

# 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: 2095 E. Willard St and 2100 E. Willard St

Postal code: 19134

#### 2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

Historic Name: The Amber Mills, C.H. Masland & Sons

Current/Common Name: The LOOM Philly

#### 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: Commercial

#### 5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

#### 6. DESCRIPTION

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

#### 7. SIGNIFICANCE

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

Period of Significance (from year to year): from 1886 to 1978

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: built between 1886 and 1925

Architect, engineer, and/or designer: Unknown

Builder, contractor, and/or artisan: Unknown

Original owner: C.H. Masland & Sons

Other significant persons: Charles H. Masland (1841-1934); Maurice H. Masland (1865-1930); Frank E. Masland (1867-1951); Walter Masland (1882-1971), etc.

**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 Keeping Society of Philadelphia Date 23 February 2022

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

Street Address 1315 Walnut St, Suite 320 Telephone 717-602-5002

City, State, and Postal Code Philadelphia, PA 19107

Nominator ☐ is ☒ is not the property owner.

**PHC USE ONLY**

Date of Receipt: 2/23/2022

☒ Correct-Complete ☐ Incorrect-Incomplete Date: 6/13/2022

Date of Notice Issuance: 6/14/2022

Property Owner at Time of Notice:

Name: Richmond Mills LP (both 2095 and 2100 E. Willard)

Address: 528 Bainbridge St

City: Philadelphia State: PA Postal Code: 19147

Date(s) Reviewed by the Committee on Historic Designation: 7/20/2022, Criterion J

Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission: 8/12/2022, Criterion J

Date of Final Action: 8/12/2022

☒ Designated ☐ Rejected

12/7/18

# **NOMINATION**

**FOR THE**

## **PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**



Figure 1. The view of the Amber Mills along the east side of Amber Street between Westmoreland Street and Alleghany Avenue.  
Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019.

### **THE AMBER MILLS**

**ERECTED BETWEEN 1886 AND 1925**  
**C.H. MASLAND & SONS**  
**LATER THE MASLAND DURALEATHER COMPANY**

—  
**2095 E. WILLARD STREET**  
**2100 E. WILLARD STREET**  
**KENSINGTON**  
**PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA**



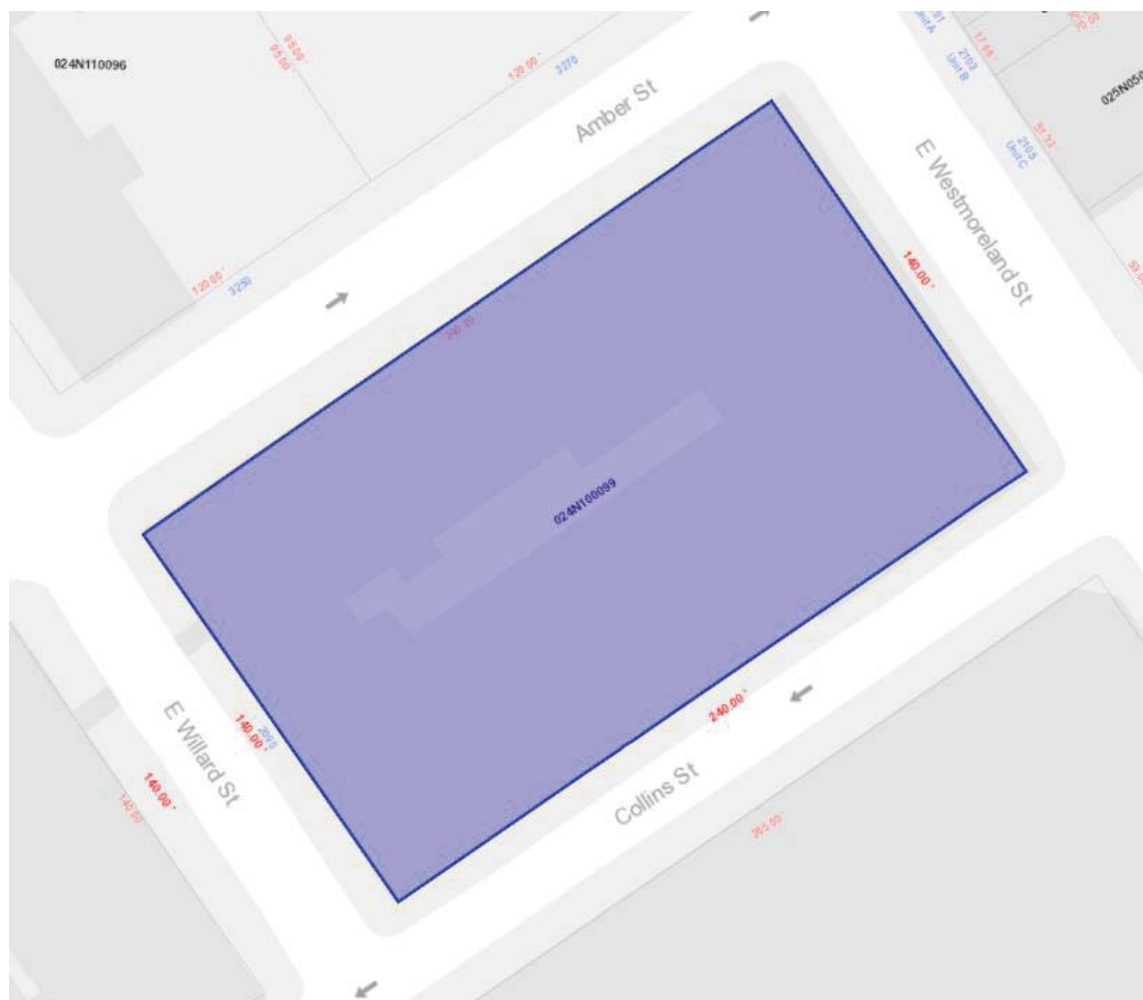
## 5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

This nomination proposes to designate two tax parcels, 2095 and 2100 E. Willard Street, which were historically part of the same industrial complex, are physically connected by a bridge over Willard Street, and were jointly conveyed, most recently on 11 December 2006 by the Philadelphia Authority for Industrial Development to Richmond Mill LP.



Figure 2: The boundaries of the proposed designation, including Premises A, 2095 E. Willard Street, and Premises B, 2100 E. Willard Street.

BEGINNING at the corner formed by the Southwesterly side of Westmoreland Street and southeasterly side of Amber Street; thence extending Southwestwardly along the said southeasterly side of Amber Street Two Hundred and Forty feet to the Northeasterly side of Willard (late Culvert) Street; thence extending Southeastwardly along the Northeasterly side of Willard Street One Hundred and Forty feet to the Northwesterly side of Collins (late Waterloo) Street; thence extending Northeastwardly along the said Northwesterly side of Collins Street Two Hundred and Forty feet to the Southwesterly side of said Westmoreland Street; and thence extending Northwestwardly along the said Southwesterly side of Westmoreland Street One Hundred and Forty feet to the first mentioned point and place of beginning. BEING known as 2095 E. Willard Street.



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BEGINNING at a corner formed by the Southwesterly side of Willard (late Culvert) Street and the Northwesterly side of Collins (late Waterloo) Street; thence extending Southwestwardly along the said Collins Street Two Hundred and Thirty Seven feet to a point; thence extending Northwestwardly on a line at right angles with the said Collins Street Seventy feet to a point; thence extending Northeasterly on a line parallel with the said Collins Street Twenty Two feet Two and One-Half inches more or less to a point; thence extending Northwestwardly on a line at right angles with Amber Street Seventy feet to a point the Southeasterly side of said Amber Street; thence extending Northeastwardly along the said Southeasterly side of Amber Street Two Hundred and Fourteen feet Nine and One-Half inches to a point on the Southwesterly side of Willard Street; and thence extending Southeastwardly along the same One Hundred Forty feet to the first mentioned point and place of beginning. Being known as 2100 E. Willard Street.



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Figure 5. Left: Looking north at the 2095 E. Willard Street portion of the subject property. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia. Figure 6. Right: Looking north at the 2100 E. Willard Street portion of the subject property. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia. Both Figures 5 and 6 are labeled in a manner that corresponds with the list of buildings below the opening paragraph of the Physical Description.

## 6. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Originally known as the Amber Mills and later the C.H. Masland & Sons, the subject property is a remarkably intact example of a densely-built industrial complex in the Kensington neighborhood of Philadelphia. In keeping with the ubiquitous built environment of Philadelphia, the buildings are largely of red brick, masonry construction and surrounded by other industrial buildings on adjacent blocks. Based on construction dates, the enumeration of the buildings that comprise the subject property is as follows:

BUILDING NO.	CONSTRUCTION DATE	ASSOCIATED ADDRESS
1: Weaving, Spooling, Winding Mill	ca. 1886-87, 1891-95 <sup>1</sup>	2095 E. Willard (NW Amber & Willard)
1a: Weaving, Spooling, Winding ""	ca. 1897 <sup>2</sup>	2095 E. Willard (SW Amber & Westmoreland)
2: Dyehouse	ca. 1886-87 <sup>3</sup>	2095 E. Willard (NW Willard & Collins)
3: Stable	ca. 1886-87 <sup>4</sup>	2095 E. Willard (north side Willard)
4: Weaving, Spooling, Winding Mill	1902 <sup>5</sup>	2100 E. Willard (SE Amber & Willard)
5: Factory	1913 <sup>6</sup>	2100 E. Willard (Amber below Willard)
6: Factory	1916 <sup>7</sup>	2095 E. Willard (SE Collins & Westmoreland)
7: Shop	ca.1911-25	2100 E. Willard (west side Collins)

<sup>1</sup> R.P. Masland. *A History of C.H. Masland and Sons*. (Unpublished Manuscript, June 1953).

<sup>2</sup> *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 15 March 1897, 9.

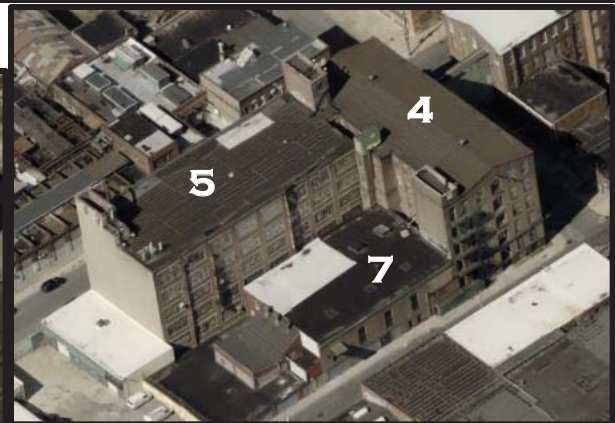
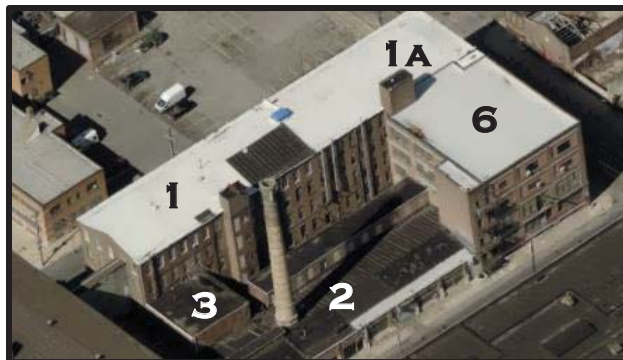
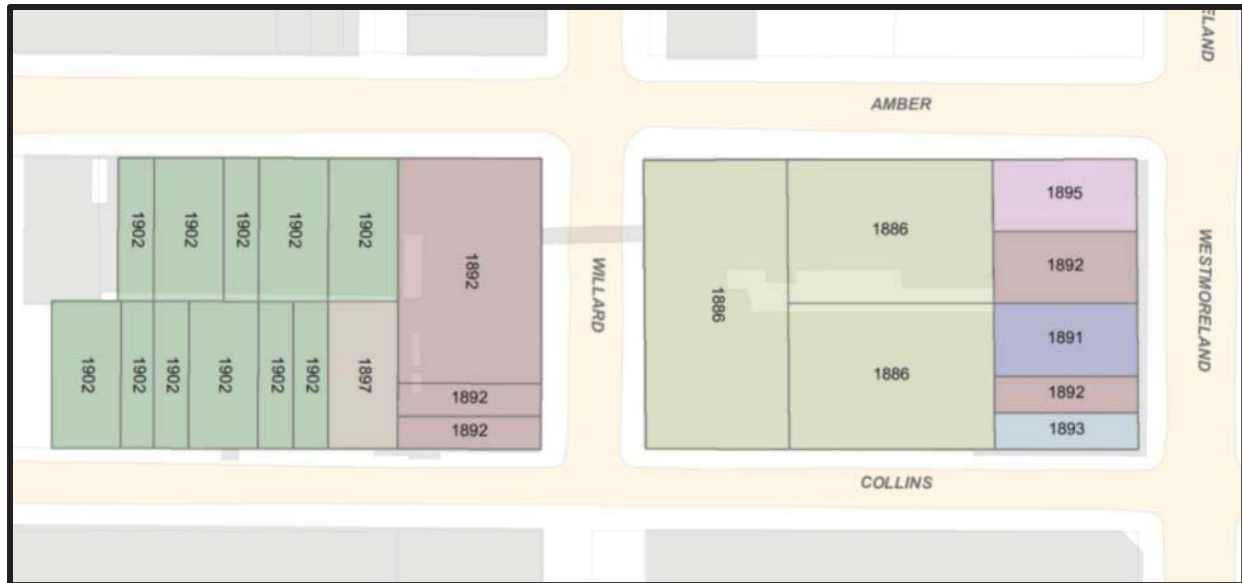
<sup>3</sup> R.P. Masland. *A History of C.H. Masland and Sons*. (Unpublished Manuscript, June 1953).

<sup>4</sup> R.P. Masland. *A History of C.H. Masland and Sons*. (Unpublished Manuscript, June 1953).

<sup>5</sup> "The New Masland Mill," *The American Carpet and Upholstery Journal*, May 1902, 93.

<sup>6</sup> *The Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide*, 12 March 1913, 169.

<sup>7</sup> *The Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide*, 16 February 1916, 131.



