

MANHEIM SQUARE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Proposed Action: Designation

Nominator: Keeping Society

Number of Properties: 6

Staff Contact: Kim Chantry, kim.chantry@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate a small historic district comprised of six properties at 32-42 Manheim Street in the Germantown section of Philadelphia. Five of the properties are classified as contributing and one, a vacant lot, is identified as non-contributing. The nomination argues that the district satisfies Criterion for Designation J, as exemplifying the economic, social, and historical heritage of the community as an early rowhouse development in southwest Germantown, “as it transformed from a linear community along one major street to a larger town or suburban setting.” The period of significance spans from 1834 to 1861, when the houses comprising the historic district were built and occupied by members of the Roset family.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the proposed historic district satisfies Criterion for Designation J. However, the staff recommends removing the property at 32 Manheim Street from the district. It is a vacant lot on the boundary of the proposed district. Historic preservation best practices advise against including non-contributing properties on district boundaries, especially vacant lots.



NOMINATION OF HISTORIC DISTRICT
PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

SUBMIT ALL ATTACHED MATERIALS ON PAPER AND IN ELECTRONIC FORM (CD, EMAIL, FLASH DRIVE)
ELECTRONIC FILES SHOULD BE WORD OR WORD COMPATIBLE

1. NAME OF HISTORIC DISTRICT (CURRENT/HISTORIC)

Manheim Square Historic District

2. LOCATION

Please attach a map of Philadelphia locating the historic district.

Councilmanic District(s): 8

3. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Please attach a written description and map of the district boundaries.

4. DESCRIPTION

Please attach a written description and photographs of the built and natural environments/ characteristic streetscape of the district.

5. INVENTORY

Please attach an inventory of the district with an entry for every property. All street addresses must coincide with official Office of Property Assessment addresses.

Total number of properties in district: 6

Count buildings with multiple units as one.

Number of properties already on Register/percentage of total: 0 / 0

Number of significant properties/percentage of total: 0 / 0

Number of contributing properties/percentage of total: 5 / 83%

Number of non-contributing properties/percentage of total: 1 / 17%

6. SIGNIFICANCE

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

Period of Significance (from year to year): from 1834 to 1861

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION:

The historic district 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.

7. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Please attach a bibliography.

8. NOMINATOR

Organization Keeping Society of Philadelphia Date 23 July 2020

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

Street Address 1315 Walnut Street, Suite 732 Telephone 717.602.5002

City, State, and Postal Code Philadelphia, PA 19144

Nominator is is not the property owner.

PHC USE ONLY

Date of Receipt: 23 July 2020

Correct-Complete Incorrect-Incomplete Date: 10 August 2021

Date of Preliminary Eligibility: _____

Date of Notice Issuance: 20 August 2021

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

Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission: _____

Date of Final Action: _____

Designated Rejected

NOMINATION
FOR THE
PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES



THE MANHEIM SQUARE HISTORIC DISTRICT
Nos. 32, 34, 36, 38, 40 & 42 MANHEIM STREET

—
ERECTED 1834–35 THROUGH 1843
—

GERMANTOWN
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19144

2. LOCATION

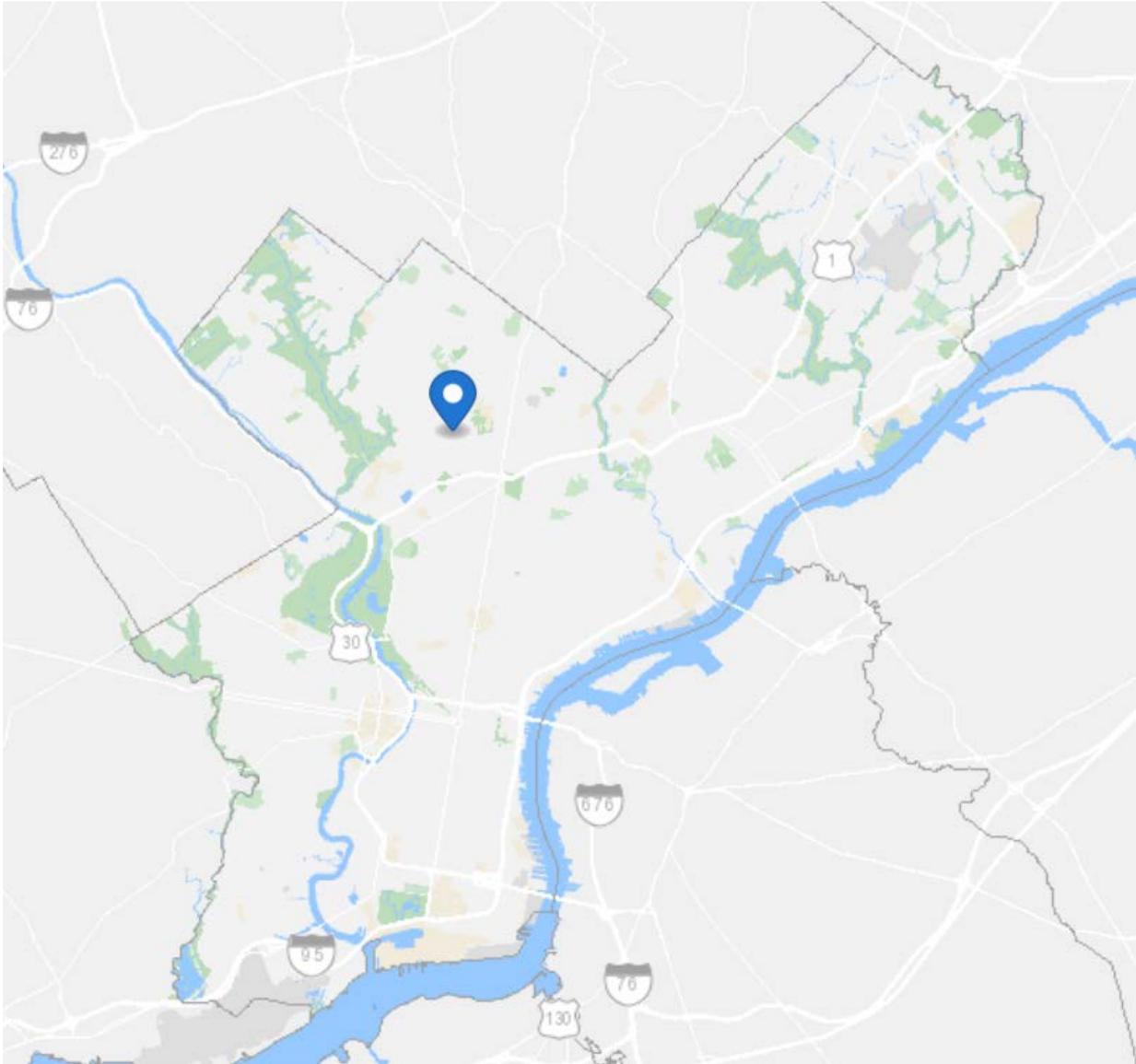


Figure 1. Map of the City of Philadelphia showing the location of the Manheim Square Historic District.



Figure 2. The boundary of the subject historic district is outlined in blue. Source: Atlas, City of Philadelphia.

3. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary for the proposed Manheim Square Historic District is composed of the following parcels:

Address	Map Registry No.	OPA Account No.
32 Manheim Street	048N050012	123067600
34 Manheim Street	048N050085	123067700
36 Manheim Street	048N050239	123067800
38 Manheim Street	048N050227	123067900
40 Manheim Street	048N050263	123068000
42 Manheim Street	048N050266	123068100

The boundary description for the historic district is as follows:

Situate on the Southeasterly side of Manheim Street and the Southwesterly side of Portico Street, containing in front or breadth on said Manheim Street approximately 103 feet and extending of that width in length or depth Southeastwardly along parallel lines approximately 104 feet to the rear property lines.

4. DESCRIPTION



Figure 3. No. 32 Manheim Street in the foreground of the historic district. Source: Cyclomedia, April 2020.



Figure 4. No. 42 Manheim Street in the foreground of the historic district. Source: Cyclomedia, April 2020.

The vignette of five houses at Nos. 34, 36, 38, 40, and 42 Manheim Street and the associated vacant lot at No. 32 Manheim Street comprise a vernacular development of brick and stone construction that stands on the southeasterly side of a thoroughfare in southwest Germantown. This block of Manheim Street terminates at busy Germantown Avenue, and the surrounding context is dense residential rowhouses. Known as Manheim Square, the row of houses was built between 1834 and 1843—with possible earlier elements, as will be further explained in this nomination.



Figure 5. Aerial imagery of the proposed historic district. Source: Pictometry, 2020.

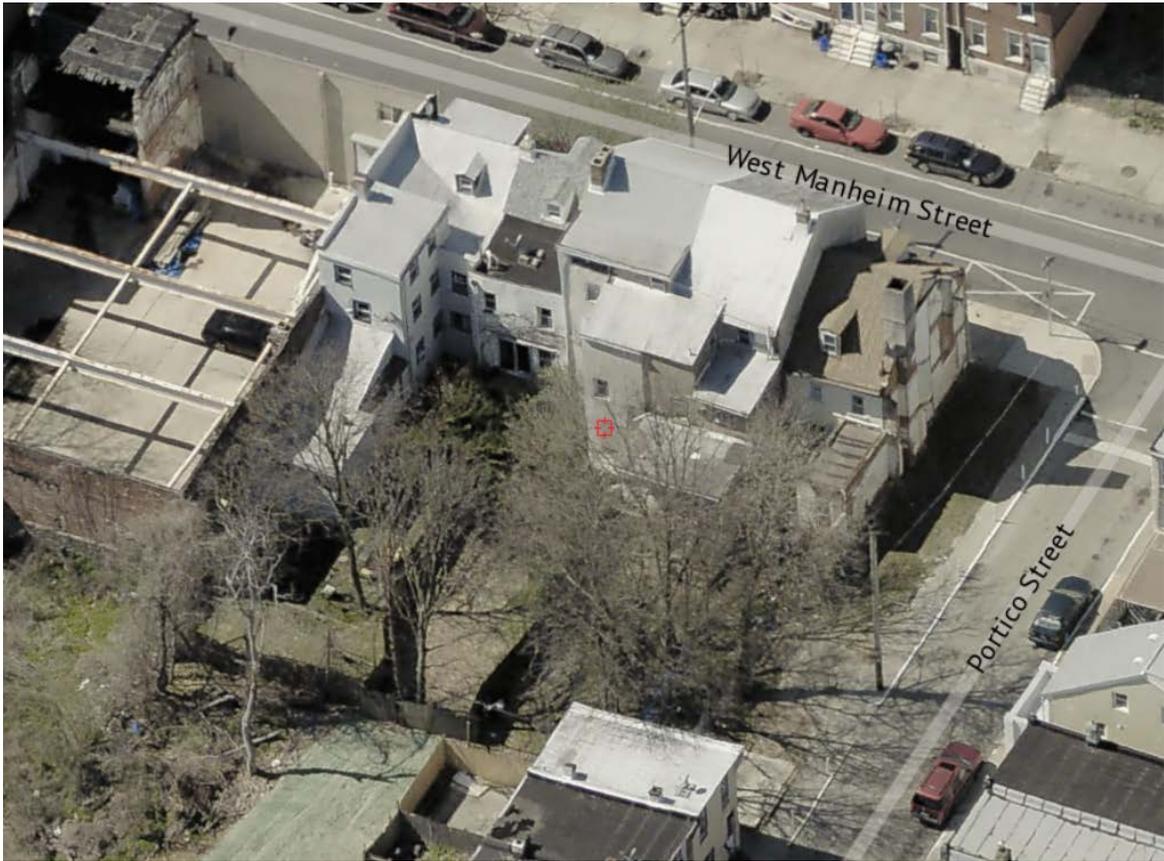


Figure 6. Aerial imagery of the rear elevations of the proposed historic district. Source: Pictometry, 2020.

