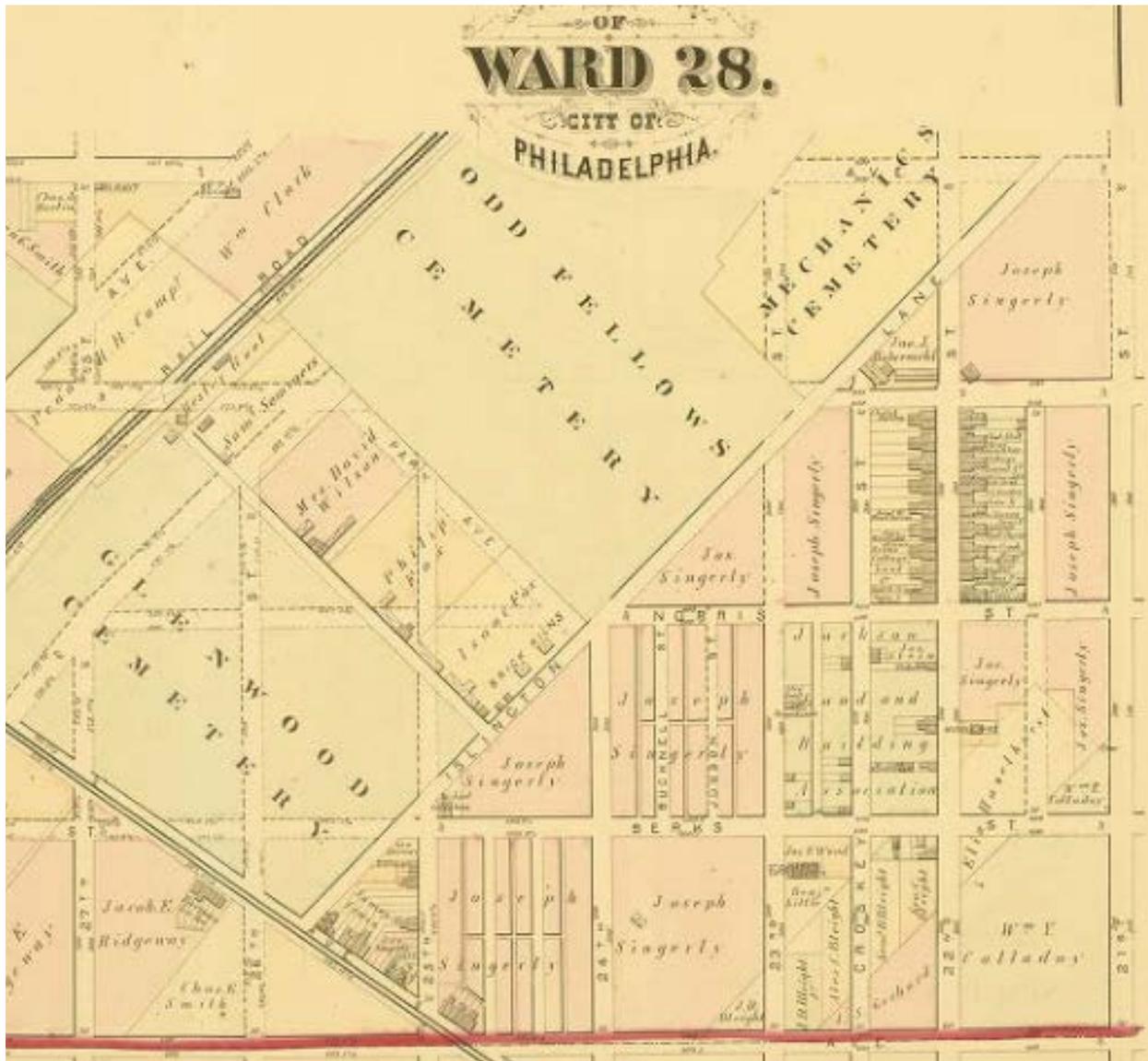


Figure 17: Detail of G.M. Hopkins' City Atlas of Philadelphia, 1875, showing the yet undeveloped, but recently-platted, Judson Street, and 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, between Norris and Berks, owned by Joseph Singerly and later his son, William Singerly. [https://www.philageohistory.org/rdic-images/view-image.cfm/GMH1875.PhilaWards21\\_28.025.PlateU](https://www.philageohistory.org/rdic-images/view-image.cfm/GMH1875.PhilaWards21_28.025.PlateU)