The three illustrations relate in that the map on top exhibits the date in which C.H. Masland & Sons purchased each lot to form the subject property as we know it today. The bottom figures correspond with the two blocks above. Figure 7. Top: A map of the blocks associated with the subject property, showing the date in which C.H. Masland & Sons purchased each lot to form the subject property as we know it today. Figure 8. Bottom left: Looking north at the 2095 E. Willard Street portion of the subject property. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia. Figure 9. Right: Looking north at the 2100 E. Willard Street portion of the subject property. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia.



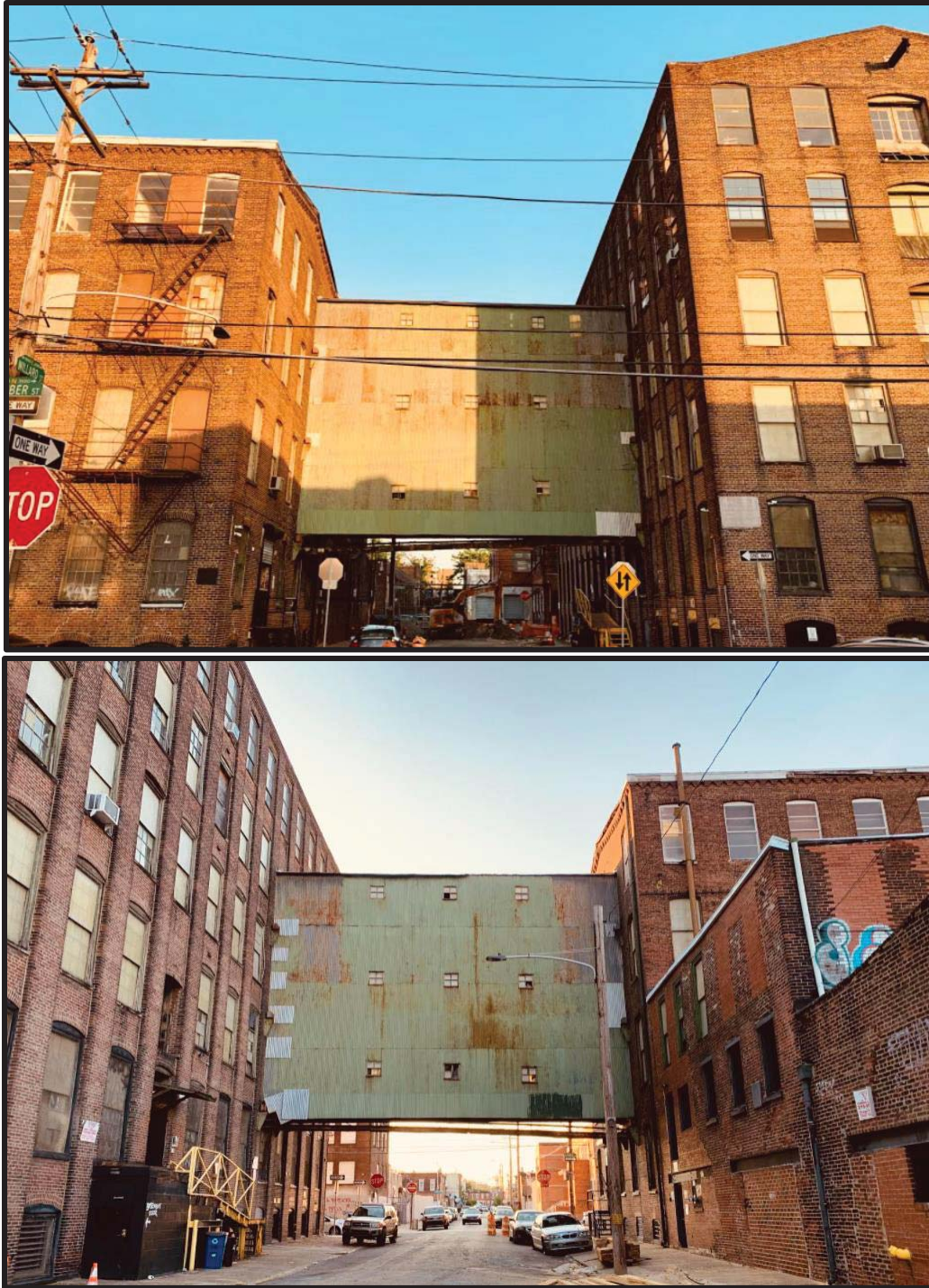


Figure 10. Top: Looking east at Buildings 1 and 4, centered on Willard Street. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2021. Figure 11. Bottom: Looking west at Buildings 4, 1, and 3 with Willard Street at center. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2021.

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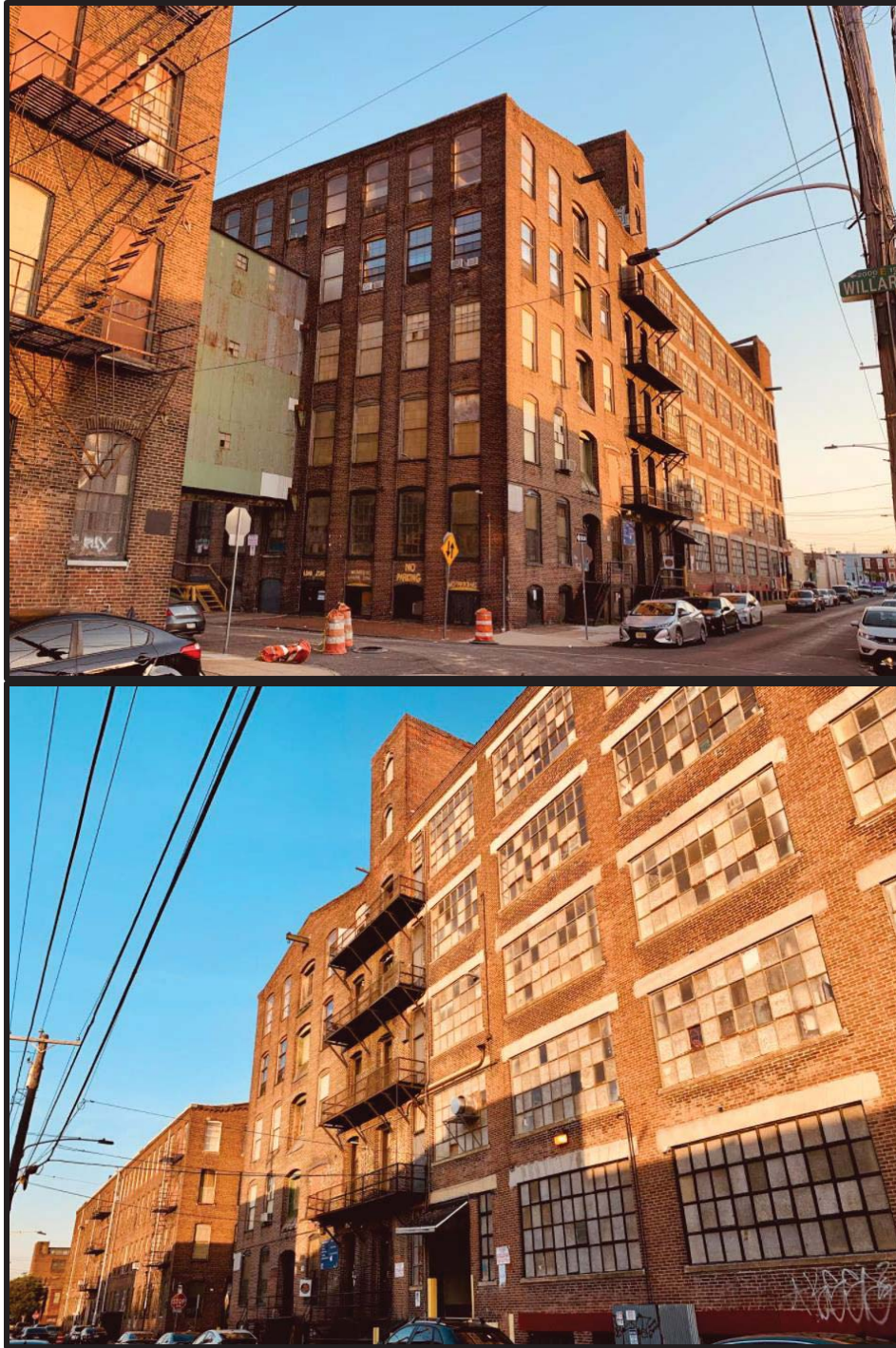


Figure 12. Top: Looking southeast at Buildings 4 at center at the southeast corner of Amber and Willard Streets. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2021. Figure 13. Bottom: Looking northeast at Buildings 1a, 1, 4, and 5. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2021.

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Figure 14. Top: Looking southwest at Buildings 4, 2, and 6, associated with 2100 E. Willard Street, along the west side of Collins Street. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2021. Figure 15. Bottom: Looking northwest at Buildings 5, 7, and 4, associated with 2095 E. Willard Street, along the west side of Collins Street. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2021.



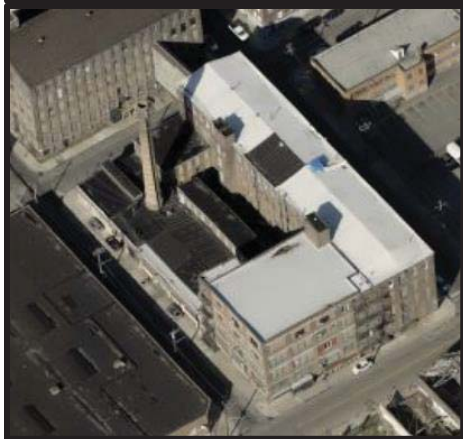
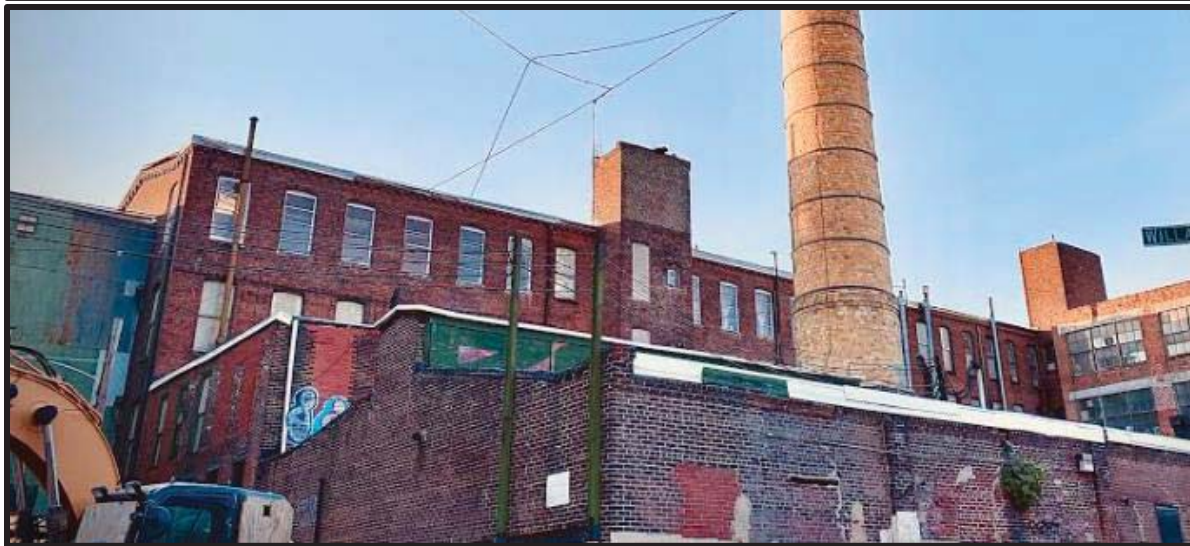


Figure 16. Looking northeast at 2095 E. Willard Street. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia. Figure 17. Right: Looking northeast at Buildings 1 and 1a at the northeast corner of Amber and E. Willard Streets. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2021.

### **BUILDING 1: WEAVING, SPOOLING & WINDING MILL (BUILT 1886-87, ENLARGED CA. 1891-95)**

Standing at the northeast corner of Amber and Willard Streets, Building 1: Weaving, Spooling, & Winding Mill (Building 1) is a large rectangular red brick factory that stands four stories with a low-pitched gable roof. The first two floors were built in 1886-87 and the top three stories were added circa 1891-95. Crowned by a corbeled cornice at the top of the gable, the south elevation faces onto Willard Street with a fenestration of five symmetrically arranged bays. A pedestrian door is located near the corner within the elevated first floor, being accessed by a short flight of steps. The fourth bay from the corner of Amber and Willard Streets is concealed at the second, third, and fourth floors by a skywalk that is sheathed in metal siding. The apertures are centered on a loading doorway at each floor, flanked on each level by three windows on each side. Most of the openings feature segmental arched brick headers with plain sills. There is a mix of original and replacement window fixtures. The fenestration of the west elevation along Amber Street features thirteen bays arranged with a shared loading bay at the south and the entire fenestration is intact, being served by a mixture of original and replacement window fabric. A fire escape extends from the façade serving the southernmost two bays at the second, third, and fourth floors. The east elevation is similar to the west in its fenestration and window fabric; however, only the third and fourth floors are visible from the street. A tower projects from this elevation at the eighth bay from Willard Street and extends an additional story to form a penthouse that likely supported a water tower. Brick party walls separate Building 1 from Building 1a and Building 3.





Various views of Building 1. Figure 18. Top: Looking east at Buildings 1 and 1a from the lot to the west across Amber Street. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2021. Figure 19. Middle: The west and south elevations of Building 1. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2021. Figure 20. Bottom: Looking southwest at the block associated with 2095 E. Willard Street. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia.