5. INVENTORY

No. 32 Manheim Street



Figure 7. Looking south at the subject properties, in which the non-contributing vacant lot at No. 32 Manheim Street is highlighted. Source: Pictometry, 2020.

Name of resource: 32 Manheim Street

Date of construction and major alteration: Demolished 2017. Historically a two-and-one-half-story stone dwelling.

Name of architect, engineer, designer, builder, original owner, and/or other significant persons involved with the resource: N/A

Brief description of physical appearance: Vacant lot

District classification: Non-contributing

Previous listings on National Register and Philadelphia Register: None



Figure 8. 2020 view of vacant lot at 32 Manheim Street. Source: Cyclomedia, April 2020.



Figure 9. The house that stood at 32 Manheim Street, which was demolished by the City of Philadelphia in 2017. Source: Google.

No. 34 Manheim Street



Figure 10. 34 Manheim Street, April 2020. Source: Cyclomedia.

Name of resource: 34 Manheim Street

Date of construction and major alteration: Constructed by 1834

Name of architect, engineer, designer, builder, original owner, and/or other significant persons involved with the resource: Jacob Roset, owner/developer

Brief description of physical appearance: Situated immediately upon the front of the parcel at the sidewalk, the residence at No. 34 Manheim Street is a two-and-one-half-story, double pile building of load bearing, masonry construction, featuring a side gables roof and a rear ell. Penetrating the

masonry façade finished in stucco, the building maintains its original symmetrical two-bay fenestration at the primary (northeast elevation) featuring a window and pedestrian door at the ground floor and two windows above on the second. The side-gabled roof features a single dormer at the primary elevation, which is of the Federal mode. This dormer has a front-gabled roof above the window opening, which is flanked by fluted pilasters. Until 2017, two large brick chimneys penetrated the roofline serving both the front and rear rooms of the buildings at both Nos. 32 and 34 Manheim Street.

The southwest elevation is a party wall that is shared with No. 36 Manheim Street, which is illustrated above in that the southwesterly eave of the subject roof extends slightly into the façade of No. 36, rising just above the top of its second-floor windows. The northeast (side) elevation was originally concealed by the presence of the building at No. 32 Manheim Street, though its demolition left the side wall and its masonry components exposed to the elements. The rear elevation is largely concealed from the public right-of-way, although a like dormer is present at the rear along with a one-story masonry ell.

District classification: Contributing

Previous listings on National Register and Philadelphia Register: None

No. 36 Manheim Street



Figure 11. 36 Manheim Street. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2020.

Name of resource: 36 Manheim Street

Date of construction and major alteration: 1835

Name of architect, engineer, designer, builder, original owner, and/or other significant persons involved with the resource: Jacob Roset, owner/developer

Brief description of physical appearance: Situated immediately upon the front of the parcel at the sidewalk, the residence at No. 36 Manheim Street is a three-story, double pile building of load bearing, stone masonry construction, featuring a side gable roof and a telescoping rear ell. Penetrating the stucco-clad, masonry façade, the building largely maintains its original semi-

symmetrical, two-bay fenestration at the primary (northwest) elevation which features an infilled window and pedestrian door at the ground floor beneath a pent roof with two windows above on the second and third floors. The side-gabled roof is of a low pitch, featuring a single, low brick chimney at the northeast elevation near the crest of the roof.

The northeast, side elevation is a party wall that is shared with No. 34 Manheim Street, which is illustrated above in that the eave of No. 34's roof extends slightly into the façade of the subject building, rising just above the top of the second-floor windows. Though the southwest elevation is entirely obscured by the presence of No. 38 Manheim Street. The side (northeast) elevation is also largely concealed by the presence of No. 34 Manheim Street, though the stucco-clad façade of its third floor is visible from this elevation and features at least one window. The rear elevation is largely concealed, although some elements of the three-story rear ell and third floor are visible from a rear alley.

District classification: Contributing

Previous listings on National Register and Philadelphia Register: None

No. 38 Manheim Street



Figure 12. 38 Manheim Street. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2020.

Name of resource: 38 Manheim Street

Date of construction and major alteration: 1835

Name of architect, engineer, designer, builder, original owner, and/or other significant persons involved with the resource: Jacob Roset, owner/developer

Brief description of physical appearance: Situated immediately upon the front of the parcel at the sidewalk, the residence at No. 38 Manheim Street is a three-story, double pile building of load bearing, stone masonry construction, featuring a side gable roof and a telescoping rear ell. Penetrating the stucco-clad, masonry façade, the building maintains its original, semi-symmetrical two-bay fenestration at the primary (northwest) elevation, featuring two windows and pedestrian door at the ground floor and two windows above on the second and third. The side-gable roof is of a low pitch, featuring a single, low-rising brick chimney at the southwest elevation near the crest of the roof.

The southwest elevation is at least partly a party wall that is shared with No. 40 Manheim Street, which is illustrated above in that the eave of No. 40's roof extends slightly into the façade of the subject building, rising just above the top of the second-floor windows. The northeast elevation is entirely obscured by the presence of the building at No. 36 Manheim Street, though the southwest elevation, being largely concealed by the presence of No. 40 Manheim Street, is partly visible where the stucco-clad façade of the third floor rises, featuring at least one window. This façade too is finished in stucco. The rear elevation is largely concealed, although some elements of the three-story rear ell and third floor are visible a rear alley.

District classification: Contributing

Previous listings on National Register and Philadelphia Register: None

No. 40 Manheim Street

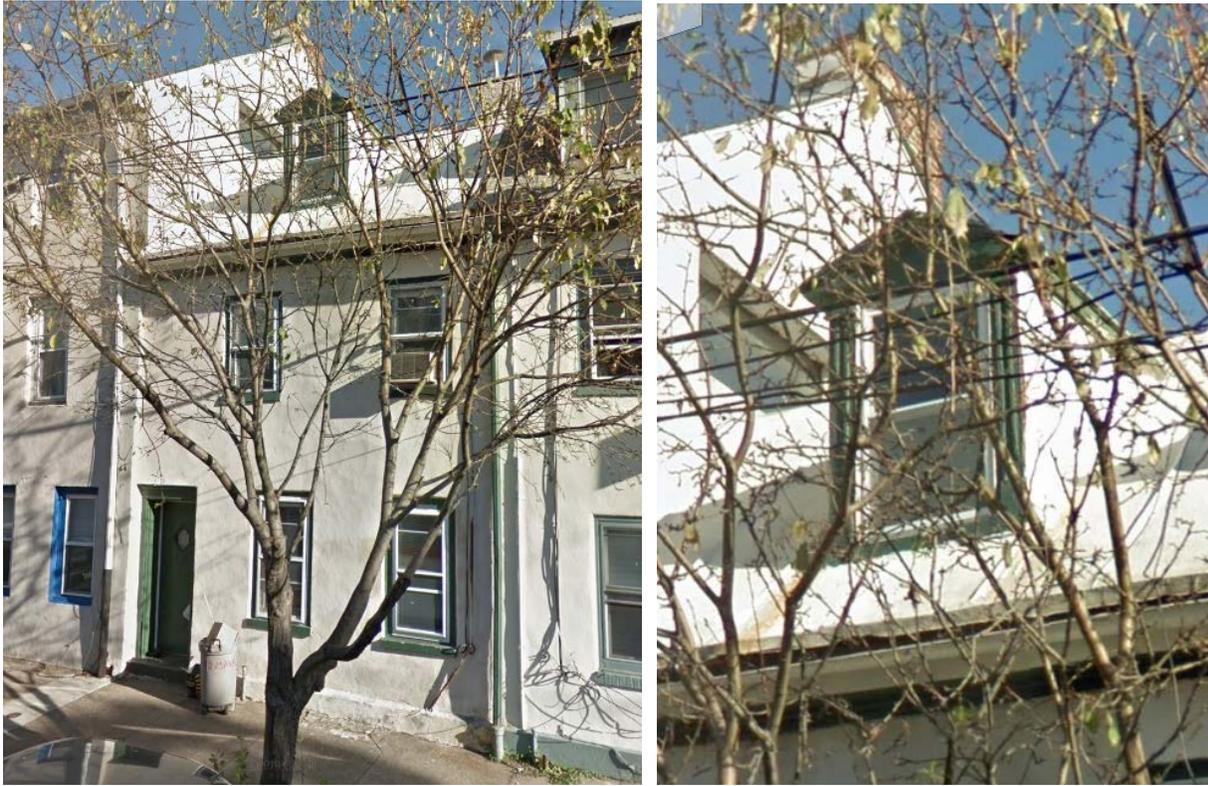


Figure 13. 40 Manheim Street, with detail of dormer. Source: Google.

Name of resource: 40 Manheim Street

Date of construction and major alteration: 1843

Name of architect, engineer, designer, builder, original owner, and/or other significant persons involved with the resource: Jacob Roset, owner/developer

Brief description of physical appearance: Situated immediately upon the front of the parcel at the sidewalk, the residence at No. 40 Manheim Street is a two-and-one-half-story, double pile building of load bearing, masonry construction, featuring a side gable roof and a rear ell. Penetrating the stucco-clad, masonry façade, the building maintains its original semi-symmetrical, two- and three-bay fenestration at the primary (northwest) elevation, featuring two windows and pedestrian door at the ground floor and two windows above on the second. The side-gables roof features a single dormer at the center of the primary elevation. This dormer features a pediment above the window opening, emulating Greek Revival style of the 1840s. The side-gable roof is penetrated at the southwest end by shared brick chimney stack that appears to be built within the party wall that is shared with No. 42 Manheim Street.

The southwest (side) elevation is a party wall that is shared with No. 42 Manheim Street, which is illustrated above in that the northeasterly eave the subject roof extends slightly into the façade of No. 42, rising just above the top of the second-floor windows. The northeast (side) elevation is

entirely obscured by the presence of the building at No. 36 Manheim Street, though the southwest elevation, being largely concealed by the presence of No. 40, is partly visible where the stucco-clad façade of the third floor rises. This third story features at least one window. This façade too is finished in stucco. The rear elevation is largely concealed, although some elements of the rear ell and third floor are visible from a rear alley.

District classification: Contributing

Previous listings on National Register and Philadelphia Register: None

No. 42 Manheim Street



Figure 14. 42 Manheim Street. Source: Google.



Figure 15. The “Manheim Square” tablet that survives in the façade of No. 42 Manheim Street. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2020.

Name of resource: 42 Manheim Street

Date of construction and major alteration: 1843

Name of architect, engineer, designer, builder, original owner, and/or other significant persons involved with the resource: Jacob Roset, owner/developer

Brief description of physical appearance: Situated immediately upon the front of the parcel at the sidewalk, the residence at No. 42 Manheim Street is a two-and-one-half-story, double pile building of load bearing, masonry construction, featuring a side gable roof and a three-story rear ell. Penetrating the stucco-clad, masonry façade, the building maintains its original semi-symmetrical, two-bay fenestration at the primary (northwest) elevation which features one window and pedestrian door at the ground floor and two windows above on the second floor. The side gable roof features a central three-bay shed dormer on primary elevation. This window, which includes a three-part mullion window, replaced the original single dormer. The side gable roof is penetrated at the northeast end by shared brick chimney stack that appears to be built within the common party wall of the subject building and No. 44 Manheim Street.