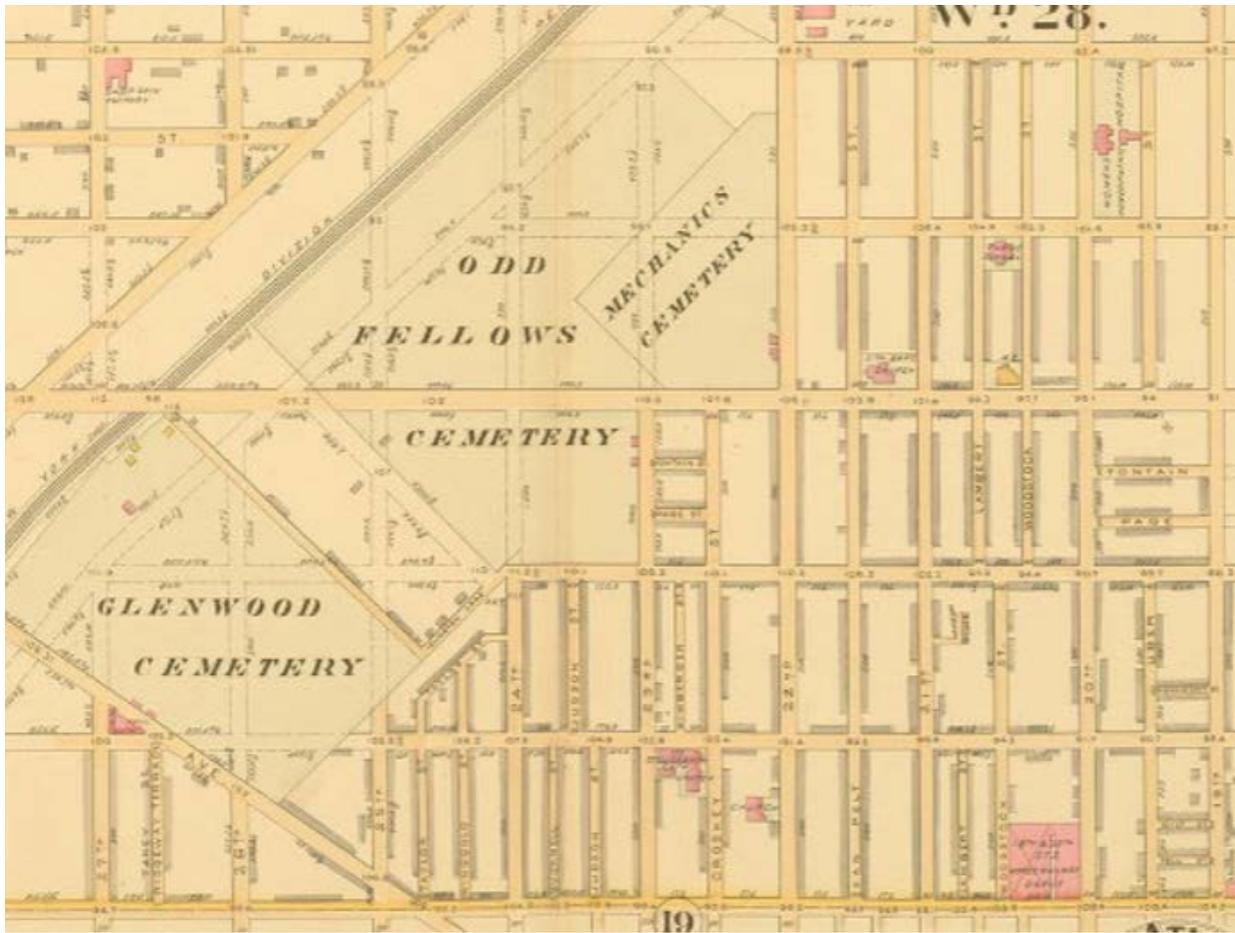


Figure 18: Detail of 1888 Baist's Property Atlas of the City of Philadelphia, Penna, complete in one volume, plate 20, showing Singler's success in opening Diamond Street through Odd Fellows' Cemetery. Source: Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network.