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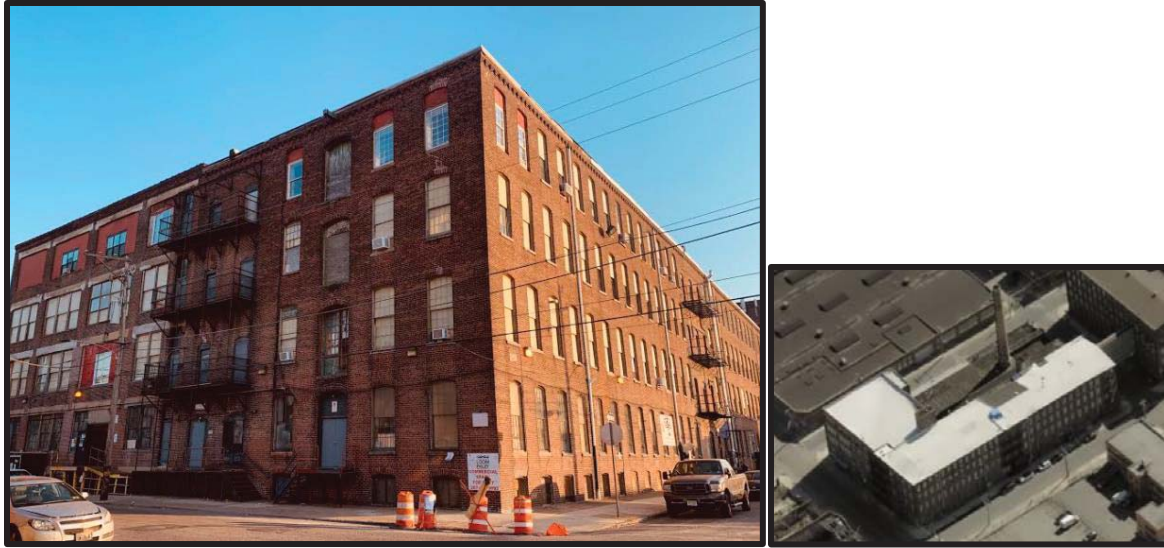
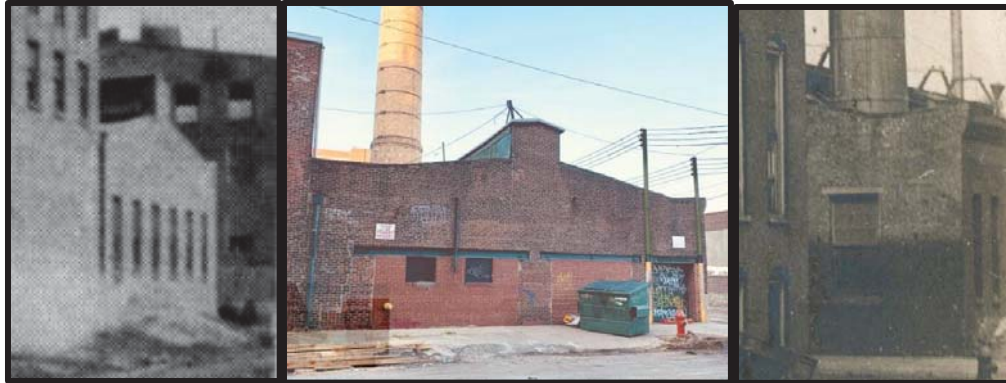


Figure 21. Left: Looking south at Building 1a. Figure 22. Right: Looking southeast at the block associated with 2095 E. Willard Street. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia.

### **BUILDING 1A: WEAVING, SPOOLING, & WINDING MILL (1897)**

Standing at the southeast corner of Amber and Westmoreland Streets, Building 1a: Weaving, Spooling, & Winding Mill (Building 1a) is a large rectangular red brick factory that stands four stories with a low-slung, flat roof. The building was constructed in 1897, appending Building 1 at the south and Building 1b at the west. Crowned by a corbeled cornice at the top of the gable, the north elevation faces onto Westmoreland Street with a fenestration of seven symmetrically arranged bays. Most of the openings feature segmental arched brick headers with plain wooden sills. The fenestration includes a mixture of original and replacement window fabric, including double-hung, twelve-over-twelve wooden sash units. The third bay to the east from the corner of Amber and Westmoreland Streets comprises openings that are dropped slightly below the other windows, serving as loading bays indicative of buildings of the period. The second-floor opening contains original double doors with multi-light openings in the upper half and paneling below. A hoist protrudes from the center of this bay to serve the loading bays. The three eastern most bays are served by fire escapes, containing both doors and windows at each level. There is a mix of original and replacement window fabric. The fenestration of the west elevation along Amber Street spans seventeen bays arranged with a shared loading bay at the south and the entire fenestration is intact with a mixture of original and replacement window fabric. The original windows are double-hung, twelve-over-twelve wooden sash units. Building 1 and Building 1a form an impressive expanse along this block of Amber Street that was once a typical Philadelphia view, but now a rare survivor.





Historic and current views of Building 2. Figure 23. Left: Looking northeast at Building 2 across Willard Street in 1891. Source: Masland Family. Figure 24. Center: the south elevation of Building 2. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2021. Figure 25. Right: The southeast corner of Building 2 in 1904. Source: Athenaeum of Philadelphia.

### **BUILDING 2: DYEHOUSE (CA. 1886-87)**

Situated at the northwest corner of Willard and Collins Streets, Building 2: Dyehouse (Building 2) is a rectangular, one-story red brick shed structure with a central clerestory that appends the south wall of Building 1b and the east wall of Building 3. Spanning six bays in width, the south elevation features a reconfigured elevation with two infilled doorways and one smaller doorway that still appears to be operable. This gable-end includes the north elevation of the clerestory structure and a symmetrical arrangement of three windows on the second and third floors, while the first floor is somewhat irregular. The east elevation shows that the structure is composed of “pilaster-framed bays, corbelled horizontal elements” with various infilled apertures, including door and windows per bay.<sup>8</sup>



Figure 26. Building 2 at the northeast corner of Collins and E. Willard Streets. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019.

<sup>8</sup> Betsy Bradley. *The Works: The Industrial Architecture of the United States*. (Oxford University Press, 1899), 239.  
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Figure 27. Top left: Looking west at one doorway along the east elevation of Building 2 along Collins Street. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2021. Figure 28. Top right: Looking southeast at the block associated with 2095 E. Willard Street. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia. Figure 29. Bottom: Looking south along E. Willard Street at Building 3 and 2. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2021.

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Figure 30. Left: Looking northeast across E. Willard Street at Building 3. Source: Masland Family. Figure 31. Right: The south elevation of Building 3. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2021.

### **BUILDING 3: STABLE (CA. 1886-87)**

Situated on the north side of Willard Street, Building 3: Stable (Building 3) is a rectangular, three-story, flat-roofed red brick building that stands between Building 1 at the west and Building 2 at the east. Spanning five bays in width, the primary (south) elevation features two infilled loading bays at the ground floor with a single pedestrian door within the western opening. The second floor features a loading doorway followed by four window openings, the latter three of which appear to be an original opening to the building though none contain original window fabric. The third-floor features five openings, the eastern two of which are infilled. The other three remain open, though only one at the center features an original six-over-six, wooden sash window.



Figure 32. Top left: Looking west at Building 4 in an aerial taken in the 1930s. Source: Hagley Digital Library. Figure 33. Top right: The east and north elevations of Building 4. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2021. Bottom: Looking west from Collins Street with Buildings 4, 1, and 3 centered on E. Willard Street. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2021.

#### **BUILDING 4: WEAVING, SPOOLING, WINDING MILL (1902)**

Situated on the south side of Willard Street, Building 4: Weaving, Spooling, & Winding Mill is a rectangular, five-story red brick factory that spans the entire face of the block between Collins and Amber Streets. The east elevation is six bays wide centered on a central loading bay that sits beneath the low-slung gable end with a hoist extending from the center of the façade. All the apertures in this building feature segmentally arched openings with brick headers and wooden sills. The loading bays feature some original doors. The southernmost two bays comprise a stair tower with two pedestrian doors per floor, which are served by projecting fire escapes. The other three bays feature original twelve-over-twelve, double-hung wooden sash windows and replacement units. The north elevation along Willard Street proudly displays the building's seventeen "pilaster-framed bays," set off by "corbelled horizontal elements," setting off one aperture per floor, all windows aside from the ninth bay from the east, which features a loading bay at the second floor. The thirteenth bay from the east features a skywalk to Building 1 from the second and third floors. The west elevation is a mirror image of that previously described at the east aside from the two-story stair tower or penthouse that extends above the roofline of the primary structure.







Figure 34. Top: Buildings 4 and 5 at the southeast corner of Amber and E. Willard Streets. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2021. Figure 35. Bottom: The west elevation of Building 4. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2021.

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Figure 36. The west elevation of Building 5. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2021.

### **BUILDING 5: WAREHOUSE (1913)**

Situated at the center of the block, Building 5: Factory (Building 5) is a five-story, “red and white” industrial building that spans eight bays along the east side of Amber Street between Alleghany Avenue and Willard Street. Built in 1913 and attached at the south elevation of Building 4, this impressive loft building is constructed of concrete and red brick, though it is largely defined by its expansive multi-light industrial windows. The primary (west) elevation along Amber Street features seven generous bays of the said multi-light industrial windows, all of which appear to be original. The structure of the building is exhibited above each window in the form of concrete lintels that extend slightly beyond width of each opening, terminating at brick piers. The eighth, southern-most bay of the west elevation is a stair tower that rises one additional floor to provide roof access and, historically, support a water tower. At the ground floor, there are pedestrian entrances within the northern- and southern-most apertures. The north is attached to Building 4, while the south elevation is a blind brick wall clad in smooth-faced stucco. The east elevation, facing the interior of the block, is much like the primary (west) elevation, though its eight visible bays are occupied by the same expansive, multi-light industrial windows, all of which appear to be original. The building features a flat roof.





Figure 37. Top: The east elevation of Building 5. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2021. Figure 38. Bottom: Looking northeast at the west and south elevations of Building 5. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2021.

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Figure 39. Left: Looking southwest at Building 6. Figure 40. Right: Looking southeast at the block associated with 2095 E. Willard Street. Source Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia, 2019. Figure 41. Bottom left: An aerial view of Building 6 in 1940. Source: Dallin Ariel Photographs, Hagley Library. Figure 42. Bottom right: The south elevation of Building 6. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2021.

### **BUILDING 6: FACTORY (BUILT 1916)**

Standing at the southwest corner of Westmoreland and Collins Streets, Building 6: Weaving, Spooling, & Winding Mill (Building 6) is a rectangular, four-story “red and white,” loft with an appending four-story stair tower that connects to the east elevation of Building 1a and the north elevation of Building 2.<sup>9</sup> The north elevation features four large bays with multiple windows per bay. The easternmost bay has only two windows, while the other bays feature three windows; some of the apertures have been infilled with new units. The original units feature one-over-one wooden sash windows. Each opening features concrete at the top and brick at the bottom. A loading dock is located within the ground floor in the third from the building’s northeast corner. The east elevation is four bays wide with the southernmost bay featuring a fire escape and a single pedestrian door at each level. The remaining fenestration is three bays wide with the southernmost bay featuring three windows, while the other two feature four. Like the north elevation, the south features a mix of original and replacement units. The basement windows in both elevations generally align with the fenestration above. The south elevation is like the north, though only appearing to be three bays in width.



<sup>9</sup> Betsy Bradley. *The Works: The Industrial Architecture of the United States*. (Oxford University Press, 1899), 158.  
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Figure 43. Left: Looking west at Building 7 in 1940. Source: Dallin Ariel Photographs, Hagley Library. Figure 44. Right: The east elevation of Building 7. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2021.

### **BUILDING 7: SHOP (CA. 1911-25)**

Situated on the west side of Collins Street, Building 7: Shop (Building 7) is a one-story, flat-roofed rectangular red brick utility structure with a raised basement that is connected to the south elevation of Building 4. Spanning roughly six bays along Collins Street, the primary (east) elevation features an irregular array of original and reconfigured apertures with one infilled loading bay and several enlarged, but infilled windows. The original openings include three basement windows and four ground floor windows, all of which feature segmental arched brick headers and wooden sills. An unusual frame structure appends the rear with a roof that forms a low-slung V-shape. This addition is clad in asbestos siding and features large, infilled industrial windows and large vents within the pitch of the roof.



Figure 45. Looking northwest at Building 7. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2021.





Figure 46. The letterhead of the Amber Mills, C.H. Masland & Sons. Source: Masland Family.

## 7. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Built to serve C.H. Masland & Sons, the Amber Mills at 2095 E. Willard Street and 2100 E. Willard Street comprises a significant historic resource that merits designation by the Philadelphia Historical Commission and inclusion on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The subject property satisfies the following Criteria for Designation, as enumerated in Section 14-1004 of the Philadelphia Code:

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

The period of significance includes two periods of Masland corporate occupancy and use, dating from 1886 to 1978. The first period dates from the time the Amber Mills was first constructed for C.H. Masland & Sons as an ingrain carpet mill in 1886 through the time of its final removal to Carlisle, Pennsylvania in 1928. The second phase of the period of significance begins in 1914 with the establishment of the Masland Duraleather Company until the time of its removal from the site in 1978.



Figure 47. An advertisement for C.H. Masland & Sons, Inc. Source: Hathi Trust.

## CRITERION J

The Amber Mills is a significant surviving industrial complex of the textile industry in Philadelphia that operated and greatly flourished at the present site from 1886 to 1928, exemplifying the cultural, economic, social, and historical heritage of the Kensington community. C.H. Masland & Sons was established as a manufacturer of ingrain carpets in 1886 at the northeast corner of Amber and E. Willard Streets by Charles Henry Masland (1841-1934), the son of a stocking weaver from England, and his own sons, including, most importantly, Maurice Henry Masland (1865-1930) and Frank E. Masland (1867-1951). Eventually occupying several blocks between Alleghany Avenue and Westmoreland Street, the firm was one of the premier American manufacturer of ingrain carpets and rugs, along with other related products, at the subject property from 1886 to 1928.<sup>10</sup> Between 1914 and 1928, the Amber Mills was recalibrated to serve a new Masland family manufacturing business, meaning that the site gained additional significance under Criterion J. The subject property was an important industrial complex of the textile industry in Philadelphia that operated and greatly flourished at the present site from 1914 to 1978, further exemplifying the cultural, economic, social, and historical heritage of the Kensington community. The Masland Duraleather Company was established as a manufacturer of imitation leather in 1914 at the subject property by Walter E. Masland (1882-1971), the son of the said industrialist Charles H. Masland, and a chemist and industrialist in his own right. Eventually expanding to the east across Collins Street between Alleghany Avenue and Willard Street, the firm was a premier manufacturer of artificial leather, better known as “pleather” and, ultimately, the first all-vinyl upholstery, which was used in automobiles and furniture.<sup>11</sup> During both periods of occupancy, the Masland firms created products that impacted the larger marketplace on the local, state and national levels. Additionally, textile manufacture, in all of its forms, was a sector of employment that greatly impacted the lives of Philadelphians, especially those who worked in manufacturing.