Both the southwest and northwest elevations are entirely obscured by the neighboring buildings at Nos. 40 and 44 Manheim Street. The rear elevation is largely concealed, although a three-story ell extends from the rear, followed by a lower building addition, which is partly visible from a rear alley.

District classification: Contributing

Previous listings on National Register and Philadelphia Register: None

6. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Manheim Square Historic District, including five buildings and one vacant lot, comprises a significant historic resource that merits designation by the Philadelphia Historical Commission and inclusion on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The subject historic district satisfies Criterion for Designation J of Section 14-1004 of the Philadelphia Code.

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

The Period of Significance is 1834 to 1861, when the houses that comprise the subject historic district were built and occupied by members of the Roset family.¹ Please note that further research may find that No. 34 Manheim Street was partly completed prior to 1834.



Figure 16. A detail of Jacob Roset's "Plan of the Lots of Ground, 1834 and 1835, for the plan of the same, were originally sold at public sale in 1833 for the Deed. 1833." Note that the houses at 32 and 34 W. Manheim Street were extant at that time, and the plan shows the future sites of 36, 38, 40, and 42 Manheim Streets, which were afterwards erected. Source: The Roset Family Papers, HSP.

¹ The dates of construction are explained in Statement of Significant and Historic Context sections; however, the period of significance begins at the time Nos. 32 and 34 Manheim Street were completed and extended through the ownership of the Roset family. This period of significance does not foreclose an extended period of significance, which was not within the scope of this work.

CRITERION J

Representative of both the neighborhood’s development, as well as the economic and social history of the people that influenced the evolution of the community and experienced its built environment, the Manheim Square Historic District is currently comprised of five attached masonry houses and a vacant lot that form one of the early rowhouse developments of southwest Germantown, as it transformed from a linear community along one major street to a larger town or suburban setting. Early on, Germantown Avenue had very few cross streets, and even those that did exist in the eighteenth century, had very few buildings, even fewer of which were rowhouse developments like those ubiquitous in Philadelphia. However, the number cross streets of Germantown Avenue increased dramatically and were developed in the third and fourth quarters of the nineteenth century. Speaking to the development of such cross streets—particularly in southwest Germantown, this 185-year-old row of dwellings figures among the first rows of houses constructed in the area. While the neighborhood is largely defined by the rowhouse and twin dwelling types today, Manheim Square emerged when Manheim Street, itself, was sparsely built with only a handful of row-like, but detached houses in the same block with larger houses and estates further west. This reflects the broader development patterns of many early settlements, towns, and villages in Philadelphia County, and it was this type of dense, urban development that led to the consolidation of the metropolis in 1854.

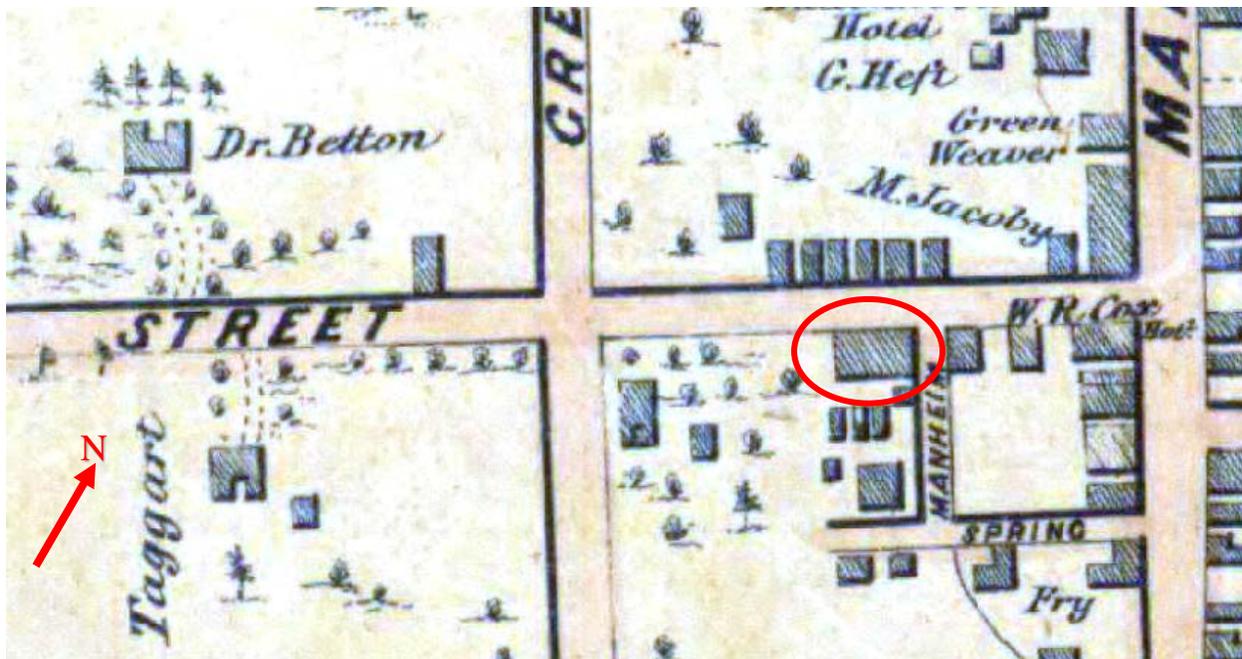


Figure 17. A detail of the 1851 Germantown, showing the first two blocks of Manheim Street with Manheim Square circled in red. Source: A.E. Rogerson and E.J. Murphy, *Map of the Township of Germantown, Philadelphia County, Penna.* (1851).

As referenced above, the Manheim Square Historic District is also representative of the economic and social history of the community, including both its prominent and ordinary citizens. A French-Hungarian immigrant who arrived at Philadelphia in 1792, Jean Jacques Rozet (1764/65–1850)—known in America as Jacob Roset—was a successful dry goods merchant in Philadelphia, who, from early-on, had both business and personal interests in Germantown, where, later in his life, he became a “Rentier”, developing properties like Manheim Square, which he constructed between 1834 and 1843. Not only did Roset develop Manheim Square, but he also eventually made his

home in both Manheim Square, itself, and in another house, which he erected and occupied across Manheim Street just a few steps from Germantown Avenue.



Figure 18. An advertisement “To Let” Nos. 36 and 38 Manheim Street placed by Jacob Roset in 1847. Source: *Public Ledger*, 12 January 1847, 3.

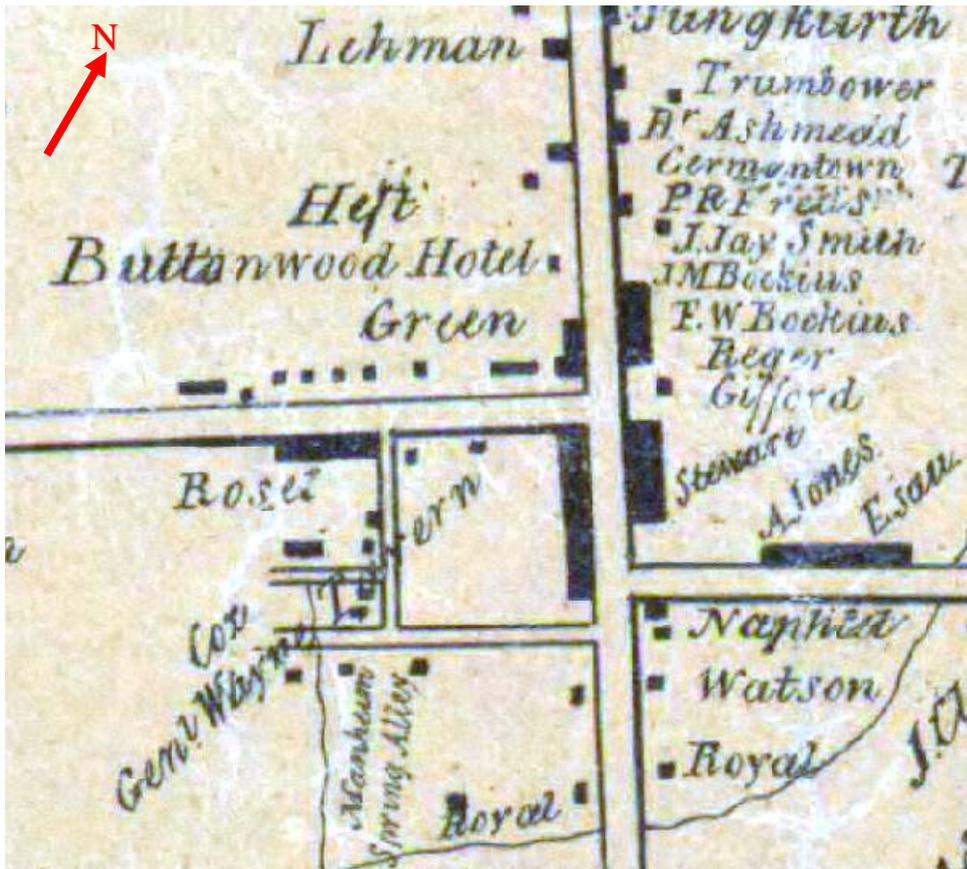


Figure 19. Map of the Township of Germantown 1848.

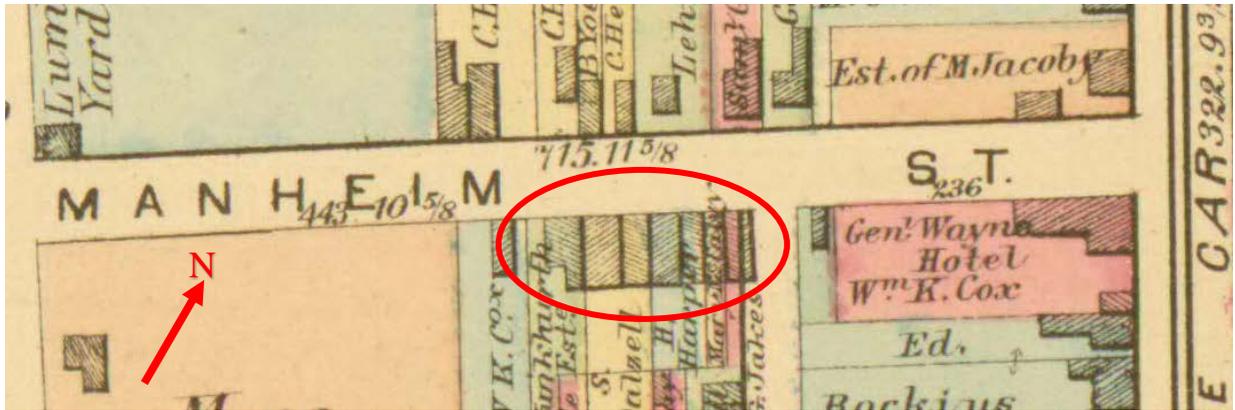


Figure 20. A detail showing the first two blocks of Manheim Street from the 1871 atlas. Source: G.M. Hopkins, *Atlas of the Late Borough of Germantown, 22nd Ward, City of Philadelphia* (1871), Plate 11.