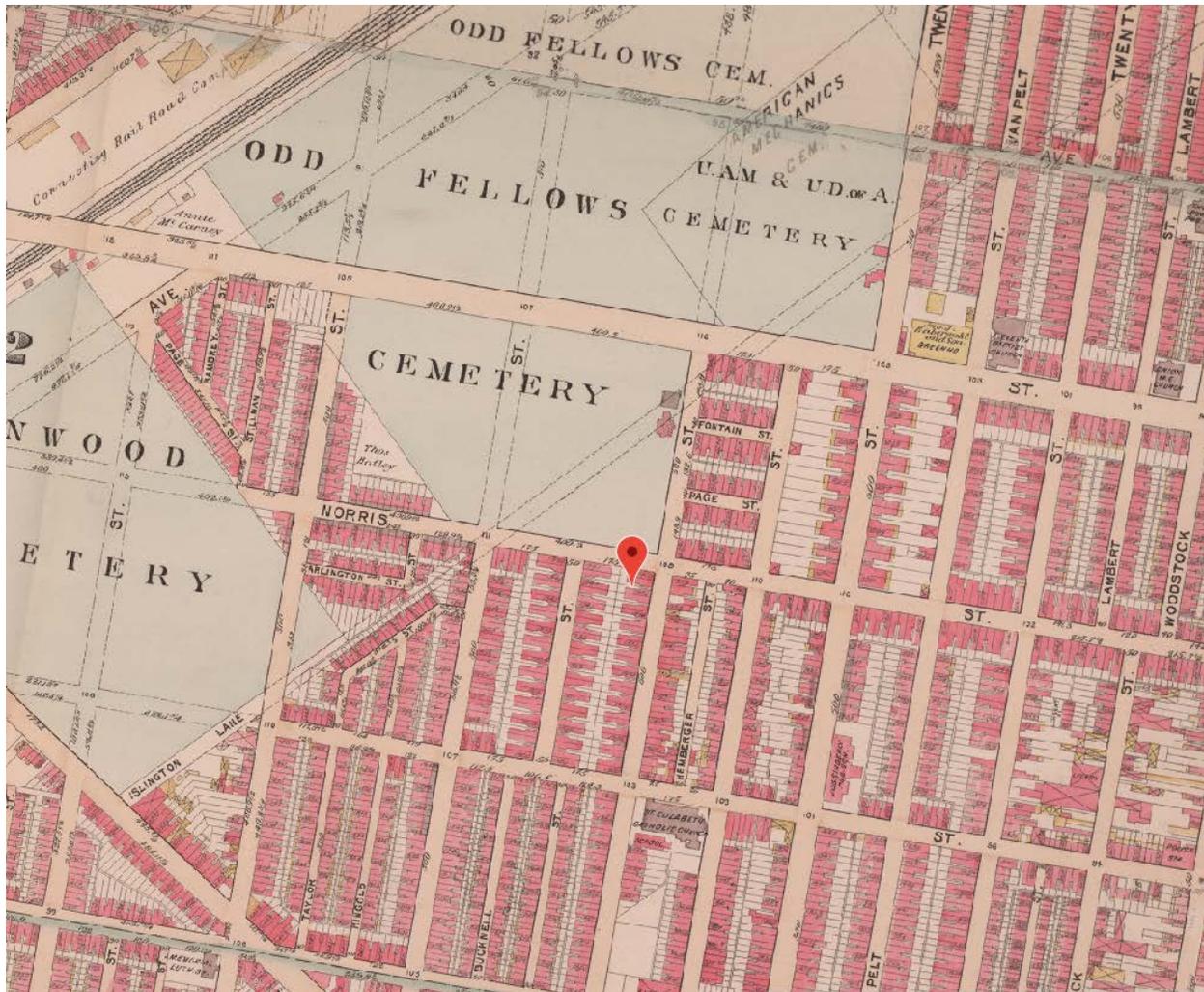


Figure 19: Detail of G. W. Bromley's 1895 Atlas of the City of Philadelphia, showing the location of 1946 N. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street and the development surrounding it. Source: Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network.