<sup>10</sup> “New Plants and Enlargements,” *The American Carpet and Upholstery Journal*, December 1902, 754.; and “Masland’s New Tapestry Brussels,” *The American Carpet and Upholstery Journal*, 1904, 71.

<sup>11</sup> “Walter H. Masland Dies; Jenkintown Businessman,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, January 1971.

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Figure 48. The sons of Charles H. Masland of C.H. Masland & Sons. Source: Masland.org.

**CRITERION J – PART I.** By the time C.H. Masland & Sons was established in 1886, carpet manufacture was well-known in the Quaker City, as some accounts credit William Peter Sprague as having established America’s first carpet mill in 1791 at Philadelphia.<sup>12</sup> Though it is also said that the first ingrain carpet was made in the eighteenth century by George Conradt in Frederick County, Maryland at a time when that industry was dominated by small producers.<sup>13</sup> An ingrain carpet is “a flat, woven, wool carpet made of yarn that is dyed before weaving.”<sup>14</sup> While Philadelphia may have had the first carpet manufactory, New England dominated the industry in the early nineteenth century, which is where, in 1839, Erastus Brigham Bigelow (1814-1879), an American inventor of weaving machines, revolutionized the industry with the invention of the power loom, a piece of machinery that doubled carpet production in the first year. This was an important development for the manufacture of ingrain carpets, Bigelow’s machinery was capable of weaving two-ply ingrain carpets, which was a time-consuming process formerly dependent on handlooms. His genius also led to a power loom for Brussels carpets or tapestries, which is a form of textile art that was traditionally woven on a handloom.<sup>15</sup> Greater still was the advent of the Jacquard loom, which was introduced in 1849. The Jacquard loom was first imported to the United

<sup>12</sup> Carroll Gantz. *The Vacuum Cleaner: A History*. (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2012), 12.

<sup>13</sup> *A Century of Carpet and Rug Making in America*. (New York: Bigelow-Hartford Carpet Company, 1925), 9.

<sup>14</sup> “Antique Ingrain Carpet Runner,” *Victoriana Magazine*, Copyright 1996-2015. Accessed on 12 July 2021.

<[Antique Ingrain Carpet Runner \(PHOTOS\) \(victoriana.com\)](https://www.victoriana.com/antique-ingrain-carpet-runner-photos)>

<sup>15</sup> *A Century of Carpet and Rug Making in America*. (New York: Bigelow-Hartford Carpet Company, 1925), 38.

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States, and, soon after, manufactured at Philadelphia.<sup>16</sup> This led to the further popularization and proliferation of the ingrain carpet, as the Jacquard loom accommodated up to six colored weft threads. An ingrain carpet is defined by being reversible, showing a different pattern on each side, so that the technological advances led to a major increase in production.<sup>17</sup> Wilton carpets also came into widespread use during this period, “woven on a Jacquard loom with loops like a Brussels carpet, but having the loops to form a close velvety pile.”<sup>18</sup> All of these landmark dates in the history of carpet manufacturing enabled the success of large firms like C.H. Masland & Sons.

To understand the significance of C.H. Masland & Sons, it is important to understand the context of the carpet manufacturing industry in the late nineteenth century. By 1870, there were 215 carpet mills in the United States, employing 12,000 in producing a total of 20 million square yards of carpet. There were slightly less in 1880 with 195, a statistic that would only decrease further by 1890, when there were 173.<sup>19</sup> As textile machinery became more advanced so did the cost to competitively manufacture carpets, requiring a more significant investment to start a successful manufactory. This further marginalized small producers, leading to a context consisting largely of medium to large size carpet manufacturers. Between 1870 and 1880, the number of workers manufacturing carpets increased from 12,098 to 20,371, a field of employment that grew to 29,121 by 1890. The average number of employees per firm in 1890 was 168.3, which shows the significance of C.H. Masland & Sons with between 700 and 800 employees a decade later.<sup>20</sup> While the machinery to manufacture carpet was more expensive, the actual product became affordable to a wider customer base, ever increasing demand in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

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<sup>16</sup> Oscar Beisert. *Philadelphia Register of Historic Places Nomination: The Columbia Works, 155-59 Cecil B. Moore Avenue, Kensington, Philadelphia*. (Philadelphia: Keeping Society of Philadelphia, 2019), 13-15.

<sup>17</sup> “Antique Ingrain Carpet Runner,” *Victoriana Magazine*, Copyright 1996-2015. Accessed on 12 July 2021. <[Antique Ingrain Carpet Runner \(PHOTOS\) \(victoriana.com\)](https://www.victoriana.com/antique-ingrain-carpet-runner-photos)>

<sup>18</sup> Definition found at Vocabulary.com. Accessed on 12 July 2021. <[Wilton carpet - Dictionary Definition: Vocabulary.com](https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/wilton)>

<sup>19</sup> Carroll Gantz. *The Vacuum Cleaner: A History*. (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2012), 12.

<sup>20</sup> William Hudson Harper. *Restraint of the Trade*. (Chicago: Regan Printing House, 1900), 140.; and “The Amber Carpet Mills (C.H. Masland & Sons).,” *The American Carpet and Upholstery Journal*, November 1903.

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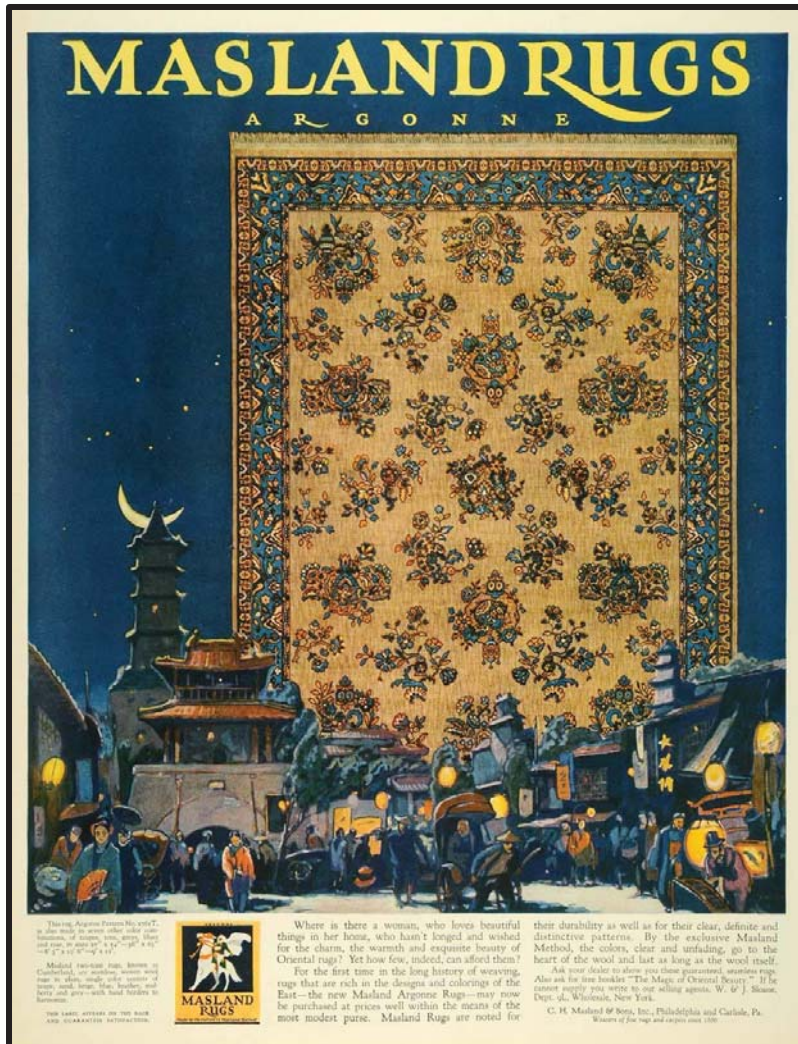


Figure 49. A 1925 advertisement for Masland Rugs. Source: Period Paper.

Between 1886 and 1928, the Amber Mills developed to be one of the major Philadelphia carpet manufacturers, and, obviously, a prominent company in the textile world. The subject property served C.H. Masland & Sons as their primary manufactory, being a major employer in the neighborhood. The firm specialized in the manufacture of ingrain carpets, among other specialized products like Brussels and Wilton carpets. With textiles, in general, as a major force in Philadelphia's local economy, Masland, like other larger carpet manufacturers, had a significant impact on both the local economy and the marketplace, making an impact on the cultural and social history of its employees and customers. The cultural, economic, and social heritage of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is defined by the city's industrial prowess, a legacy that was built by family-owned firms like C.H. Masland & Sons. While the city was once replete with blocks upon blocks of massive industrial buildings, much of that built heritage has been lost, making the Amber Mills a significant representative of Philadelphia's industrial age.

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Figure 50. The Masland Duran Trademark. Source: Trademarkia.

**CRITERION J – PART II.** As C.H. Masland & Sons slowly moved their carpet manufacturing operations from Philadelphia to Carlisle, Walter E. Masland, first an employee of the Du Pont Company, developed “Duraleather,” a synthetic leather product that would be manufactured by the newly established family-owned firm—the Masland Duraleather Company. Leather was always a valuable commodity, a factor that only increased during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as the industrial age made the purchase and ownership of goods more widespread than ever before in history. This meant that the creation of a viable synthetic leather was a potentially valuable endeavor, reducing product cost and increasing durability for specific purposes.

Imitation Morocco, as leather was called, was known in Philadelphia as early as the 1820s, and *Presstoff*, an imitation leather composed of layered and treated paper pulp, was of nineteenth century origin in Germany.<sup>21</sup> However, it wasn’t until the first quarter of the twentieth century that artificial leather came into widespread use. *Naugahyde* was among the first rubber-based artificial leather products, developed as a “durable waterproof material” in 1914 by Byron A. Hunter, a senior chemist in the laboratories of the United States Rubber Company. It was primarily a substitute for leather upholstery.<sup>22</sup> Around that same time, the Du Pont Company was also working to create its own imitation leather product, which materialized in 1915 with the introduction of *Fabrikoid*. Defined by “pliability, toughness, and elasticity,” *Fabrikoid* was perfect for motor cars and other products that required durable upholstery that appeared as leather.<sup>23</sup> In fact, Walter E. Masland was involved in the development of this Du Pont product from 1904 to 1914. Ever disgruntled with his employer, Masland, took his trade secrets home to Philadelphia, where at the Amber Mills he started the Masland Duraleather Company in 1914.<sup>24</sup>

The principal product of the newly established firm was essentially a form “pleather,” called “Duraleather,” though “it contained no leather,” rather was “printed and embossed with a grain closely resembling leather.”<sup>25</sup> From 1914 to 1978, the subject property was used for the

<sup>21</sup> *The United States Gazette*, 29 August 1828, 2.; and *The National Gazette*, 8 May 1829, 2.

<sup>22</sup> *The Haberdasher*, 1920, 103.

<sup>23</sup> “Solving the Upholstery Problem,” *The Automobile*, 10 February 1916, 270-71.

<sup>24</sup> “Use of Word “Duraleather” as Name for Imitation Leather Enjoined,” *The Business Law Journal*, 1925, 202.

<sup>25</sup> “Use of Word “Duraleather” as Name for Imitation Leather Enjoined,” *The Business Law Journal*, 1925, 202.

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manufacturing of the artificial leather and vinyl upholstery by the Masland Duraleather Company. The firm was a pioneer and first in the manufacture of all-vinyl upholstery, of which “Duran” was an important product for automobile upholstery, being introduced in 1946, leading to as much a 1000% rise in the company’s production. Over time, the firm would improve its product line. In 1965, the Masland Duraleather Company completed an “extensive modernization” of the subject property for its operations producing their “line of Duran vinyl...for upholstery for furniture and autos, for wallcovering and as a laminate to metal, wood, gypsum and other materials.”<sup>26</sup>



Figure 51. An advertisement for Masland Duran from the 1960s. Source: Click Americana.

Considering both Part I and Part II, the Amber Mills satisfies Criterion J, exemplifying the carpet manufacturing and larger textile legacy of C.H. Masland & Sons, as well as the Masland Duraleather Company, in Kensington and Philadelphia at-large, informing the cultural, economic, and social heritage of the community.

<sup>26</sup> Harry J. La Croix. “Masland to Boost Capacity,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 12 April 1965, 30.

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Figure 52. Top left: Charles H. Masland in his Civil War uniform, ca. 1860-64. Source: Masland.com. Figure 53. Top right: Annetta Rebecca Meyer Masland at age 17. Source: Ancestry.com. Figure 54, Figure 55, Figure 56, and Figure 57. Bottom row: Sons of Charles H. Masland and Annetta R. M. Masland: Maurice H. Masland, Frank E. Masland, Charles W. Masland, and J. Wesley Masland. Source: Ancestry.com.

### **HISTORIC CONTEXT: THE AMBER MILLS—C.H. MASLAND & SONS**

Long before the establishment of C.H. Masland & Sons, Sgt. John Thurmond Masland (1807-1883) emigrated to the United States via Quebec, Canada in May 1833. Born at Arnold, Nottinghamshire, England to James Masland (1780-1833), a framework knitter, and Mary Ann Paulson (1788-1869), he eventually migrated to Massachusetts, where in Leicester he married Sarah Johnson in 1834. She died just three years later in 1837 at Germantown, then a municipality in Philadelphia County. By the close of the year, he remarried Mary Ann Taylor (1807-1891) with



whom he had at least nine children. John T. Masland worked as a “stocking weaver” in Germantown, where he would eventually live at 4555 Germantown Avenue.<sup>27</sup>

After serving in the Union Army during the American Civil War, Charles H. Masland was honorably discharged in the fall of 1864, after which time he was employed in a dye house by John Tingley at Fisher’s Hollow in Germantown. He purchased the business from Tingley in partnership with James W. Masland and Joe Scargle, which they operated for roughly one year in a tenanted mill at Sleepy Hollow along the Wingohocking Creek in East Germantown. However, in time, the boiler proved unreliable, which apparently the landlord would not repair.<sup>28</sup> The Maslands soon relocated the business to Frankford, where they rented and operated a dye house on the Frankford Creek until 1868.<sup>29</sup> By 1870, the Masland brothers had moved the operations to Kensington, where at Trenton Avenue and Clearfield Street, they formed C.H. Masland & Bro.<sup>30</sup> They remained at this location through the 1870s.<sup>31</sup>

C. H. MASLAND & BRO.  
**Allegheny Dye Works**  
Trenton Avenue, above Clearfield St.

Philadelphia, 187

C. H. MASLAND & BRO., we send

pounds of Yarn,

to be dyed and returned soon as possible, as follows,

Pounds Tan,

“ Brown,

“ Red,

“ Green,

“ Blue,

“ Black,

“ Purple,

“ Yellow,

“ Orange,

“ Slate,

For

Figure 58. An order slip for C.H. Masland & Bro., located at the Allegheny Dye Works. Source: R.P. Masland. *A History of C.H. Masland and Sons*. (Unpublished Manuscript, June 1953).