Of the six original houses that comprise the Manheim Square Historic District, Nos. 32 and 34 Manheim Street are the oldest, potentially dating to the late-eighteenth or early-nineteenth century, at which time the building(s) would have been originally of the Reger family. In 1834, Jacob Roset purchased a larger parcel that included the subject property and subdivided the parcel into smaller lots.² By the close of 1834, the twin dwelling that comprised Nos. 32 and 34 had been completed by Roset—only the latter survives to-date.³ Roset lived in one of these houses and appears to have leased the other to an “infant school,” one of the first in that part of Germantown.⁴ Between 1834 and 1835, Roset built a three-story stone twin, creating Nos. 36 and 38 Manheim Street, making Manheim Square a row of four attached houses. While the interior space was no doubt domestic in scale and finish, the third floor was added to the plans as a purpose-built “Lodge Room” or “Hall” for the Philomathean Order of Odd Fellow of Germantown, which was founded in 1828. This was their first purpose-built space, which they occupied from 1835 until April 1847.⁵ It appears that the “Infant School” may have moved to the first and second floors of Nos. 36 and 38 Manheim Street, after which time the building became known as the Roset School.⁶ Eventually, the District of the Public Schools of the 6th Section, 1st District rented the first and second floors, which they used for the primary and grammar departments until the Rittenhouse School was built.⁷ After 1847, Nos. 36 and 38 were likely remodeled for strictly residential tenants. It appears that Manheim Square was enlarged with another two-and-one-half-story masonry twin in 1843, which

² Deed: Jacob Reger, of Germantown, yeoman, and Dorothy, his wife, Leonard Reger, of the same, livery stable keeper, and Mary, his wife, George Deal, of the same, hatter, and Ann, his wife, William Deal, of the same, manufacturer, and Elizabeth, his wife, John Jackson, of the same, yeoman, and Catharine, his wife, Jacob Epler, of the same, cordwainer and Margaret, his wife, Charles Deal, of the same, cordwainer, and Naomi, his wife, Margaret Wolf, of the same, widow, George Rees, assignee of the insolvent debtor William Reger, of Northern Liberties, cabinet maker, Daniel I. George, of Germantown, cabinet maker, and Louisa, his wife, to Jacob Roset, of Germantown, gentleman, for \$5,820, 31 July 1833, Philadelphia Deed Book (hereafter PDBk) G.W.C., No. 34, p. 245, City Archives of Philadelphia (hereafter CAP).

³ Fire Insurance Policy of Jacob Roset on 32 and 34 W. Manheim Street, Germantown, dated 1834, Roset Family Papers (1794–1857), Collection 1897, Historical Society of Pennsylvania (hereafter HSP).

⁴ Edward W. Hocker, *Germantown, 1683–1933: The Record that a Pennsylvania Community Has Achieved in the Course of 250 Years, Being a History of the People of Germantown, Mount Airy and Chestnut Hill* (Philadelphia: Published by the Author, 1933), 179.

⁵ Samuel Fitch Hotchkin. *Ancient and Modern Germantown, Mount Airy and Chestnut Hill* (Philadelphia: P.W. Ziegler & Co., 1889), 335.

⁶ Hocker, *Germantown, 1683–1933*, 179.

⁷ Lease between Jacob Roset and the Directors of the Lower Ward, 1843, Roset Family Papers, HSP.

would comprise Nos. 40 and 42 Manheim Street. While the houses were constructed as twin-like dwellings with common masonry party-walls, they formed a row of six, five of which survive to-date.⁸ After the death of Jacob Roset in 1850, the Manheim Square properties would largely remain in the family to provide rental income. Jacob Roset, Jr., who lived with his father on Manheim Street, retained ownership of many of the properties for more than a decade.⁹ By 1871, the properties that comprise Manheim Square all appear to have been owned by private individuals, as shown in the 1871 Atlas of Germantown.



Figure 21. Left: The Germantown Avenue at Manheim Street, featuring what was known as the General Wayne Inn to the left. Figure 22. Right: The northwest corner of Germantown Avenue and Manheim Street before the present buildings were erected in the mid-nineteenth century. Source: The Germantown Historical Society.

Historic Context: The Origin & Early Development of Manheim Street in Germantown

The property that now comprises Manheim Street traces its origins to the Estate of Joseph Shippen (1679–1741), who was perhaps the first Philadelphian to choose Germantown as a summer residence. Born in Boston, Joseph Shippen followed his father, Edward Shippen, to Philadelphia around 1707. A prominent merchant in the city, Edward Shippen acquired land in both Philadelphia proper and Southwark. Joseph Shippen began buying land in lower Germantown in 1707 and 1709. He eventually acquired three original town and side lots totaling 150 acres covering an area roughly bounded present-day Hansberry to Reger Streets and Germantown to Wissahickon Avenues. Sometime before his death in 1741, Shippen had retired to his Germantown property. In February 1740, Joseph Shippen gave his Germantown property to his three sons Edward (1703–1781), Joseph, Jr. (1706–1793), and Dr. William Shippen (1712–1775).¹⁰ It was in 1741 that Joseph Shippen deeded the subject property, when it was part of a larger parcel, to Joseph

⁸ *Pennsylvania, Wills and Probate Records, 1683–1993* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2015.

⁹ Deed: Jacob Roset [Jr.], 22nd Ward, gentleman, and Cecilia, his wife, to John McDevitt, for \$1,075, 15 September 1861, Philadelphia Deed Book A.C.H., No. 25, p. 409, CAP.

¹⁰ Deed: Joseph Shippen, the father, to his sons Edward, Joseph and William Shippen, 27 February 1740; recited in Philadelphia Deed Book I., No. 9, p. 544, City Archives of Philadelphia (hereafter CAP). The recital has a deed book and page number for the 1740 deed but no record of that date corresponds with the citation given.

Shippen, Jr.¹¹ The remaining portion of the larger estate, which extended into the adjacent Northern Liberties (now East Falls) was also given to his sons.¹²

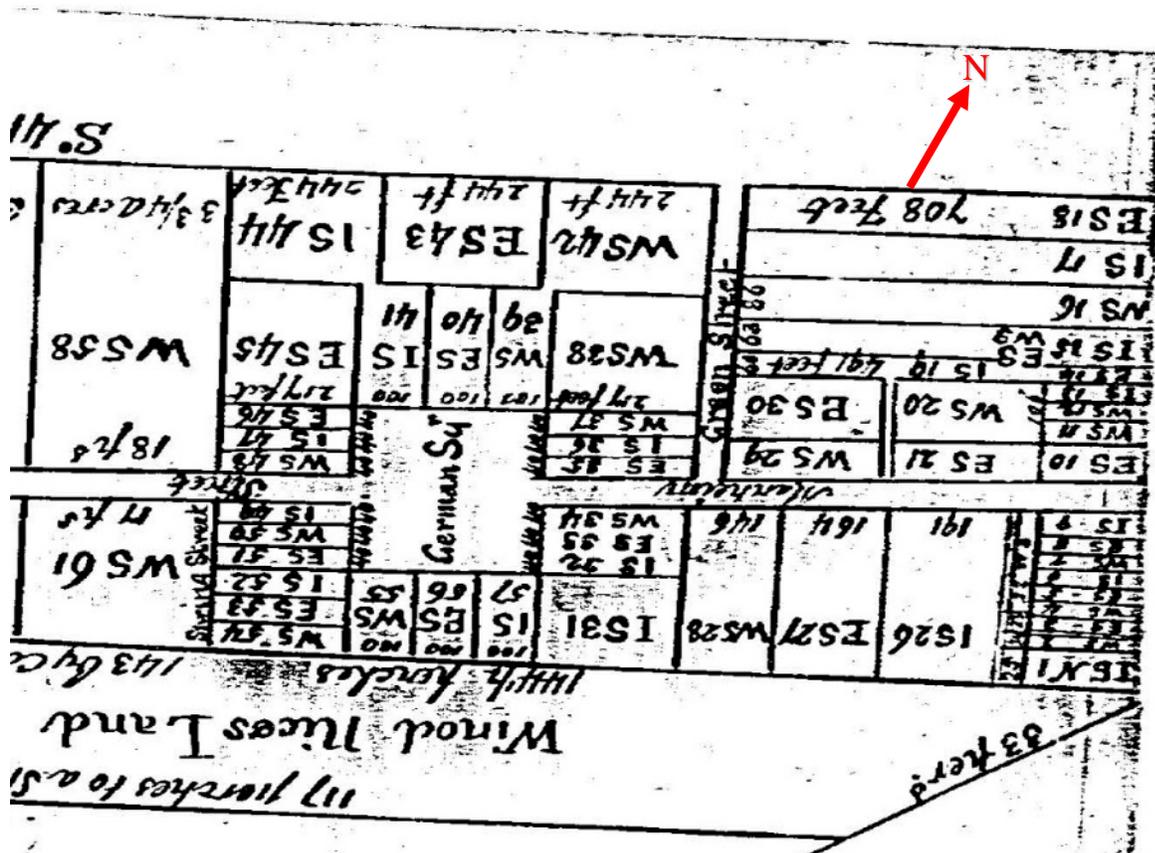


Figure 23. Detail from the 1742 Shippen Estate partition plan showing the original “German Square” and the smaller house lots along Germantown Avenue on the side of the map and larger lots along Manheim Street. The location of the subject property is highlighted. Source: Philadelphia Deed Book I., No. 9, p. 544.

Edward, Joseph, Jr. and William Shippen divided up their father’s Germantown estate in February 1742.¹³ This partition was Germantown’s first large scale subdivision. The brothers created a square and four new streets—two of which (Mannheim and Green Streets) still retain their original names—and a total of 78 lots of varying sizes.¹⁴ The smallest lots were placed along Germantown Avenue and off Manheim Street around the “German Square” (Figure 23). At this time, most of the lots were open, unimproved land. Beginning in 1743, the brothers starting advertising the lots along Germantown Avenue for sale. The sale of the lots on ground rent was slow at first, but soon picked in the 1740s and 1750s.

¹¹ Deed: Jacob Reger et alia, to Jacob Roset, PDBk G.W.C., No. 34, p. 245, CAP.
¹² Will of Joseph Shippen “late of the City of Philadelphia (but now of Germantown) ... merchant,” dated 30 December 1740, proved 30 June 1741, Will Book F., p. 219, Philadelphia Register of Wills.
¹³ Deed of Partition between Edward Shippen, of the City of Philadelphia, merchant, Joseph Shippen, of the City, merchant, and William Shippen, of the City, chemist, 10 February 1741[2], Philadelphia Deed Book I., No. 9, p. 544, CAP. Later recitals of the partition deed assign the double date of 1741/2 (PDBk No. 61, p. 475; A.W.M., No. 61, p. 469).
¹⁴ A plan of the partition is recorded with the partition deed.