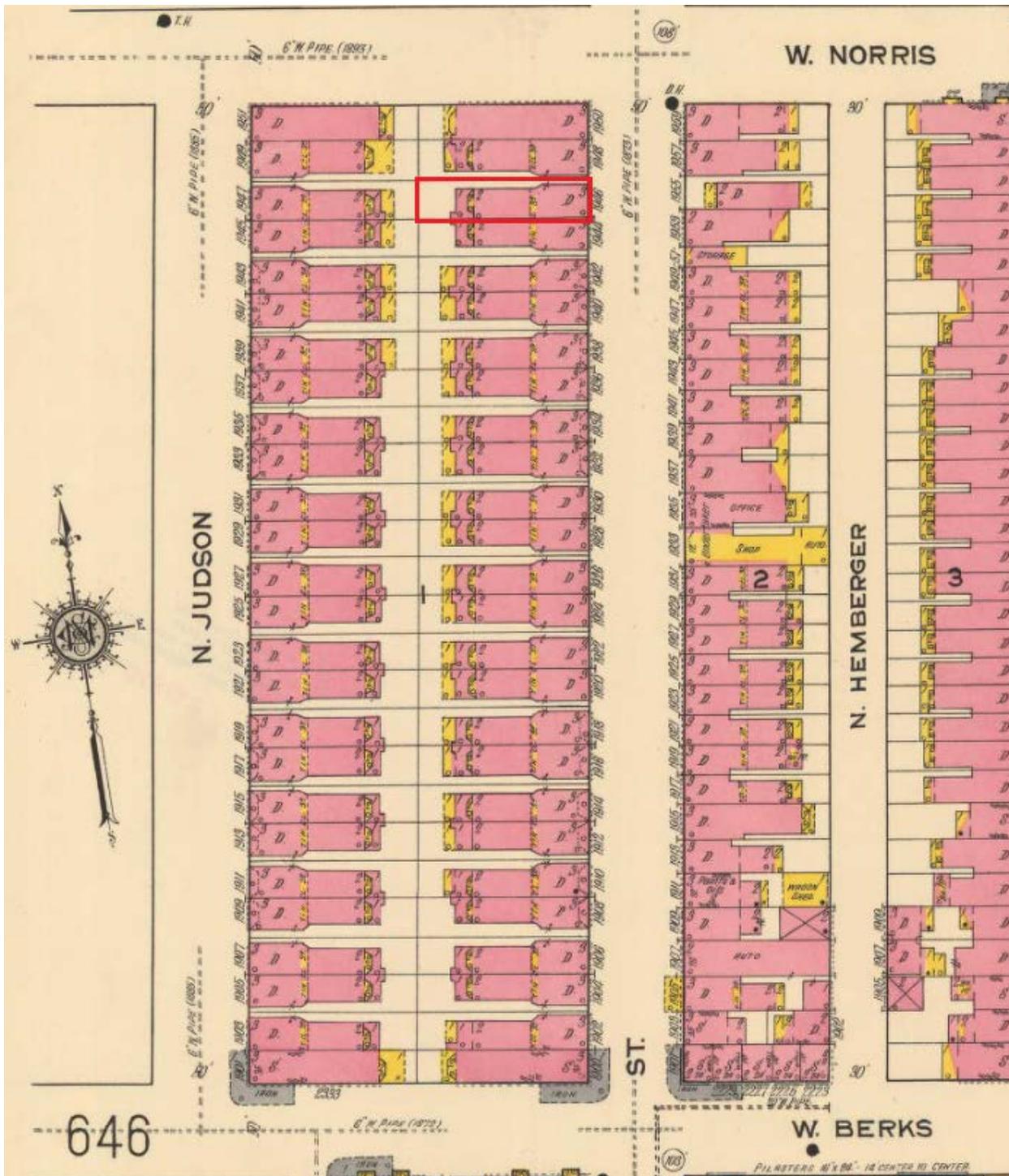


Figure 20: 1918 Sanborn fire insurance map showing 1946 N. 23rd Street in the context of the larger development project in which it was constructed in the 1880s. Source: Sanborn Map Company, Volume 7, sheet 647. Pennsylvania State University.