By 1876, James W. Masland had moved to 2854 Amber Street near the subject property.<sup>32</sup> Between 1880 and 1881, it appears that the Masland brothers had dissolved their partnership, as Charles H. Masland was listed as a dyer and James W. Masland had entered into partnership with John I.

<sup>27</sup> 1860 Census; and Philadelphia City Directory (1876).

<sup>28</sup> Oscar Beisert and J.M. Duffin. *Philadelphia Register of Historic Places Nomination: “Sleepy Hollow” Mill Complex & Site—ca. 1736-1983*. (Philadelphia: Keeping Society of Philadelphia, 2021).

<sup>29</sup> R.P. Masland. *A History of C.H. Masland and Sons*. (Unpublished Manuscript, June 1953).

<sup>30</sup> Philadelphia City Directory (1870), 1061.

<sup>31</sup> Philadelphia City Directory (1871), 998.; Philadelphia City Directory (1872), 940.; Philadelphia City Directory (1873), 915.; Philadelphia City Directory (1877), 996.

<sup>32</sup> Philadelphia City Directory (1876).

Merrell to form James W. Masland & Co., Dyers.<sup>33</sup> In 1883, Charles H. Masland was listed as a dyer, operating at Trenton and Allegheny Avenues, though by 1885 his situation was located at Trenton Avenue and Clearfield Street.<sup>34</sup>



Figure 59. Top: 1876 Philadelphia Atlas, showing that the subject property was undeveloped land. Figure 60. Bottom: 1886 Philadelphia Atlas, showing the subject property was still undeveloped land in 1886, though the three original parcels were already subdivided. Source: Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network.

<sup>33</sup> Philadelphia City Directory (1880).

<sup>34</sup> Philadelphia City Directory (1883), 1101.; and Philadelphia City Directory (1885), 1213.



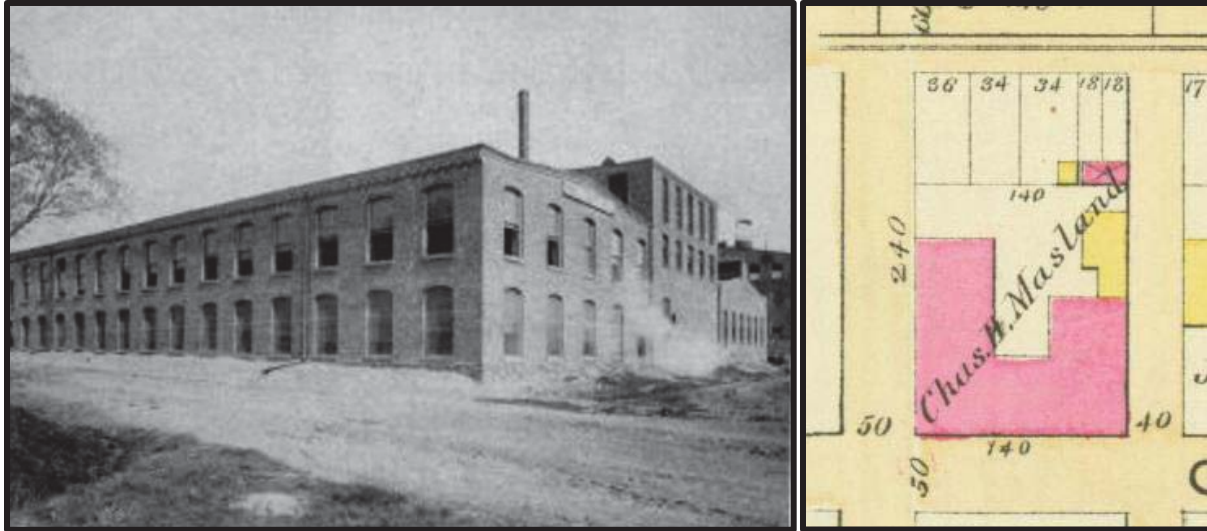


Figure 61. Left: Looking towards the northeast corner of Amber and Willard Streets at the original Amber Mills, including the first two floors of Building 1, Building 3, and Building 2 in 1891. Source: Masland.com. Figure 62. Right: 1891 Philadelphia Atlas, showing an overview of the buildings shown in Figure 62. Source: Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network.

By March 1886, Charles H. Masland had moved his business operations to the subject property, at which time he purchased Plots 27, 28, and 32 from John Adam and Louisa Auck (shown above in Figure 62).<sup>35</sup> While Charles H. Masland owned the property, the establishment of C.H. Masland & Sons in 1886 was largely the work of his sons, Maurice H. Masland and Frank E. Masland. Their brother, C. William Masland, joined in the years afterwards, along with another brother, J. Wesley Masland, in 1896. Between 1886 and 1887, Building 1 (Figure 63) was constructed as a one-and-one-half-story mill at the northeast corner of Amber and Willard Streets. Building 2 was also constructed at the same time as a dye house at the northwest corner of Collins and Willard Streets. As part of the larger iteration, Building 3 was constructed as a stable. A boiler house was also included in the complex. Previously operating on Lieb Street, the looms from that plant were removed to and installed at the subject property upon its completion.<sup>36</sup> By 1887, the firm was manufacturing carpets with twelve power looms, operating under the name of C.H. Masland & Sons—the partnership of Charles H. Masland, Maurice H. Masland, and Frank E. Masland. In addition, C.H. Masland Sons & Company was established for the manufacture of yarns, also at the subject property. This company’s partners included the same partners as C.H. Masland & Sons, along with one outsider, James W. Difenderfer.<sup>37</sup> The yarn business was short-lived, dissipating by 1890, while the carpet manufacturing flourished.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Deed: John Adam Auck and Louisa, his wife, to Charles H. Masland, 21 March 1886, Deed Book G.G.P., No. 139, p. 1.

<sup>36</sup> R.P. Masland. *A History of C.H. Masland and Sons*. (Unpublished Manuscript, June 1953).

<sup>37</sup> Philadelphia City Directory (1887).

<sup>38</sup> Philadelphia City Directory (1890).

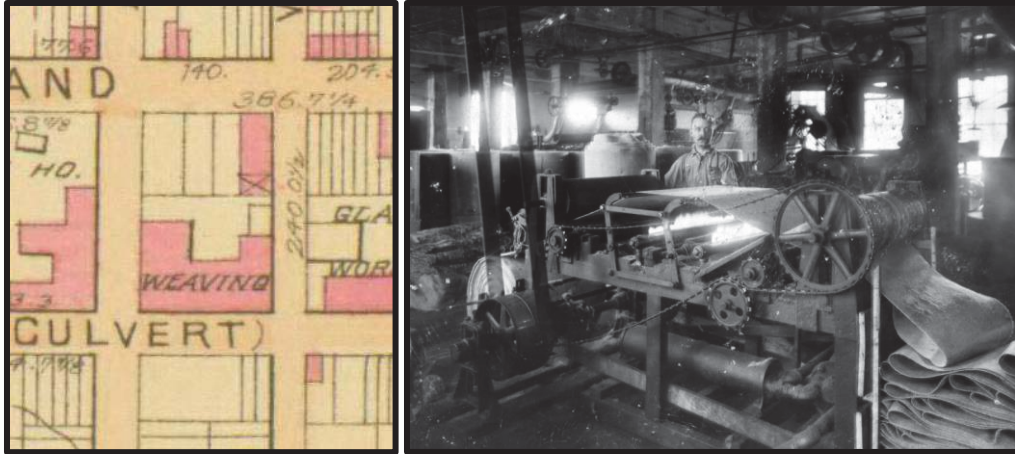


Figure 63. Left: 1895 Philadelphia Atlas, showing the original northerly block of the subject property. Source: Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network. Figure 64. Right: An interior view of the Amber Mills with a weaver at center. Source: Masland.com.

Initially, C.H. Masland & Sons specialized in the manufacture woven ingrain carpets at a time when this process accounted for 90% of the carpet industry's production.<sup>39</sup> After years of selling merchandize "direct to retailers and jobbers who called at the mill," the firm eventually found a dealer for their products in W. & J. Sloane of New York City. The first sale by Sloane was for "one roll of ingrain carpet, 36" wide, known as "Union." "It was a blend, believe it or not, consisting of 50% wool and 50% cotton, and was sold at 230 a square yard." Sloane would become the sole agent for the firm, selling direct to giants like Marshall Field of Chicago, among others.<sup>40</sup>



Figure 65. An unknown employee of the Amber Mills operating a loom. Source: Masland.com.

<sup>39</sup> *Workshop of the World: A Selective Guide to the Industrial Archeology of Philadelphia* (Wallingford, PA: Oliver Evans Press, 1990).; and Oscar Beisert. *Philadelphia Register of Historic Places Nomination: Star Carpet Mills, Kensington, Philadelphia*. (Philadelphia: The Keeping Society of Philadelphia, 2019).

<sup>40</sup> R.P. Masland. *A History of C.H. Masland and Sons*. (Unpublished Manuscript, June 1953).

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**C. H. Masland & Sons**  
Manufacturers, Philadelphia, Pa.

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**Amber Velvet Carpeting**  
AN IDEAL CONTRACT CARPET

AVING the high-class appearance of a Wilton, and being itself a durable fabric, Amber Velvet Carpeting is an ideal floor covering for Hotels, Restaurants, Theatres, Lodges and other large spaces usually supplied with carpet under contract.

Amber Velvet Carpeting is made in Two-Tone, Oriental, Floral and Conventional patterns. The color effects are highly decorative and attractive.

Large quantities stocked at all times. Prompt deliveries assured.

Samples and prices submitted upon request to our Selling Agents

---

**W. & J. Sloane**  
SELLING AGENTS 888 Broadway, New York

Figure 66. Advertisements for the “Victor Velvet Rug” produced at the Amber Mills. Source: Masland.com.

Between 1889 and 1895, Building 1, originally a two-story structure, was enlarged with three additional stories. “Additional ingrain looms were purchased each year until the decline of that type of weave, at which time the company owned 197 ingrain looms and 24 Artsquare looms.”<sup>41</sup> As the company grew in size, they purchased the neighboring properties to expand to the northern part of the original block and to the south across E. Willard Street. The northerly expansion extended to Westmoreland Street, where the firm made five purchases: 1891, 1892 (2), 1893, and 1895.<sup>42</sup> In fact, Building 1 was further enlarged to the north upon purchase of the property at the southeast corner of Westmoreland and Amber Streets in 1895 from Jacob and Louise Roth.<sup>43</sup> Robert Beatty & Bro. were commissioned to construct a four-story factory building that extended from the northern façade of Building 1 to Westmoreland Street along Amber. The new factory

<sup>41</sup> R.P. Masland. *A History of C.H. Masland and Sons*. (Unpublished Manuscript, June 1953).

<sup>42</sup> Samuel J. Lippencott and Mattie K., his wife, to CHM, 31 October 1891, Deed Book T.G., No. 116, p. 156; Joseph M. Engel to CHM, 5 May 1892, Deed Book T.G., No. 176, p. 369; Amanda Barlett to CHM, 1 November 1892, Deed Book T.G., No. 238, p. 411.; Horace C. Seely and Fredericka Amelia, his wife, to CHM, 16 February 1893, Deed Book T.G., No. 282, p. 442.; and Deed: Jacob Roth, Sr., and Louise, his wife, to CHM, 12 October 1895, Deed Book J.J.C., No. 143, p. 269.

<sup>43</sup> Deed: Jacob Roth, Sr., and Louise, his wife, to CHM, 12 October 1895, Deed Book J.J.C., No. 143, p. 269.



building is identified as Building 1a, which, at the time of construction, cost \$16,000.<sup>44</sup> By 1897, there were at least thirty firms that manufactured ingrain carpets in Philadelphia. Like many of the larger mills of the era, Masland was one of the few with its own dyehouse, representing roughly 15% of carpet manufacturers, as dyeing was usually outsourced in the late-nineteenth century.<sup>45</sup> In time the firm added the manufacture of “their justly celebrated amber velvets, a high-pile 2-shoot wool fabric printed on the surface in most attractive designs and colors,” an “ingenious process, perfected by Maslands, and not in use in any other mills.”<sup>46</sup> New developments in their product line almost always required additional space for the manufacture of the associated products.