The subject property was part of a 1.3-acre parcel in the subdivision known as Lot IS 26, which measured 191 feet along the south side of Manheim Street, extending west 300 feet to the property of Baltis Reser. The full length of Spring Alley was the northeastern boundary of the property. Joseph Shippen, Jr. retained ownership of the property until July 1780, when he and, his wife, Mary sold the property to Jacob Reager/Rieger/Reger (1743–1812), a blacksmith, of Germantown.¹⁵ Reger lived next door to the 1.3-acre parcel on Germantown Avenue at what is known today as 5044 to 5052 Germantown Avenue in a house (no longer extant) and lot he purchased in February 1780.¹⁶ In 1798, Reger's was assessed for a two-story stone house, measuring 21 by 16 feet, with a unoccupied stone "Brewhouse", measuring 27 by 20 feet in "poor condition," and a stone kitchen, measuring 36 by 18 feet.¹⁷ This may indicate that some buildings existed on the 1.3-acre parcel. Jacob Reger willed all his property to his wife and children. It remained until 1833 when they petitioned the Philadelphia Orphans' Court to divide the land on Manheim Street into 13 lots and sell them. The Court granted the petition, and the lots were sold at auction in June 1833.¹⁸

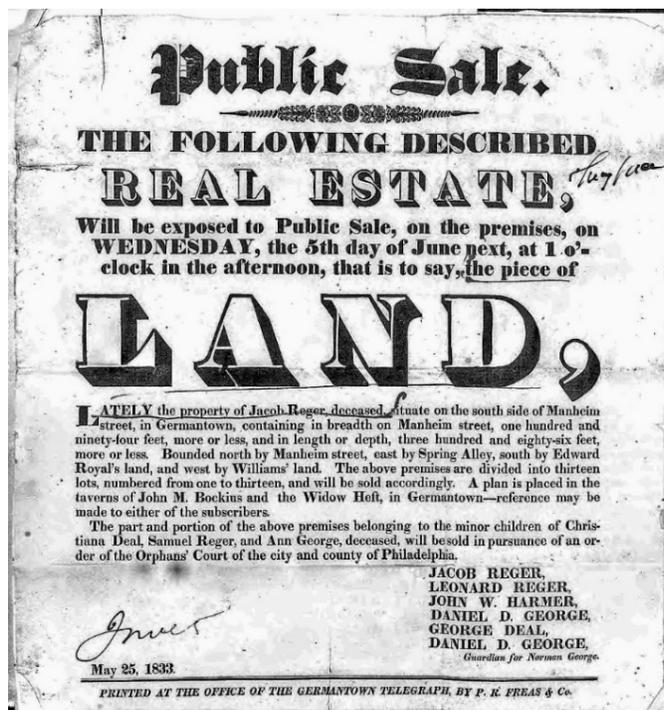


Figure 24. Auction notice of the sale of the Jacob Reger properties along Manheim Street in 1833. Source: Estate of Christiana Deal, No. 56 of 19 July 1833, Book 33, p. 460, Philadelphia Orphans' Court Estate Papers.

¹⁵ Deed: Joseph Shippen, of the City of Philadelphia, merchant, and Mary, his wife, to Jacob Reager, of Germantown, for £50, 26 July 1780, PDBk I., No. 17, p. 480, CAP.

¹⁶ Deed Tripartite: Rachael Weitman, of Germantown, widow of Jacob Weitman, of Germantown, mason, first part, George Benner, of Bristol Township, husbandman, and Mary, his wife, second part, and Jacob Weitman, of the City of Philadelphia, potter, and Elizabeth Weitman, of the same place, spinster, to Jacob Reiger, of Germantown, tape weaver, for £24,000, 10 February 1780, PDBK I., No. 17, p. 413, CAP.

¹⁷ *United States Direct Tax of 1798: Tax Lists for the State of Pennsylvania*. M372, microfilm, 24 rolls. Records of the Internal Revenue Service, 1791–2006, Record Group 58. National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

¹⁸ Estate of Christiana Deal, No. 56 of 19 July 1833, Book 33, p. 460, Philadelphia Orphans' Court Estate Papers.

Jacob Roset purchased lots 3, 4 and 11 in the estate auction. The Reger heirs executed the deed for these on July 31, 1833. His purchase of lots 3 and 4 had a front of 106 feet on Manheim Street and a depth of 170 feet to the southeast. The purchase also included a lot (no. 11) on Reger Street, with a frontage of 36 feet. The deed included a reference to “buildings, improvements, etc.”¹⁹ Based on this deed, there may have been a building on the property, perhaps the buildings at 32 and 34 Manheim Street.

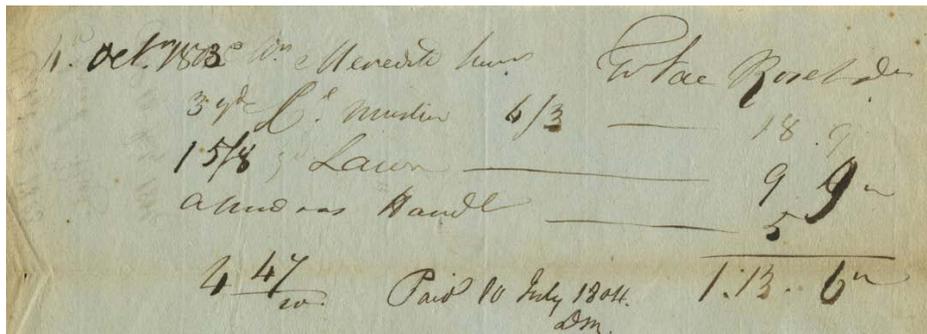


Figure 25. A receipt for a handkerchief, lawn, and muslin for Mr. Meredith from Jacob Roset on October 4, 1803. Source: Collection 145, Winterthur Digital Collections.

Historic Context: Jacob Roset (1764–1850), Merchant & Rentier

Known in the annals of Germantown history, Jacob Roset was born as Jean Jacques Rozet to Simon Louis Marie Rozet, a *régisseur* or local Collector of the Royal Customs, and Elizabeth Cousset in July 1764 at Lyons, France.²⁰ After 1789, his father having since died, Jacob Roset, his mother, and his brother Nicholas, removed from Lyons to Vienna, Austria, fleeing the country due to the impending French Revolution.²¹ According to a family tradition published in *The Evening Telegraph*, Jacob Roset “attracted the notice of Emperor Joseph II, of Austria,” and, as a result, “was educated at the Imperial Military Academy of Presburg, Hungary [present-day Bratislava, Slovenia].”²² He eventually left Vienna, and went to England, and then on to the United States around 1792, where he would finally land for the remainder of his life at Philadelphia.²³

¹⁹ Deed: Jacob Reger et alia, to Jacob Roset, PDBk G.W.C., No. 34, p. 245, CAP.

²⁰ “Translation of a Letter Dated 17th June 1841 written by François Rozet [aka Ignaz Franz Rozet von Brühlwalde] at Vienna, Austria,” Roset Family Papers, HSP; Marriage of Niklas Rozet to Henriette Pertholt, 2 October 1796, Trauungsbuch, 1796–1801, 01, Unsere Liebe Frau zu den Schotten Pfarrbereich, Romankatholische Erzdiözese Wien, Wien/Niederösterreich (Osten), Austria. I. Franz Rozet’s letter or the translation appears to have some mistakes regarding family names which the nominators corrected here by consulting the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century church records in Vienna.

²¹ Grace Mather-Smith and Kelley, Russell P., III, *My Darlings: A Memoir* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2018), 144.

²² “Death of an Estimable and Valuable Citizen,” *The Evening Telegraph*, 10 August 1870, 8.

²³ *The Gazette*, 31 May 1798, 1.



Figure 26. This 1797 watercolor shows the “Court House, Rickett’s Circus, and Oeller’s Hotel” at Sixth and Chestnut Streets in Philadelphia, where Jacob Roset appears to have lived when he first arrived at Philadelphia in 1793. Source: HSP.

Jacob Roset embarked upon his life in the New World with Jean-Pierre Blanchard (1753–1804), the French inventor, best known as a pioneer in balloon flight. Roset was Blanchard’s secretary, living at Oeller’s Hotel in 1793, when tickets were being sold to observe what would become the first successful balloon flight in America. The steep ticket price was five dollars.²⁴ A woodcut made by Charles R. Gardner in 1931 describes the “first flight” as follows:

The New World’s first flying field was the yard of the Walnut Street Prison in Philadelphia, at the southeast corner of Sixth and Walnut Streets, site of the present home of The Penn Mutual Life Insurance Company. At 10.09 A.M., January 9, 1793, Jean Pierre Blanchard, a citizen of France, ascended in a hydrogen-filled balloon, in the presence of President Washington and a great assembly. The aeronaut’s only passenger was a small black dog. Upon reaching an elevation of 1200 feet, the balloon was carried by a northwest wind over the Delaware River, at a pace of 20 miles an hour. Maximum altitude reached was 5,813 feet; distance 15 miles; time 45 minutes.²⁵

While not a known inventor like Blanchard, Roset was involved in the organization of the “first flight,” a significant innovation of the period. Ultimately, he sought other employment and Blanchard left the United States in 1797. Roset’s relationship with Blanchard explains the collective “local lore,” which included him knowing and conversing with General George Washington in the streets of Philadelphia.²⁶

²⁴ Lewis, “Phaeton in Philadelphia, Jean Pierre Blanchard and the First Balloon Ascension in America, 1793,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 67 (1943): 49–60.

²⁵ Woodcut: Charles R. Gardner, *The First Air Voyage In America* (Philadelphia: The Penn Mutual Life Insurance Company, 1931).

²⁶ Charles Francis Jenkins, *The Guide Book to Historic Germantown* (Philadelphia: 1902), 42.



Figure 27. Left: Pierre Blanchard. Figure 28. Center: An illustration of Blanchard’s Balloon. Source: Jean-Pierre Blanchard, *Journal of My Forty-Fifth Ascension, Being the First Performed in America, on the Ninth of January, 1793*. (Philadelphia: 1793). Figure 29. Right: Source: A Woodcut of “The First Air Voyage in America” dated 1931 by Charles R. Gardner. Source: Charles R. Gardner, *The First Air Voyage In America* (Philadelphia: The Penn Mutual Life Insurance Company, 1931).

Nearly a year after the “first flight,” Jacob Roset married Elizabeth Stuber on December 5, 1793 in the First Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia.²⁷ Their union would produce at least four children: John Roset (1794–1870), who married Mary Ann Laning (1807–1880); Eliza Margaret Roset (b. 1797), who married Abraham B. Amerman; Catherine Roset (1802/3–1821); and Jacob Roset, Jr. (1807–1862), who married Cecelia Luff (b. 1830).²⁸ Around the time of his wedding vows, he also took his Oath of Allegiance to the United States, but his citizenship would not be complete until 1798.²⁹

After leaving the service of Blanchard, Jacob Roset was employed for four years by the post office in Philadelphia, after which time he worked for “Mr. Brown.” In April 1797, Roset was contracted to provide services to various publications of the day: Andrew Brown, editor and publisher of the *Philadelphia Gazette*; John Fenno (1752–1798), a Federalist Party editor and publisher of the *Gazette of the United States*; Benjamin Franklin Bache (1769–1798), a journalist, printer and publisher of *The Philadelphia Aurora*; and Thomas Bradford (1745–1838), a printer and editor of the *Pennsylvania Journal*.³⁰ His commissioned was for “the purpose of enclosing and preparing our [news]papers for the Post-Office” a service he rendered for all of the aforementioned publishers. By 1797, “the press,” which included the above-named editors and publications had become highly politicized. Benjamin Franklin Bache had inherited *The Philadelphia Aurora* from his grandfather, Founding Father, Benjamin Franklin, which he would rename *The Aurora and General Advertiser* in 1794. By this time, publications like Bache’s were politicized to an incendiary degree. Roset entered upon the contractual services he provided an incredibly exciting,

²⁷ Church Registers. Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

²⁸ Records of the Roset family are included in the First Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia and later Trinity Lutheran Church, Germantown. John Roset’s daughter married Anthony J. Drexel.

²⁹ *The Gazette*, 31 May 1798, 1.

³⁰ Rosalind Reemer, *Printers and Men of Capital: Philadelphia Book Publishers in the New Republic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996).

yet toxic period of American journalism. Almost immediately, William Cobbett (1763–1835), an English refugee, pamphleteer, and independent journalist, living in Philadelphia between 1793 and 1800, attacked Roset’s business ethics, accusing him of an inappropriate relationship that involved the post office and his clients. Jacob Roset published a letter defending his character and background in *The Gazette* on May 31, 1798. Brown, Fenno, Bache, and Bradford vouched for Roset in an accompanying piece the same day—no doubt one of the few times they agreed on something in print.³¹

MR. CORBETT,

AT this present crisis, I believe it an indispensible duty—Tow to my family, and to my personal safety, to acquaint the public with a short detail of facts relating to my conduct in this country, my object is to prevent if possible, any confidence being placed in the wrong insinuations, you have published in the month of October of last year, and recently in your remarks on Mr. Brown’s note; such publications being calculated not only to deprive me and my young children of the very means of subsistence, but also to expose me to public view as a dangerous Frenchman, and capable of making malicious use of the lists of subscribers in my hands; however, I am certain that Mr. Fenno nor any of his subscribers would not feel the least uneasiness to see their names published, or even disclosed to the directory of France.

In the year 1792, I arrived in Philadelphia (from Germany where I lived with my parents since the age of 14) after one year’s residence I was united in the bands of matrimony with a woman, a native American; hence I took the firm resolution to stay in this country, and to become a peaceable citizen of the United States. My conduct and my demeanour can be ascertained by my neighbors and other acquaintance: in fine, in the year 1793 I took the oath before a magistrate to support the constitution, and I am considered as a citizen (having also for five years past, paid the taxes*) and entitled to possess the confidence of my employers.

I have been for 4 years employed in the post-office and afterwards by Mr. Brown, until my proposals were agreed to by Messrs. Fenno, Bache, Brown and Bradford. In consequence thereof, I have for fourteen months sent with the utmost impartiality and attention the papers of the several printers—Your complaints are all unfounded as well as your charges.

After this, I hope that your remarks on the above, and what you have already said, will not injure me in the minds of the public.

I have the honor to be, Sir,
the News-papers Printer,
 JACOB ROSET.

* In your paper of October last, you mentioned of your own authority, that my name was not entered in the tax books. at

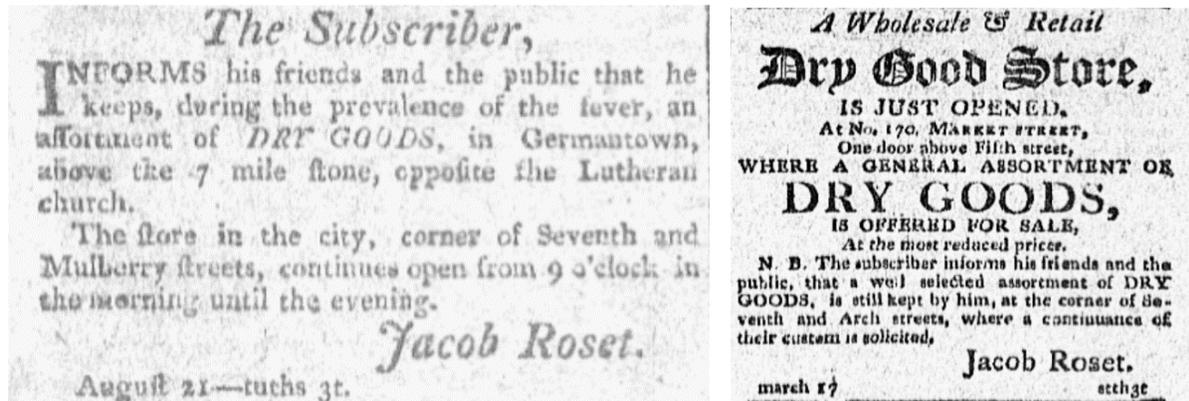
WE, the subscribers, having employed Mr. Jacob Roset in the month of April, 1797, for the purpose of enclosing and preparing our papers for the Post-Office, do hereby certify, that they have been since that period forwarded to our respective subscribers, as far as we are able to ascertain, with the strictest regularity on his part; and that we have not the smallest reason to suspect him guilty of any partiality in the business whatever.

A. Brown
 John Fenno
 Benjn. Franklin Bache
 Thos. Bradford.

Figure 30. Left: Letter: Jacob Roset to Mr. Corbitt, *The Gazette*, 31 May 1798, 1. 31. Right: Announcement, *The Gazette*, 31 May 1798, 1. Source: Newspaperarchive.com.

³¹ *The Gazette*, 31 May 1798, 1.

A nephew, Ignaz Franz Rozet von Brühlwalde of Vienna, described his uncle's career in an 1841 memoir of the larger family which stated that Jacob Roset was a "foreign language translator" for a "news establishment," who later went into business for himself, and, finally, lived as a "rentier" or "gentleman," as would be listed in Philadelphia city directories of the period, indicating that he had an income from rental properties.³²



32. Left: An advertisement for Jacob Roset's new Germantown location in 1802. Source: *Philadelphia Gazette*, 24 August 1802, 4. 33. Right: An advertisement for Jacob Roset's new location at 170 Market Street (one door above Fifth Street) in 1810. Source: *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, 20 March 1810, 1.

While Roset's work in the publishing industry appears to have been short-lived, the endeavor likely provided him the financial capital required to establish a mercantile business house in a growing and competitive city like Philadelphia. He entered the ever-growing field of commission dry goods in the first years of the nineteenth century. Roset's store was originally located at the corner of Seventh and Arch Streets in Philadelphia. By 1802, he was advertising his new, second location at Germantown, located "above the 7 mile stone, opposite the Lutheran church."³³ The earliest business receipt that survives of Roset's establishment was written out to a Mr. Meredith for what might be called "millenary..." or "fancy goods" in 1803.³⁴ Despite these early records, he does not appear in the Philadelphia city directories until 1806, when "Jacob Rosset" was recorded as a storekeeper at 243 Mulberry (now Arch) Street. He is listed at that address through 1810.³⁵ On March 20, 1810, Roset announced the opening of a new, second location in Philadelphia, prominently sited on Market Street above Fifth.³⁶ The Philadelphia city directories referred to Roset as both a merchant and storekeeper at "170 High St." (now Market Street) from as early as 1814 through 1824.³⁷ In the obituary of his son in 1870, the business is described as follows:

³² "Translation of a Letter Dated 17th June 1841 written by François Rozet [aka Ignaz Franz Rozet von Brühlwalde] at Vienna, Austria," Roset Family Papers, HSP. Jacob's brother in Vienna, Niklas Rozet, appears to have been partially involved in the book business as well in the 1790s (described as "fabriks Compagnon und Handlung Buchhalter" in his 1796 marriage record). Niklas founded the well-known Viennese jewelry firm of Rozet & Fischmeister, still in existence today.

³³ *Philadelphia Gazette*, 24 August 1802, 4.

³⁴ Collection 145, Winterthur Digital Collections.

³⁵ Philadelphia city directories.

³⁶ *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, 20 March 1810, 1.

³⁷ Philadelphia city directories.

The successive houses of Jacob Roset, of Roset & Son, and finally Roset & Bicking, occupied for many years a conspicuous and honorable position among the large commission dry goods houses of this city [Philadelphia].³⁸

Jacob Roset's apparent success as a merchant in Market Street naturally earned him the income or credit necessary to invest in real estate, which, on a personal level, included his own residence at the corner of Seventh and Arch Streets. Roset would later own two attached, three-story brick dwellings in North Tenth Street above Race, which he would bequeath to his son John Roset in 1847.³⁹ His real estate holdings extended to Germantown from an early date through the remainder of his life, which will be discussed later in this nomination. Roset was also involved with the Committee of Defence [sic] of Philadelphia, a thirty-four-member body that formed on August 26, 1814, which he and others supported financially.⁴⁰ In addition, he had interest in other business and civic matters in Philadelphia and, in some cases, throughout the Commonwealth.⁴¹

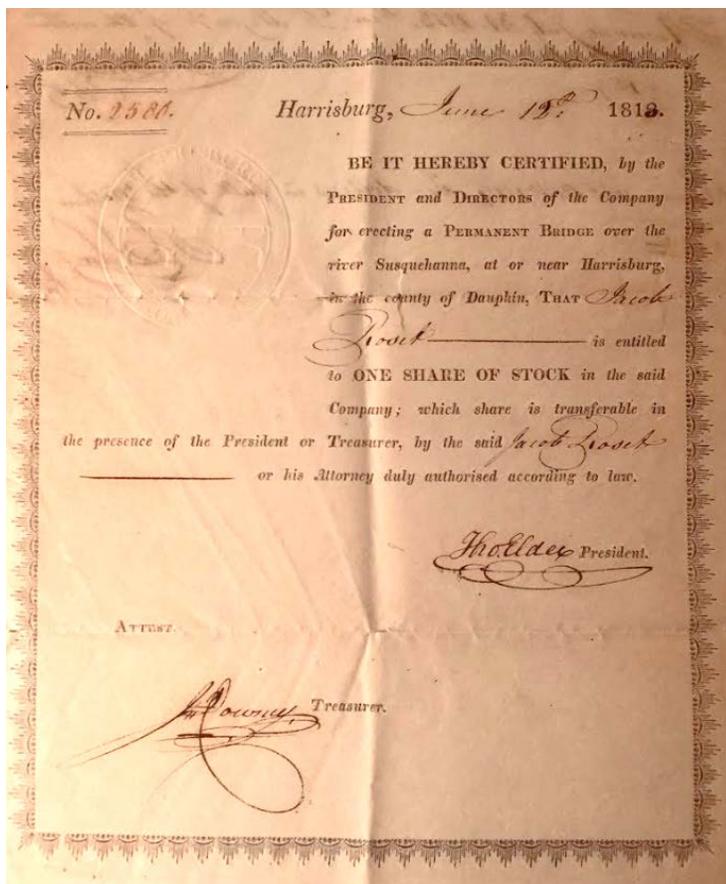


Figure 34. Jacob Roset's Stock Certificate for "One Share" in the "Company for erecting a Permanent Bridge over the Susquehanna River, at or near Harrisburg," issued June 12, 1819. Source: Roset Family Papers, HSP.

³⁸ "Obituary," *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, 10 August 1870.

³⁹ *Pennsylvania, Wills and Probate Records, 1683–1993* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2015.

⁴⁰ *Minutes of the Committee of the Defense of Philadelphia, 1814–1815* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1867), 98.

⁴¹ Roset Family Papers, HSP.