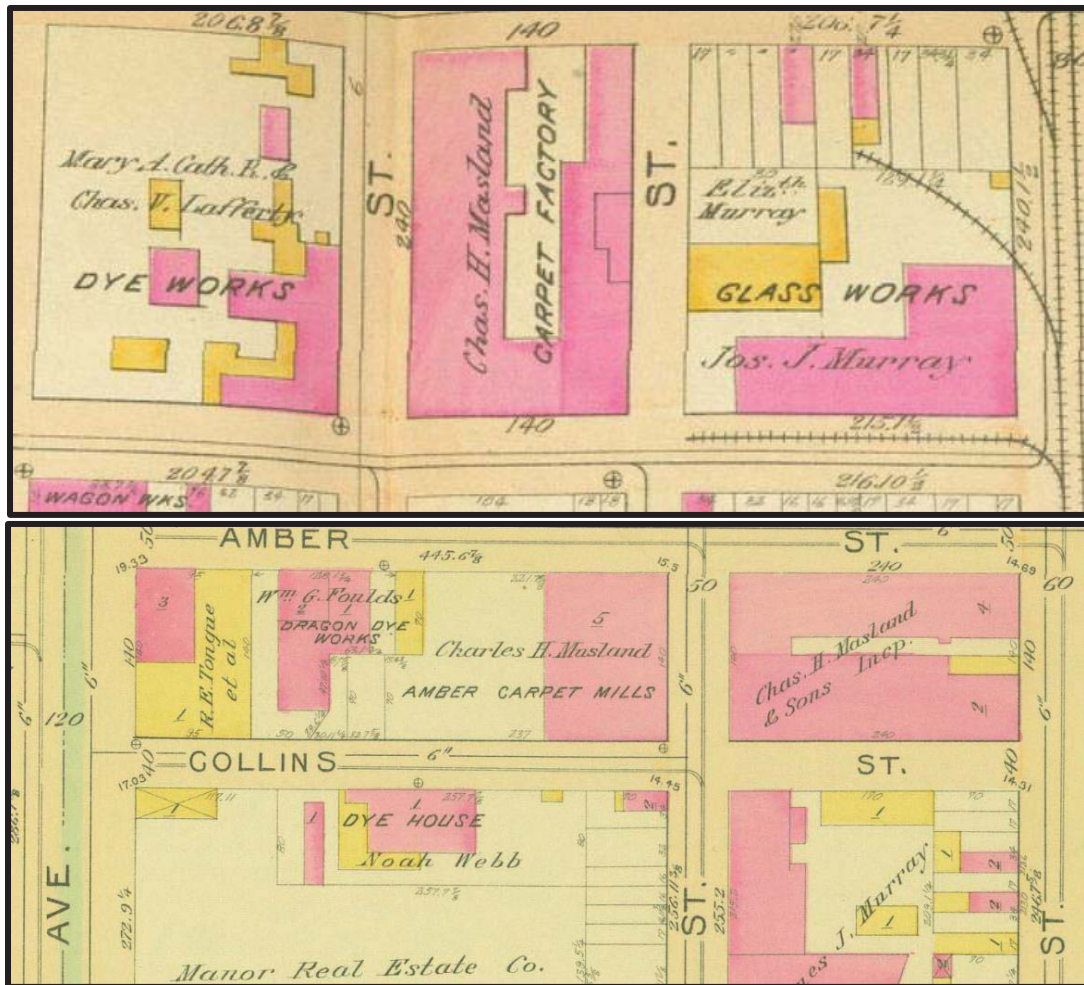


Figure 67. Top: 1901 Philadelphia Atlas, showing that the northerly block of the subject complex was almost entirely developed at that time. Source: Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network. Figure 68. Bottom: 1910 Philadelphia Atlas, showing the 1902 expansion to 2100 Willard Street. Source: Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network.

<sup>44</sup> *The Philadelphia Real Estate Record & Builders' Guide*, 1897.

<sup>45</sup> *Workshop of the World: A Selective Guide to the Industrial Archeology of Philadelphia* (Wallingford, PA: Oliver Evans Press, 1990).

<sup>46</sup> *The American Carpet and Upholstery Journal*, April 1902, 740.

Plans for the property to the south of the original block across E. Willard Street were underway nearly a decade before realized with the purchase of Plots 30, 34, and 54 in 1892, which were united by the firm to dominate the street frontage on the south side of E. Willard Street.<sup>47</sup> Building 4 was constructed as a “new five story mill” for “...a large velvet plan, in addition to increasing their [sic.] output of printed tapestries by twenty-five looms.”<sup>48</sup> Excavations for Building 4 began in May 1902.<sup>49</sup> *The American Carpet and Upholstery Journal* described the new and tallest building as follow upon its completion in December 1902:

Much of the new machinery has been installed, and the entire plant will be in running order in a few days. One of the new buildings is a five-story and basement structure, 56 x 140 feet in area while the other is 30 x 140 feet, one story high. Eighty-five looms will be operated in the new buildings, exclusively on velvet carpets and rugs, both machine and drum printed. The new plant is equipped throughout with every modern device. The machinery is driven by electric power. The new buildings are connected with the older factory by a bridge and a tunnel.<sup>50</sup>

This speaks to the ever-growing business of the firm. By 1903, the firm employed between 700 and 800 hands, creating an output that consumed nearly 7,000,000 pounds of yarn per year. The dyehouse was equipped to “handle and treat” 18,000 pounds of raw material.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Deed: Samuel E. Carver and wife to CHM, 28 November 1892, Deed Book T.G., No. 233, p. 533.; Deed: Samuel C. Lippencott to CHM, 29 December 1892, Deed Book T.G., No. 258, p. 199.; and Deed: Samuel C. Lippincott to CHM, 29 December 1892, Deed Book T.G., No. 258, p. 199.

<sup>48</sup> *The American Carpet and Upholstery Journal*, April 1902, 740.

<sup>49</sup> “The New Masland Mill,” *The American Carpet and Upholstery Journal*, May 1902, 93.

<sup>50</sup> “The Enlarged Amber Mills,” *The American Carpet and Upholstery Journal*, December 1902, 754.

<sup>51</sup> “The Amber Carpet Mills (C.H. Masland & Sons).,” *The American Carpet and Upholstery Journal*, November 1903.

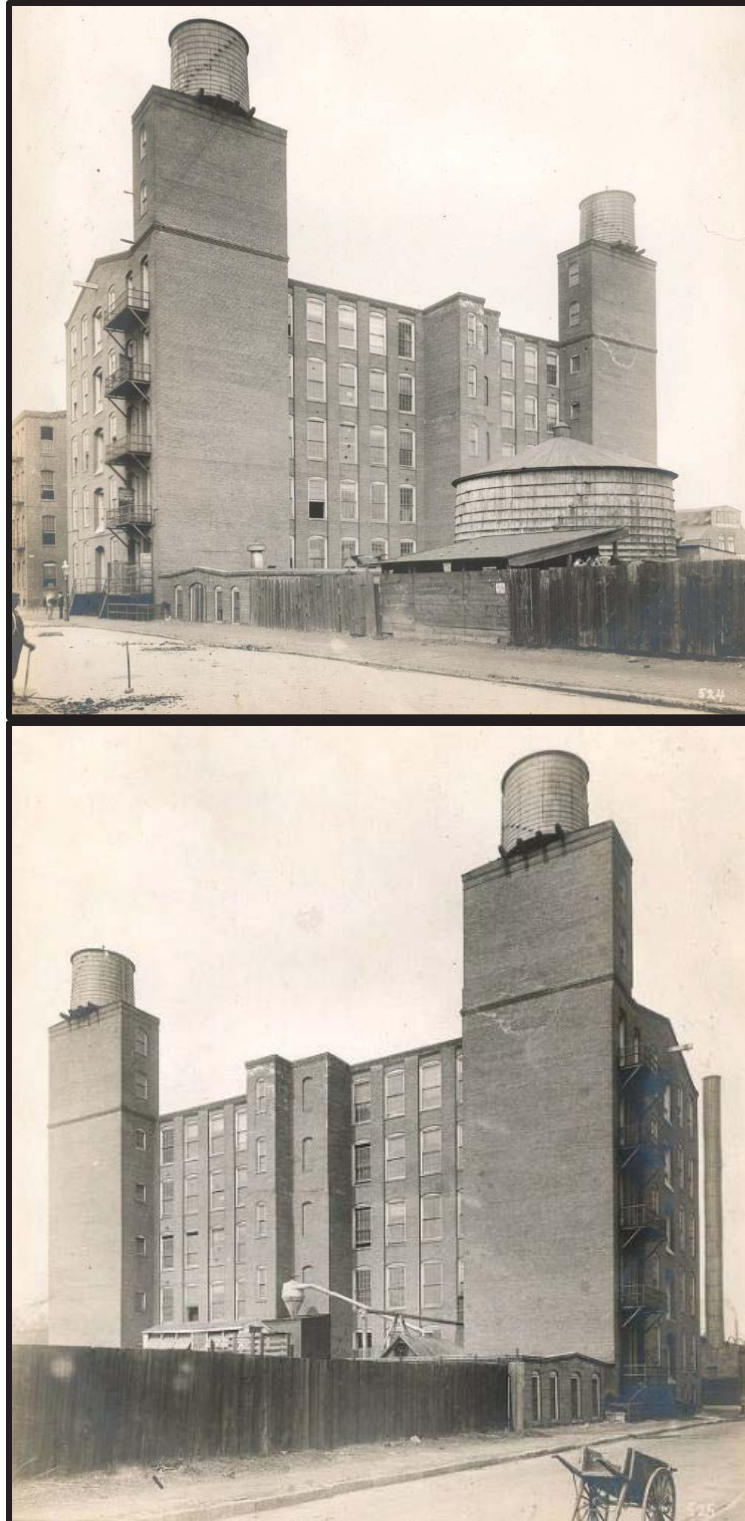


Figure 69. Top: Looking northeast from Amber Street at the newly built Building 4, which was completed in December 1902. Source: The Athenaeum of Philadelphia. Figure 70. Bottom: Looking northwest from Collins Street at the newly built Building 4, which was completed in December 1902. Source: The Athenaeum of Philadelphia.

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**A GREAT CHANCE TO BUY CARPETS CHEAP**  
**Extraordinary Sale of Velvet and Tapestry Brussels Carpets at One-Third Off Regular Prices**  
**Special Sale of Carpets from the C. H. Masland & Son Mills in Philadelphia**

No need to tell folks of the high quality of the carpets manufactured by the C. H. Masland & Son mills at Amber and Westmoreland Streets, in this city. Their goods are known everywhere, and for years W. & J. Sloane, of 19th and Broadway, New York, have been their selling agents. Not long ago a mishap occurred in the Masland carpet mills and the sprinkling valves became accidentally opened. 1750 rolls of carpet, all wrapped and ready for shipment, were slightly wet on the edges. The heavy burlap in which they were wrapped made the damage, if any, very slight indeed. Last week these carpets were sold in New York, through Field, Chapman & Co., and we purchased at a great discount, several hundred rolls. And we bought these rolls only after a thorough examination of the



stock, several days prior to the sale. The outside edges of some of these carpets are slightly stained by water—not enough, however, to mar them in any way, and certainly they will wear as well as ever. These carpets—good tapestry Brussels and Velvets—are now on sale in our carpet department, at the following prices:

Regular 50c Tapestry Brussels Carpets, marked per yard.....	<b>33c</b>
Regular 65c Tapestry Brussels Carpets, are marked per yard.....	<b>39c</b>
Regular 75c Tapestry Brussels Carpets, are marked per yard.....	<b>47½c</b>
Regular 85c Tapestry Brussels Carpets, are marked per yard.....	<b>52½c</b>
Regular 85c Velvet Carpets, are marked per yard.....	<b>58c</b>

Carpets, are marked per yard.....  
 Regular 85c Velvet Carpets, are marked per yard.....  
 Fourth Floor

Figure 71. Top: Looking northwest from Amber Street at the newly built Building 4, which was completed in December 1902. Source: The Athenaeum of Philadelphia. Bottom: An advertisement for C.H. Masland & Sons in 1905. Source: *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 25 October 1905, 5.

The continued growth of C.H. Masland & Sons led to additional development of the subject property in the 1910s. Attached at the southwest corner of Building 4, the firm commissioned William Steele & Sons Company to design and construct a five-story brick and concrete structure, measuring 65' by 150', which is identified at Building 5.<sup>52</sup> In April 1913 the proposed cost was \$52,000.<sup>53</sup> By August 1913, the firm had also commissioned a two-story office building at the southwest corner of Amber and Willard Streets, which still stands, but is outside the boundary of this nomination.<sup>54</sup> Construction of another large factory building began in 1916, when the firm commissioned William Steele & Sons to design Building 6 at the southwest corner of Westmoreland and Collins Streets.<sup>55</sup> The projected cost was stated as \$25,000 in February 1916.<sup>56</sup>

The Maslands also expanded across from the original block to the west across Amber Street, occupying much of that block, as well as the block to the east of Buildings 4 and 7 across Collins Street, in the 1920s.

<sup>52</sup> *The Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide*, 12 March 1913, 169.

<sup>53</sup> *The Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide*, 16 April 1913, 253.

<sup>54</sup> *The Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide*, 13 August 1913, 531.

<sup>55</sup> *The Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide*, 9 February 1916, 103.

<sup>56</sup> *The Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide*, 16 February 1916, 131.

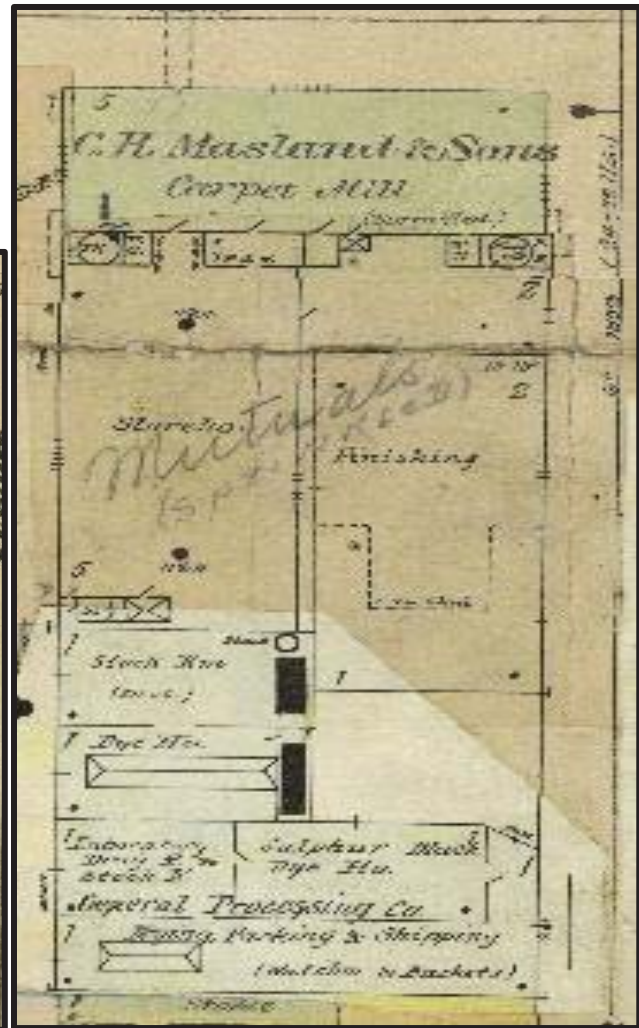
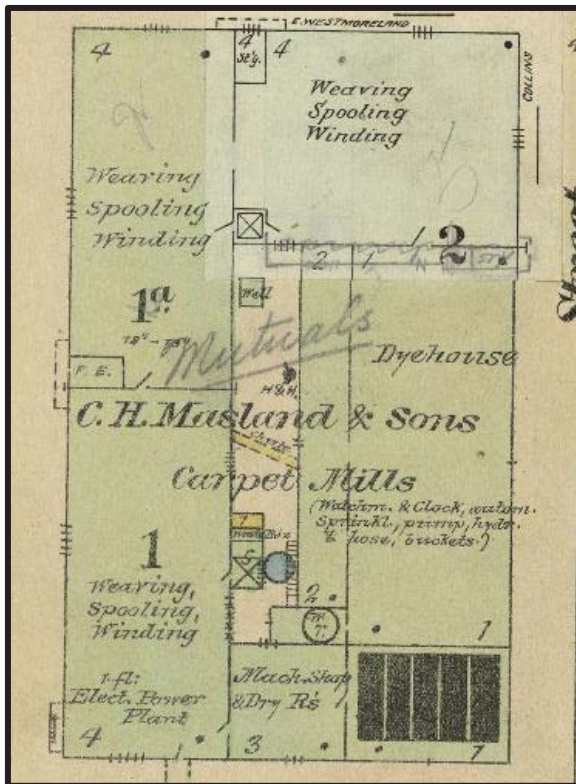


Figure 72. Sanborn Atlas showing the subject property in the ca.1920. Source: Historical Society of Pennsylvania.