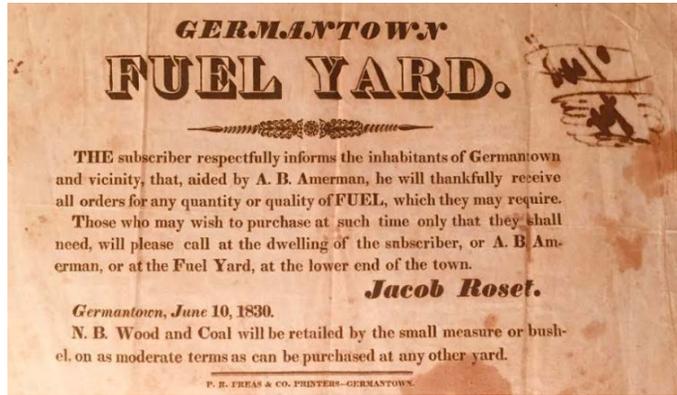


Figure 35. Left: The Toland House, Germantown Avenue at the present-day site of West Rockland Street, a “country house” that Jacob Roset and his family are said to have occupied in Germantown for nearly a decade. Source: John G. Bullock Collection, Library Company of Philadelphia. Figure 36. Right: An advertisement for the “Germantown Fuel Yard” where Jacob Roset began selling retail wood and coal with his son-in-law in 1830. Source: Roset Family Papers Collection, HSP.

Like many other successful Philadelphians in business, Jacob Roset eventually took a country house, his first being Richmond Hill at the Falls of the Schuylkill for about two years.⁴² Soon after, he purchased a property at Germantown from John Salter, Jr., likely in the first years of the nineteenth century. It appears that he created a Federal style house immediately situated on Germantown Avenue by 1804, incorporating an older building component that became the rear ell. He occupied this building and leased it for “the season” to wealthy Philadelphians like Tench Coxe (1755–1824), the American political economist and businessman. Though it has since been replaced by a modern commercial building, the property is known today as 5537–39 Germantown Avenue, which, in 1811, Roset sold to the brothers Joseph and Jacob Green, longtime hatters of Germantown.⁴³ It is likely that after this sale, Roset occupied the old Toland House (demolished), once located on the west side of Germantown Avenue near the present-day site of West Rockland Street.⁴⁴ Roset came to Manheim Street in 1828, when he purchased a property at 49–53 Manheim Street (see fig. 42).⁴⁵ He and his family appear to have lived there until the subject properties were completed. By 1830, the Rosets had opened a “Fuel Yard”, specializing in the products associated with that trade of the day—coal and wood—though little is known about this endeavor.⁴⁶

⁴² Naaman H. Keyser, C. Henry Kain, John Palmer Garber, and Horace F. McCann, *History of Old Germantown* (Philadelphia: Horace F. McCann), 193.

⁴³ Deed: John Ashmead and Mary Annen, administrators of the estate of John Salter, Jr., late of Germantown, to Jacob Roset, 1 January 1803, PDBk E.F. No. 14, p. 230; Deed: Jacob Rosette [sic], of the City of Philadelphia, and Elizabeth, his wife, to Joseph Green and Jacob Green, of Germantown, hatters, for \$3,160, 25 March 1811, Philadelphia Deed Book I.C., No. 13, p. 366.

⁴⁴ Jenkins, *Guide Book to Historic Germantown*, 42.

⁴⁵ Deed: John Deprefontaine, Bristol Township, Philadelphia Co., surveyor, and Hannah, his wife, to Jacob Roset, of Germantown, gentleman, for \$500, 6 December 1828, PDBk G.W.R., No. 29, p. 87, CAP.

⁴⁶ Germantown Fuel Yard bill, 10 June 1830, Roset Family Papers, HSP.

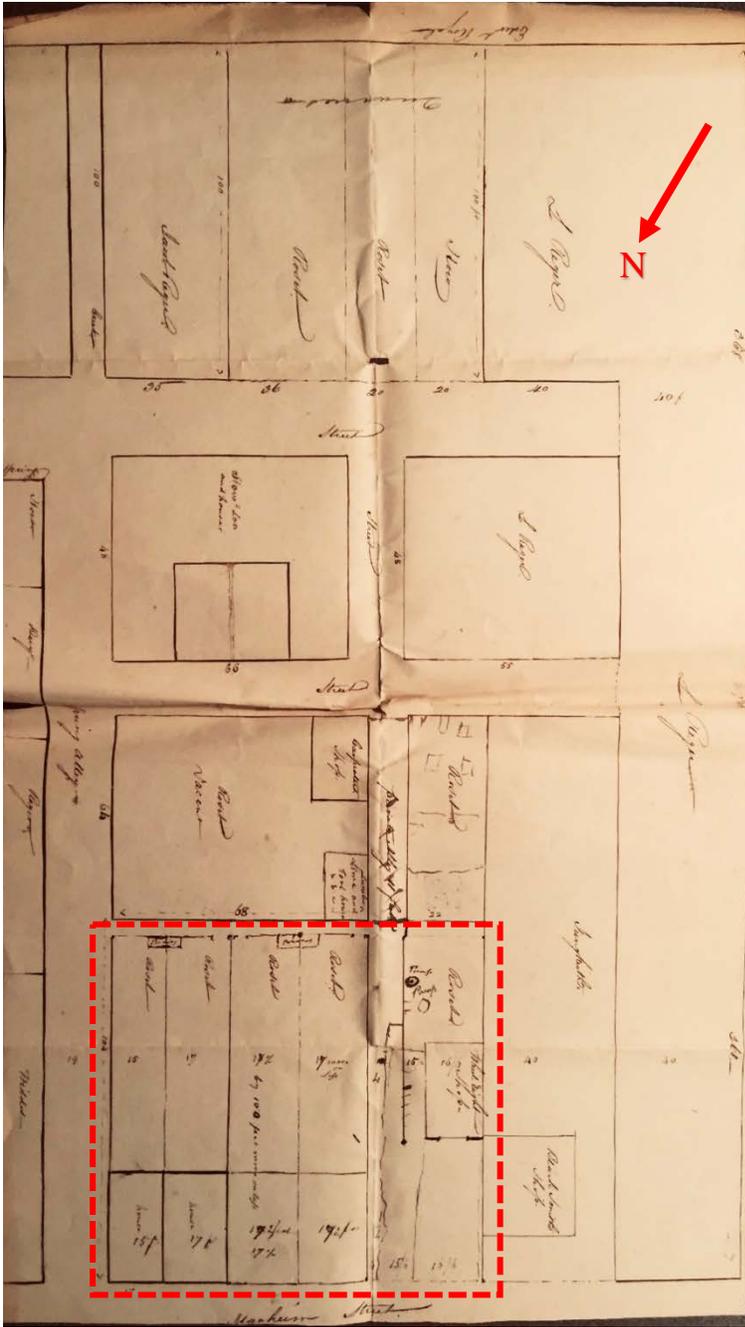
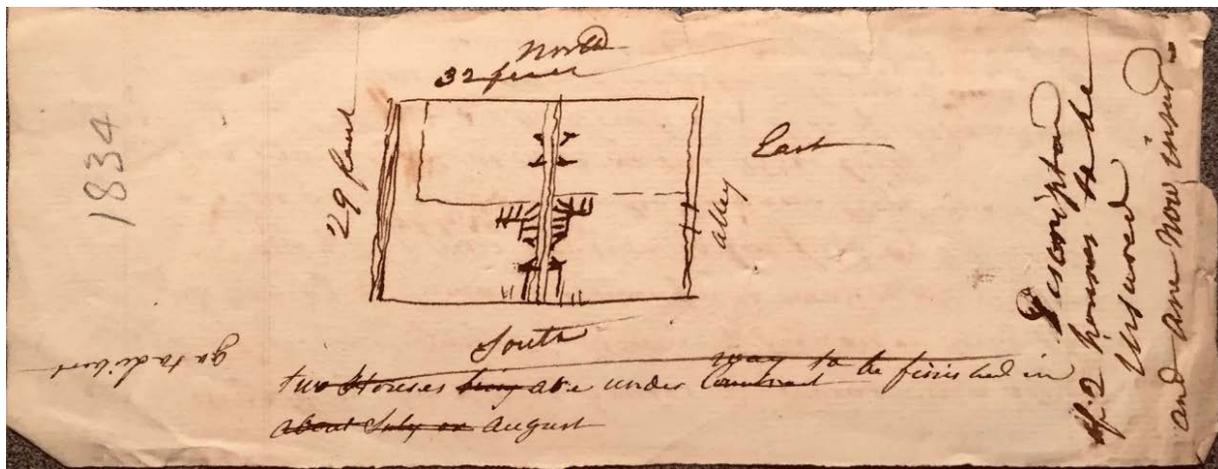


Figure 37. Jacob Roset's "Plan of the Lots of Ground, 1834 and 1835, for the plan of the same, were originally sold at public sale in 1833 for the Deed. 1833." Note that the houses at Nos. 32 and 34 W. Manheim Street were extant at that time, and the plan shows the future sites of Nos. 36, 38, 40, and 42 Manheim Streets, which were afterwards erected. Source: Roset Family Papers, HSP.



Insured 1834

two stone two stories houses 2 Rooms on a floor ^{Partitions}

2 Plastered garrets - partitions of the cellar being paved

and having a chimney answer for an occasional kitchen

one of the houses measure 15 feet front by 29 Deep

the other ^{17 by 29 both} adjoining under the same Roof are divided

by a brick wall as high as the upper lofts -

Situated on the South East Side of Manheim St

near the ~~farm~~ our turnpike - ^{corner of Spring alley on the East}

there are not as yet any ^{and few about lots on the West} but ^{by of Rose}

no incumbrance on the rear

Figure 38. Jacob Roset's fire insurance policy (company unknown) for Nos. 32 and 34 W. Manheim Street, Germantown. Source: Roset Family Papers, HSP.

Historic Context: The Manheim Square Development of Jacob Roset

On July 31, 1833, Jacob Roset purchased the subject property from the Jacob Reger heirs, which included a largely undeveloped parcel occupying 106 feet on Manheim Street and a depth to the east of 170 feet with Spring Alley as its eastern border.⁴⁷ While largely unimproved, the Regers did maintain several small buildings on the site, which were obviously built prior to 1833. It appears that at the time of purchase, a stone house or twin, possibly smaller in size and then enlarged, stood at the southwest corner of Manheim Street and Spring Alley. Comprising what would become Nos. 32 and 34 Manheim Street, only the latter survives to-date. Completion of the two houses as they would stand for much of their history appears to have been achieved by August 1834, when the above-illustrated fire insurance policy for the stone twin was finalized.⁴⁸ The finished product at Nos. 32 and 34 appear to have included a marble tablet at the corner of the Manheim Street façade of No. 32, which read “Manheim Square” and another such tablet immediately adjacent on the east elevation of the same building, bearing the name “Spring

⁴⁷ Deed: Jacob Reger et alia, to Jacob Roset, PDBk G.W.C., No. 34, p. 245, CAP.

⁴⁸ Fire Insurance Policy of Jacob Roset on 32 and 34 W. Manheim Street, Germantown, 1834, Roset Family Papers, HSP.

Alley”.⁴⁹ While the two houses were built as a twin, Roset would go on to develop four additional houses, which were attached. However, based on various records, they were constructed as twins that eventually formed a row of six houses. Immediately attached at the west was a three-story stone twin at Nos. 36 and 38, which was completed in 1835. An additional two-and-one-half-story, stone twin at Nos. 40 and 42 was completed by Roset in 1843, serving as two private houses leased to tenants. On the east side of the Manheim Street elevation of No. 42 is an extant marble tablet bearing the name “Manheim Square”. The finished product comprised one of the earliest of the rowhouse developments in the area. According to Rev. Samuel Fitch Hotchkin, a local historian, Roset completed much of his row in 1835, adding the third floors to Nos. 36 and 38 as a purpose-built “lodge room” or “hall” for the Philomathean Lodge of Odd Fellows of Germantown.⁵⁰ Roset’s will, executed in 1847, states that Nos. 40 and 42 were completed by 1843.⁵¹



Figure 39. “The Old Roset House,” was illustrated in 1902, showing Nos. 32, 34, 36, and 38 Manheim Street, the latter two of which served the Philomathean Lodge of Odd Fellows of Germantown on the third floor. Source: *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 22 June 1902, 3.

Thomas Wildey, an Englishman, founded the “Odd Fellowship,” known officially as the Independent Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF) in Baltimore in 1819. Inspired by the Order of Odd Fellows founded during the eighteenth century in England, Wildey had been instrumental in the

⁴⁹ Both tablets were destroyed and/or removed from the site when No. 32 Manheim Street was demolished by the City of Philadelphia in 2017 because of a damaged chimney stack.

⁵⁰ Hotchkin. *Ancient and Modern Germantown*, 335.

⁵¹ *Pennsylvania, Wills and Probate Records, 1683–1993* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2015.

establishment of a famous old London lodge, but, more importantly, Washington Lodge No. 1 at Baltimore, which figured as the first official IOOF in the United States. The trend was soon greatly popularized, making its way to Philadelphia by 1821. This led to the organization of other lodges throughout Philadelphia County, including the establishment of the Philomathean Lodge of Odd Fellows of Germantown in 1828. The first lodge room or hall of the Germantown Philomatheans was “in a building next to the National Bank”, where they occupied the upper floor.⁵² However, it was at Nos. 36 and 38 Manheim Street that Roset provided the Germantown Philomatheans with their first purpose-built space. IOOF occupied these quarters from 1835 until April 1847, when Philomathean Hall was completed in E. Wister Street (demolished). The Germantown Philomatheans included numerous prominent citizens: Martin Landenburger, William Ent, Hillary Krickbaum, Elias Birchall, Aaron Jones, Henry Woltemate, William K. Cox, William Allen, George Fling, Joseph L. Sykes, Thomas Brooks, Hon. William H. Brooks, Captain John Waterhouse, F. William Bockius, and John Platt.⁵³

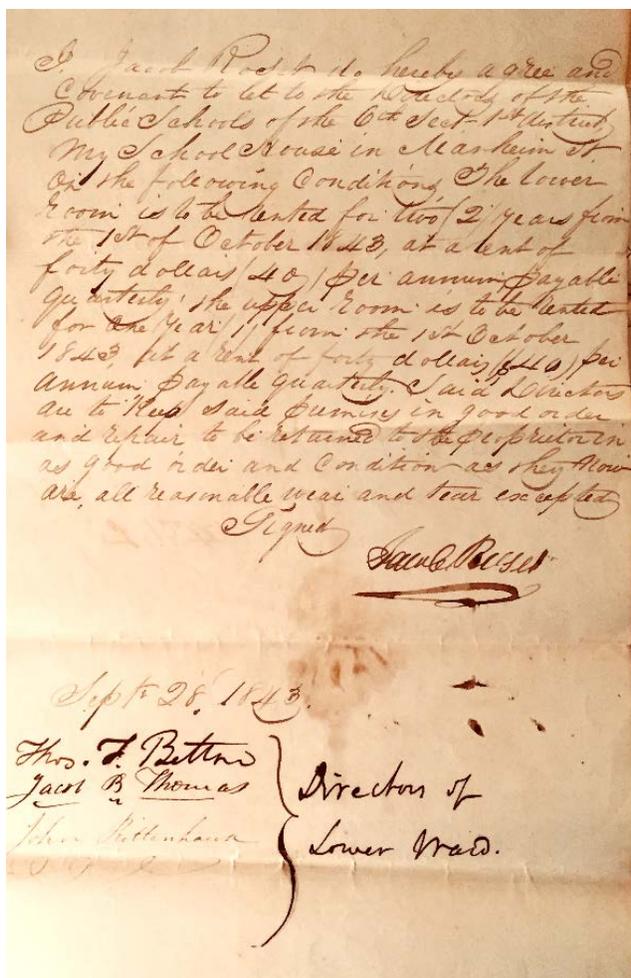


Figure 40. A two-year lease agreement between Jacob Roset and the Public Schools of the 6th Section, 1st District, to use the house in Manheim Street as a School House on the first and second floors for a two-year term. Source: Roset Family Papers, HSP.

⁵² Hotchkin, *Ancient and Modern Germantown*, 335.

⁵³ Hotchkin, *Ancient and Modern Germantown*, 335.

Just prior to the tenure of the Germantown Philomatheans at Nos. 36 and 38 Manheim Street, Roset leased part of his premises to an “infant school” in 1834, which first operated at Nos. 32 and 34 and, later, in the first and second floors of Nos. 36 and 38, which corresponds with the fact that the third floor was leased to IOOF for civic purposes.⁵⁴ Beyond its identity as the Philomeathan Lodge, the building was known for many years as the Roset School, for which purposes it served until the Rittenhouse School was constructed. Roset fitted up the first and second floors of what was intended to be a dwelling as a “School House”, which he leased to the District of the Public Schools of the 6th Section, 1st District. The “lower room” was leased for at least two years at \$40 per annum, which was used by the Primary Department. The “upper room” was leased for at least one year also for \$40, serving the grammar pupils. Signed by the Directors of the Lower Ward, including John Rittenhouse, at least one lease began on October 1, 1843.⁵⁵ Miss Margaret Provost was one of the first teachers at the school.⁵⁶ While the Roset School would be relatively short-lived within the longer history of Germantown, it represents the early development of the community, as it expanded in the second quarter of the nineteenth century.



Figure 41. Left: The “Roset House” or development at the southeast corner of Manheim Street and Spring Alley, showing Nos. 32 and 34 Manheim Street. Source: The Library Company of Philadelphia. Figure 42. Right: The “Roset Residence” ca. 1870 at 49–53 Manheim Street (no longer extant) as drawn by John Richards. Source: The Germantown Historical Society.

Beyond these organizational and public uses, another aspect of Roset’s development that affected the economic and social history of the neighborhood was providing rowhouse quarters to tenants. While the six buildings certainly did not allow their residential character to hold back other possible uses, they were employed primarily as dwellings for the majority of their existence. For example, No. 32 Manheim Street was long noted as the first residence of Jacob Roset and his family. It also appears that the family may have occupied Nos. 36 and 38 Manheim Street for a brief period. However, he would ultimately move to the northwesterly side of the street, occupying a stone twin built by himself (demolished). The five extant houses at Nos. 34, 36, 38, 40, and 42 Manheim Street served as rental properties for much of their early years, an income and investment

⁵⁴ Hocker, *Germantown, 1683–1933*, 179.

⁵⁵ Lease between Jacob Roset and the Directors of the Lower Ward, 1843, Roset Family Papers, HSP.

⁵⁶ Hocker, *Germantown, 1683–1933*, 194.

which Jacob Roset would pass down to his son Jacob Roset, Jr. in 1850. These would remain in the family until 1861, after the death of Jacob Roset, Jr. Nevertheless, the row of five buildings and the associated vacant lot, stand as one of the earliest rowhouse developments in an area now dominated by that house type.



Figure 43. Left: “A Pair of Chippendale Carved Walnut Side Chairs”, presumably owned by Jacob Roset, passed down by descent to Livingston Ludlow Biddle, Jr and sold at Christies in 1989. Source: <https://www.christies.com/lotfinder/Lot/a-pair-of-chippendale-carved-walnut-side-5970054-details.aspx>. Figure 44. Center Left: A portrait of John Jacob Roset in 1829 by Rembrandt Peale (1778–1860). Figure 45. Center right: A portrait of Mary Ann Lanning Roset in 1829 by Rembrandt Peale. Source: John R. Drexel III and Alice Troth Drexel Papers. Figure 46. Right: A portrait of John Roset Drexel (1863–1935) by Clarence A. Worrall, artist. Source: The Drexel Collection.

Historic Context: Jacob Roset Continued

As a man of some means and property, Jacob Roset appears to have been moderately successful, and also a man with some personality as a “noted” local character in most of the published histories of Germantown. These publications site some of his professional endeavors, but, for the most part, his pastimes and personality traits are reflected on as a matter of local memory of nineteenth century Manheim Street. Edwin Costley Jellet, a Germantown historian, describes Jacob Roset in his book *Germantown Gardens and Gardeners*:

Roset was fond of flowers and had a fine garden in which dahlias predominated. Townsend Ward states that when Fanny Kemble passed Roset’s home upon her usual morning ride, the gallant old gentlemen always had a bouquet in waiting for her.⁵⁷

Associated with both the Reformed Church and the First Presbyterian of Philadelphia, Jacob Roset and his family eventually joined Trinity Lutheran Church during their residence in Germantown. His son Jacob Roset, Jr. lived with him in his Manheim Street home by the mid-1840s, a property which he would also inherit. The Roset children and grandchildren, married into prominent Philadelphia families. His granddaughter, the daughter of his eldest son John married Anthony J. Drexel.⁵⁸

While the dwellings that stand today present a humble appearance in comparison with those often associated with prominent citizens, houses such as these embody the physical character of old Philadelphia and especially Germantown, places with a strong European influence that is reflected in even the most basic vernacular architecture. What survives of Roset’s small, but noted legacy,

⁵⁷ Edwin Costley Jellett, *Germantown Gardens and Gardeners* (Philadelphia: H.F. McCann, 1914), 63–64.

⁵⁸ Jenkins, *Guide Book to Historic Germantown*, 42.

that of a French-Hungarian immigrant, represents the cultural, economic and social history of the era. From a close connection to “first flight” to a successful career as a dry goods merchant and, finally, as one enjoying life as a “rentier” in Germantown, Roset’s story, unlike many others of his class level, is represented by the incredible survival of these Manheim Square buildings. The group of buildings is also rare as an early surviving example of rowhouse development in Germantown, representing the evolution of the community and its built environment, as Manheim Street progressed from a lane dotted with country houses and estates to the dense, semi-urban environment that comprises the neighborhood today. Another anecdote presented by Jenkins is that “it was he [Jacob Roset] who first introduced the tomato plant into Germantown.” While this bit of local history may seem unimportant in the scheme of things, it was people like Roset and other immigrants and residents that made Germantown the diverse small town that figures so prominently in various aspects of American domestic history. After his death in 1850, Jacob Roset was laid to rest in his family plot at Trinity Lutheran Church of Germantown.⁵⁹



Figure 47. The dwelling formerly located at 27–29 Manheim Street, which may have been occupied by Jacob Roset and Jacob Roset, Jr. by 1847. Source: www.newspapers.com.

⁵⁹ The Roset family burial plot was observed by the author at Trinity Lutheran Church, Germantown.



Figure 48. A postcard illustrating what was considered to be the “Jacques Marie Roset House” in Germantown, showing Nos. 32 and 34 Manheim Street with part of No. 36 Manheim Street in view. Source: The Library Company of Philadelphia.

7. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

This nomination was sponsored by Michael Simone, who grew up on Manheim Street in Germantown, and was prepared by the Keeping Society of Philadelphia. The document was authored by Oscar Beisert, Architectural Historian and Historic Preservationist; and J.M. Duffin, Archivist and Historian, with assistance from Kelly E. Wiles, Architectural Historian.

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