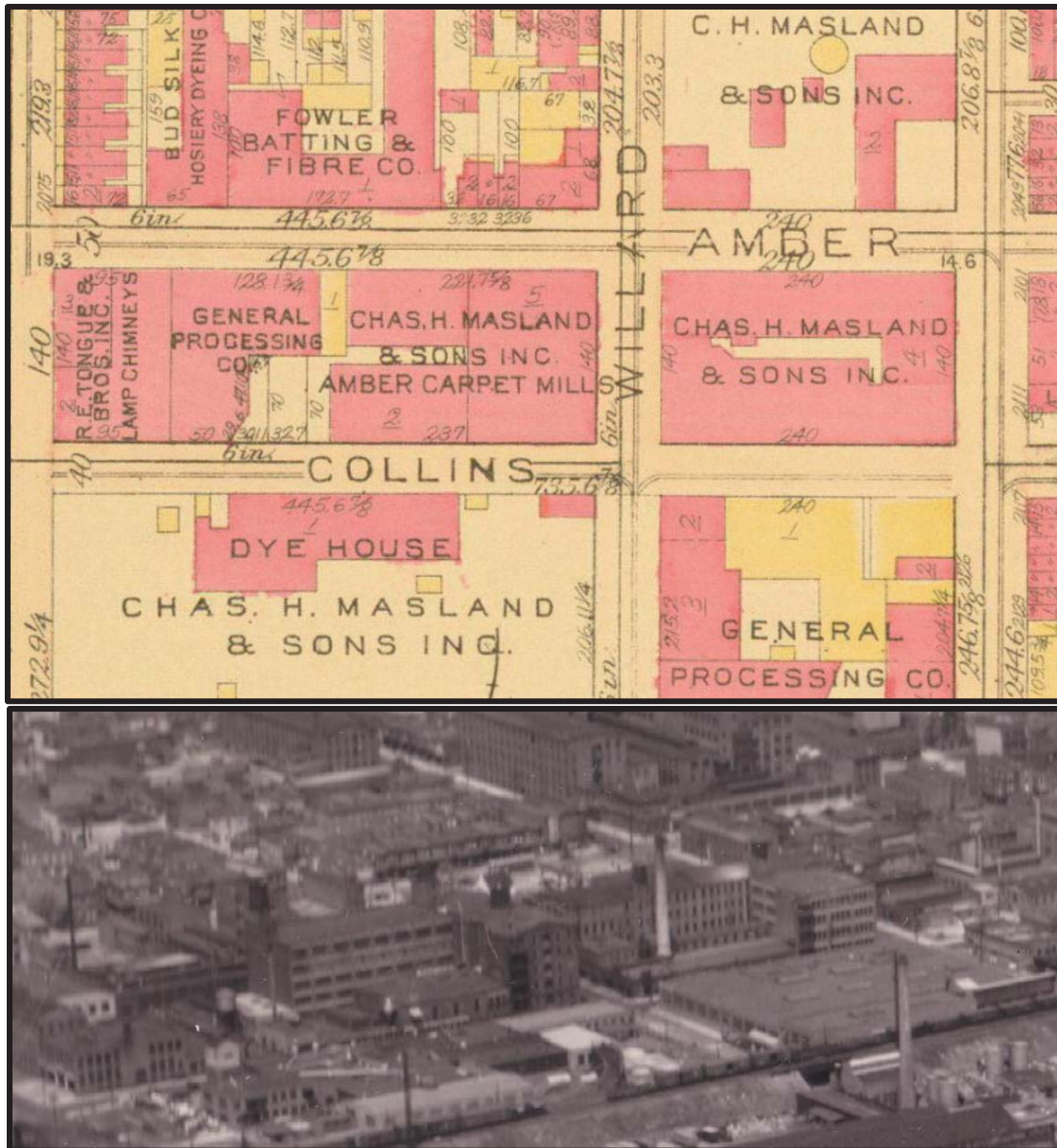


Figure 73. Top: 1925 Philadelphia Atlas. Source: Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network. Figure 74. Bottom: An ariel photograph of the subject property in 1940. Source: Dallin Ariel Photographs, Hagley Library.

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Figure 75. An advertisement for Rugs and Carpets manufactured by the Masland Process. Source: *The American Carpet and Upholstery Journal*, Jan-June 1922, 36.

In 1919, as space became more and more of a premium in Philadelphia, C.H. Masland & Sons began erecting their new “Carpet Mill” in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Previously the fairgrounds of the Carlisle Agricultural Society, the firm commissioned the architecture firm, Lockwood Green Co. of New York City, to design a \$1,000,000 plant to be constructed of “brick, concrete and steel.”<sup>57</sup> This would lead to the ultimate removal of the firm from Philadelphia to Carlisle, a process that occurred between 1919 and 1928.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>57</sup> *The Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide*, 7 May 1919, 265.

<sup>58</sup> R.P. Masland. *A History of C.H. Masland and Sons*. (Unpublished Manuscript, June 1953).

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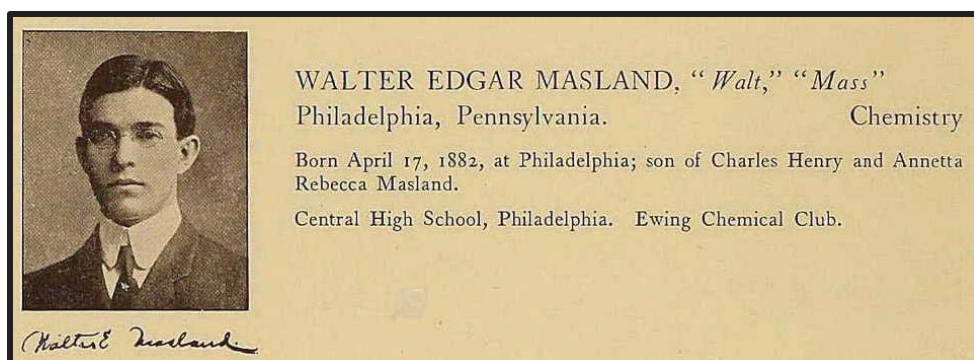


Figure 76. Walter E. Masland during his years in college. Source: Ancestry.com.

### HISTORIC CONTEXT: THE MASLAND DURALEATHER COMPANY - 1914-1978

An integral corporate shift at the Amber Mills occurred in 1914 when Walter E. Masland (Figure 77) founded and began operating the Masland Duraleather Company. A graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, Walter E. Masland, “a gifted chemist,” went to work for the Du Pont Company in 1904, where he was a research chemist for a solid ten years. During his Du Pont tenure, the work included the development of artificial leather. After being passed over for several promotions, the last straw for Walter E. Masland occurred when his product development expertise was patented under the name of his superior, Charles Reese, the head of Du Pont’s Chemical Department and chair of its Experimental Board.<sup>59</sup> This would ultimately lead to *E.I. du Pont de Nemours Powder Co. v. Masland*, an unresolved intellectual property case that went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court.<sup>60</sup>

Walter E. Masland did in fact leave Du Pont, removing with his knowledge of imitation leather to the Amber Mills, where he established an artificial leather company and manufactory in 1914. As previously stated, the firm called their product “Duraleather,” despite the fact that it actually contained no leather and was simply “printed and embossed with a grain closely resembling genuine leather.”<sup>61</sup> The timing was fortuitous as C.H. Masland & Sons would soon start to move their carpet manufacturing operations to Carlisle, Pennsylvania in 1919, leaving much of the space at the subject property open for the newly established operations engaged in manufacturing artificial leather.<sup>62</sup> Walter E. Masland was president from the time of incorporation through 1955.<sup>63</sup> The Masland Duraleather Company was formally established in 1919. The firm sold its products to businesses like the Virginia Trunk and Bag Company that used it for the manufacture of bags, suitcases, and overnight bags.<sup>64</sup> Another indicator of its success, the firm commissioned William Steele & Sons Company to design and construct a new building to serve its operations in 1928, which was built on Allegheny Avenue east of Collins Street.<sup>65</sup> Afterwards, the firm engaged the

<sup>59</sup> William T. Gallagher. *Intellectual Property*. (New York: Ashgate Publishing, 2007).

<sup>60</sup> Catherine L. Fisk. *Working Knowledge: Employee Innovations and the Rise of Corporate Intellectual Property, 1800-1930*. (The University of North Carolina Press, 2009).

<sup>61</sup> “Use of Word “Duraleather” as Name for Imitation Leather Enjoined,” *The Business Law Journal*, 1925, 202.

<sup>62</sup> “Walter H. Masland Dies; Jenkintown Businessman,” 1971. Source: Ancestry.com.

<sup>63</sup> “W.E. Masland Dies, Firm’s Founder 88,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 19 January 1971, 10.

<sup>64</sup> “Use of Word “Duraleather” as Name for Imitation Leather Enjoined,” *The Business Law Journal*, 1925, 202.

<sup>65</sup> *The Philadelphia Real Estate Record & Builder’s Guide*, 18 January 1928, 38.

Wintz Bros., Inc., to enlarge the factory with the portion at Willard and Collins Streets in 1935.<sup>66</sup> The 1928 portion of the Masland Duraleather Company is not part of this nomination, but may be the subject of a future nomination.

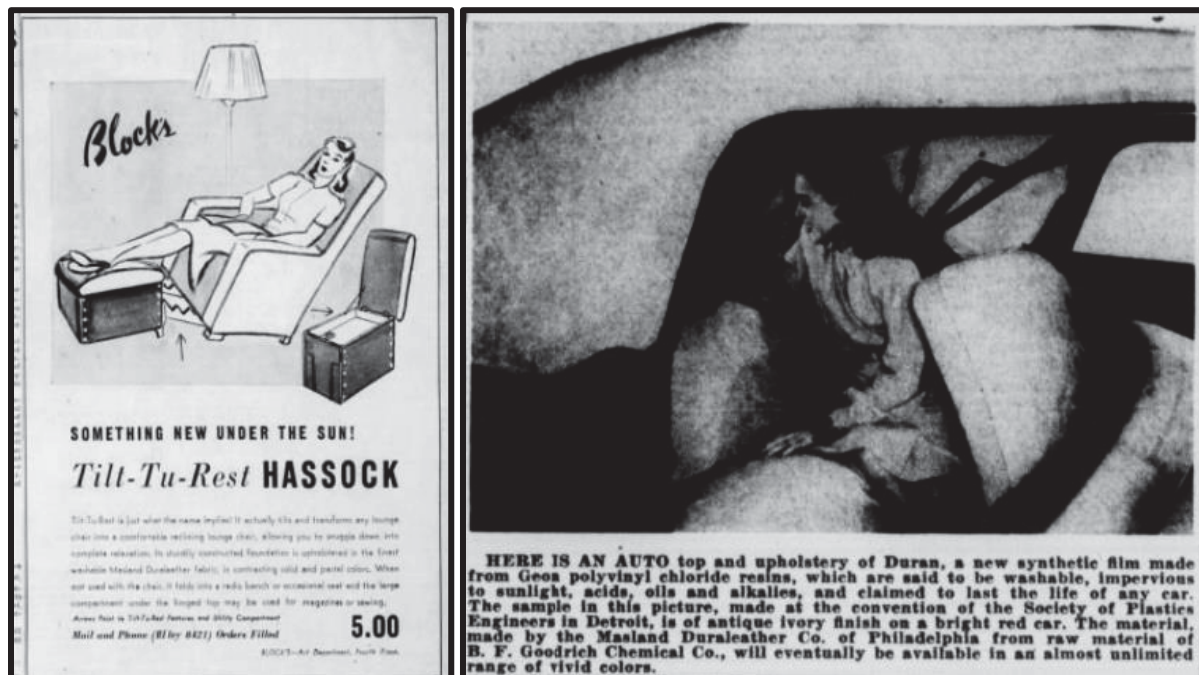


Figure 77. Left: The Tilt-Tu-Rest Hassock with Masland Duraleather upholstery. Source: *The Indianapolis Star*, 24 September 1940, 17. Figure 78. Right: An image showing the Duran product, manufactured by the Masland Duraleather Company, in 1946. Source: *Automotive News*, 18 February 1946, 25.

The Masland Duraleather Company was one of the pioneer manufacturers of all-vinyl upholstery, which was introduced in 1946, leading to 1000% rise in production volume for the company. The product, known as Duran, was a new vinyl upholstery made from “Geon poly vinyl chloride resins,” which was said to be “washable, impervious to sunlight, acids, oils and alkalis, and claimed to last the life of any car.”<sup>67</sup> These products continued to evolve over time to complete in the all-vinyl upholstery marketplace.

Driven by the massive new production demands, the firm expanded the plant at Amber and Willard Streets in 1955, “bringing its total Philadelphia facilities to some 420,000 square feet.” A new plant was built in 1961 at Mocksville, North Carolina, constituting 150,000 square feet.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>66</sup> “Builders Receive Contract,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 4 August 1935, 22.

<sup>67</sup> *Automotive News*, 18 February 1946, 25.

<sup>68</sup> Harry J. La Croix. “Masland Duraleather Offers Embroidered Vinyl Fabric,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 19.

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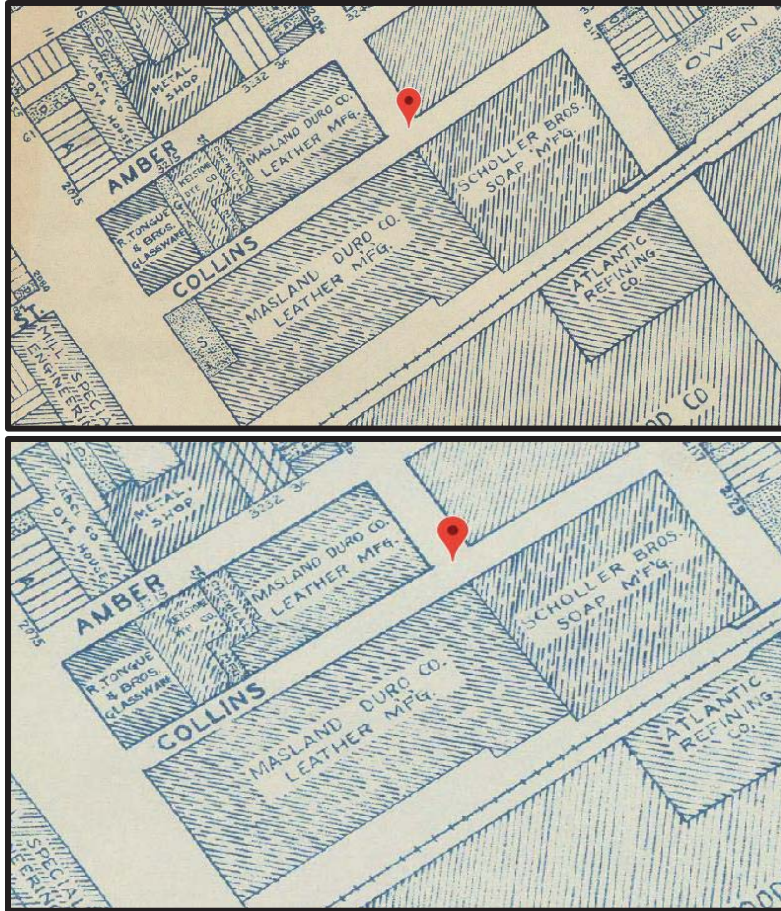


Figure 79. 1942 Land Use Map, showing the Masland Duraleather Company at the subject property and across the street to the east as well. Source: Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network. Figure 80. 1962 Land Use Map, showing the Masland Duraleather Company at the subject property and across the street to the east as well. Source: Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network.

In 1963, the firm developed an embroidered vinyl fabric called Neopoint.<sup>69</sup> As a result, in 1965, the Masland Duraleather Co. completed “extensive modernization” of the subject property for its operations producing their “line of Duran vinyl...for upholstery for furniture and autos, for wallcovering and as a laminate to metal, wood, gypsum and other materials.”<sup>70</sup> As late as 1975, the firm was still operating at the plant, then employing 335 workers. By that time, the firm manufactured “coated fabrics and vinyl upholstery work.”<sup>71</sup> The firm was eventually purchased by Uniroyal Inc., though it continued to operate as the Masland Duraleather Co. Operations endured until 1978, when the “falling demand for its vinyl-coated fabrics” resulted in “thin” profits. At the time of its closure, the company employed approximately 230 people. Its remaining operations were relocated to Ohio, Indiana and Wisconsin, “where higher-profit, vinyl coated Naugahyde is made.”<sup>72</sup> The subject property remained in the hands of the Masland family until

<sup>69</sup> Harry J. La Croix. “Masland Duraleather Offers Embroidered Vinyl Fabric,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 19.

<sup>70</sup> Harry J. La Croix. “Masland to Boost Capacity,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 12 April 1965, 30.

<sup>71</sup> Dominic Sama. “Uniroyal Is Closing Plant In Tacony; 400 Jobs Lost,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 12 July 1975, 12.

<sup>72</sup> “Uniroyal plans to close Masland Co.,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 8 April 1978.

1996, when it was sold by Frank E. Maland, III, and Dale L. Floyd to the Philadelphia Authority for Industrial Development.<sup>73</sup>



Figures 81. and 82. Top left and right: Masland fabric samples. Source: Retro Plant. Figure 83. Bottom left: An advertisement for “masland Duran all plastic upholstery covering” from an unknown magazine in 1951. Source: Ebay. Figure 84. Bottom right: A Masland Duran advertisement for the firm’s “all plastic upholstery” in 1952. Source: The Internet Antique Shop.

<sup>73</sup> Deed: Frank E. Masland, III, and Dale Floyd, trustees of Amber Liquidating Trust, to the Philadelphia Authority for Industrial Redevelopment., 13 September 1996, Philadelphia Deed Book V.C.S., No. 118, 191.

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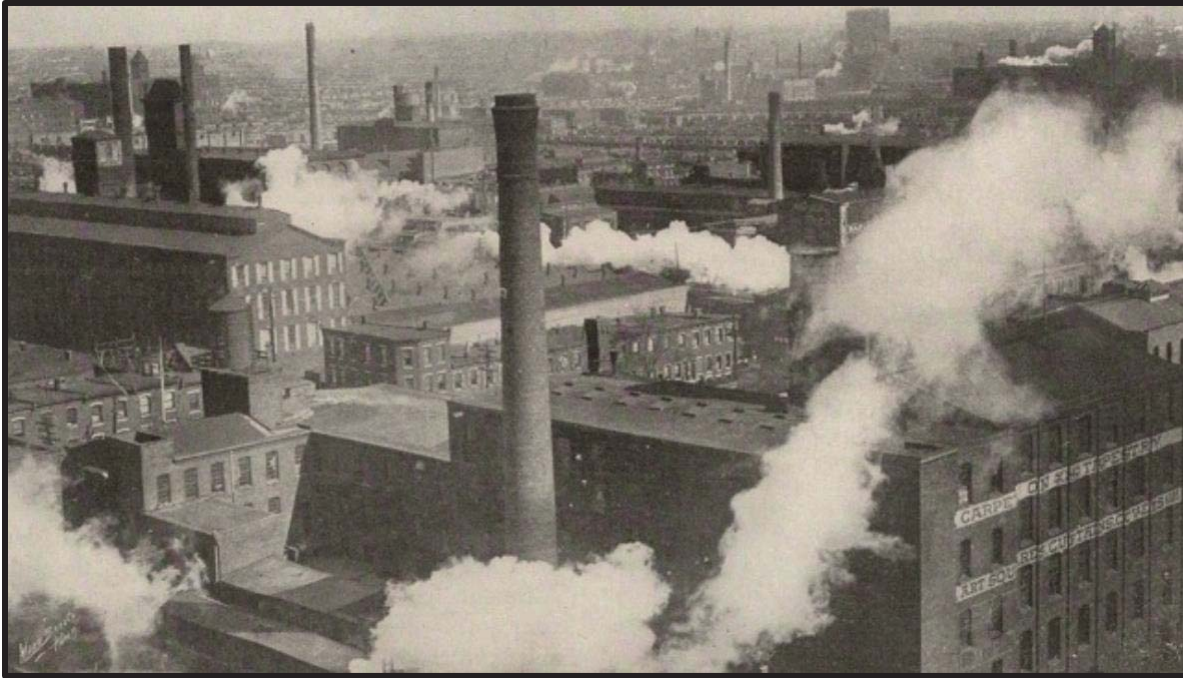


Figure 85. The Industrial District of Kensington, c. 1900. Source: Kensington.” <http://www.workshopoftheworld.com/kensington/kensington.html>. Accessed on 17 December 2011.

### **HISTORIC CONTEXT: THE EARLY INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT OF KENSINGTON**

Within the larger context of Philadelphia as the former “Workshop of the World,” Kensington was one of the primary neighborhoods of working-class Philadelphia, home to both native and immigrant laborers and workers residing in close proximity to their work sites. The industrial history of Kensington no doubt has its roots in some eighteenth-century enterprises, but its primary period of development was in the nineteenth century. The first of Kensington’s industries were chemical works, glass factories, machine shops, potteries, and wagon manufactories. While much of the city’s nearby industrial development began closer to water, near the Delaware River, the Canal, and Pegg’s Run, Kensington hosted some of these early enterprises west of North Front Street in the area north of Girard Avenue and south of Lehigh. However, no industry would come to define the industrial history of Kensington like that of textiles.

### **HISTORIC CONTEXT: THE DEVELOPMENT OF KENSINGTON’S TEXTILE INDUSTRY**

While the manufacture of textiles was a known and viable industry dating back to the colonial period, Philadelphia’s greatest period of development and productivity as a textile powerhouse took place in the nineteenth century, when Kensington continued to evolve as one of the city’s most important industrial neighborhoods. Located on the cusp of Northern Liberties and Kensington, “the first mill of any considerable size to engage in textile manufacture” was the Globe Mill, which was established in 1804 by Seth Craige at Germantown and West Girard Avenues.<sup>74</sup> By the late 1820s, there were approximately 104 textile firms in Philadelphia, employing about

<sup>74</sup> Oberholtzer, Ellis Paxson, *Philadelphia: A History of the City and Its People* (Philadelphia: S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1912) 1; 441.



9,500 people.<sup>75</sup> The population of Kensington at that time was approximately 7,259, a population statistic that would double to approximately 16,000 in 1830.<sup>76</sup> This population boom is invariably linked to the advent of Kensington's "specialized cottage industry" for the production of textiles, a system where each part or step of the manufacturing process was completed by "independent, partial-process" component entities and firms.<sup>77</sup> This great period of industrial progress led to the establishment of Philadelphia's first hosiery factory by Martin Landenberg in 1843. The first patents for knitting machinery in the United States followed in 1850, issued in Philadelphia.<sup>78</sup> Incidentally, it was Philadelphia's position as a manufacturer of textile machinery that led to the construction of the subject property c1880-82.

As part of the National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form: *Industrial and Commercial Buildings Related to the Textile Industry in the Kensington Neighborhood of Philadelphia*, completed in 2012, Logan I. Ferguson of Powers & Company, Inc., summarized the city's position as a textile manufacturing center:

By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the textile industry in greater Philadelphia achieved an unprecedented level of prominence and its title as the "world largest and most diversified textile center."<sup>79</sup>

In 1850, Kensington was home to approximately 126 textile firms, which represented roughly thirty-nine percent of the larger \$65 million industry in Philadelphia, then employing a reported 12,369 people.<sup>80</sup> Five years later in 1855, "the value of the textile fabric in Philadelphia was more than all of the city and state of New York and more fabric was produced than in any other city in the United States." Textile production had also become one of the city's top five industries, valued at roughly \$23.5 million, with steel production trailing behind at approximately \$14.7 million. Another comparison was the manufacture of clothing and apparel, valued at \$21.4 million, while wood and publishing and bookbinding were valued at \$6.1 million and \$6.4 million respectively.<sup>81</sup>

According to the 1860 Federal Census, the value of Philadelphia's "textile manufacture had grown to \$135 million with 464 firms and 18,521 employees."<sup>82</sup> This also reflects the largest increase in Philadelphia's population, growing from 121,376 in 1850 to 565,529 in 1860, representing a 365 percent boom. In the decades to follow between 1860 and 1920, the population continued to grow with a rate that fluctuated between seventeen to twenty-five percent.

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<sup>75</sup> Russell F. Weigley, ed. *Philadelphia, A 300-Year History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1982), 275, 488.

<sup>76</sup> *Kensington: A City within a City* (Philadelphia: Keighton Printing House, 1891), ix.

<sup>77</sup> Scranton, *The Philadelphia System of Textile Manufacture, 1884-1984*, 28.

<sup>78</sup> J. Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, *History of Philadelphia: 1609-1884* (Philadelphia: L.H. Everts and Co., 1884), 2306-07.

<sup>79</sup> Logan I. Ferguson. *National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form: Industrial and Commercial Buildings Related to the Textile Industry in the Kensington Neighborhood of Philadelphia*. (Philadelphia: Powers & Company, Inc., 2012).

<sup>80</sup> Scranton, *Proprietary Capitalism*, 182.

<sup>81</sup> *Philadelphia Board of Trade*, 15-20.

<sup>82</sup> *Philadelphia Board of Trade*, 15-20.

In the book *Workshop of the World*, the neighborhood and its industrial establishments are described in detail:

The textile trades came to dominate Kensington by the mid-nineteenth century. The genesis of the ingrain carpet industry was centered around Oxford and Howard Streets in West Kensington, where some mills still stand. Other early carpet mills in this area are now gone, but they included James Gay's Park Carpet Mill, the Dornan Brothers' Monitor Carpet Mill, William J. Hogg's Oxford Carpet Mill, the Stinson Brothers' Columbia Carpet Mill, and the carpet mills of Horner Brothers, and Ivins, Dietz, and Magee (later of Hardwick and Magee). The earliest carpet factories operated mainly through "outwork" the owners providing yarns to workers who hand loomed the goods in their homes. As these small textile concerns grew, their owners built small factories in East Kensington. Associated textile trades, such as dye works, yarn factories, woolen and worsted mills, cotton mills, and even textile machinery factories were often located in the same building or complex. After the 1860s, Kensington was filled with two story brick rowhouses and steam powered mills. In 1883, Lorin Blodget described the northward expansion of the area as having had rapid and successful development from vacant fields a few years ago, to a densely built up city, all of which is recent, and most of it within ten or twelve years.<sup>83</sup>

The National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form: *Industrial and Commercial Buildings Related to the Textile Industry in the Kensington Neighborhood of Philadelphia* lists only five as examples carpet mills: the Bromley Mills (circa 1870) at Jasper and E. York Streets; Thomas Develon's Sons (c1875) at W. Lehigh Avenue and N. Hancock Street; the Franklin Carpet Mills (c1879) at 2139-45 E. Huntingdon Street; and the Harrison Mills (c1890), Cecil B. Moore Avenue and Blair Street. While the Bromley Mills is perhaps the most significant of the surviving mills, its former carpet factory facility at Jasper and N. Front Streets only retains two of fifteen buildings unlike the subject property which remains entirely intact. Thomas Develon's Carpet Mill, the Franklin Carpet Mills and the Harrison Mills feature significant multi-story mill buildings, but only included facilities for weaving, while the subject property, which includes both the large mill building and a dyehouse.

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<sup>83</sup> *Workshop of the World: A Selective Guide to the Industrial Archeology of Philadelphia* (Wallingford, PA: Oliver Evans Press, 1990), 233.



Figure 86. Charles H. Masland as a Union soldier. Source: Masland.com.

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

The following sites were used to create the nomination:

Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network

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