

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

4

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Reading Company Grain Elevator

AND/OR COMMON The Granary

RECEIVED

FEB 26 1980

PH. G. MC

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 411 North Twentieth Street

CITY, TOWN Philadelphia

STATE Pennsylvania

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 2

VICINITY OF

CODE 42

COUNTY Philadelphia

CODE 101

Historic Preservation

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE:	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Kenneth P. Parker

STREET & NUMBER 411 North Twentieth Street

CITY, TOWN Philadelphia

STATE Pennsylvania

VICINITY OF

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Department of Records

STREET & NUMBER Philadelphia City Hall

CITY, TOWN Philadelphia

STATE Pennsylvania

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Pennsylvania Inventory of Historic Places

DATE 1980

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission

CITY, TOWN Harrisburg

STATE Pennsylvania

DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Granary is a reinforced-concrete former grain elevator with 12-inch concrete curtain walls. Its roughly rectangular plan measures approximately 72 feet front on the east side of North Twentieth Street by 127 feet depth along the north side of Shamokin Street. The ground story on the north side of the building, originally a train shed adjacent to the Reading Company's railroad tracks, extends another 15 feet in depth at the building's northeast corner. The building rises 110 feet (divided internally into four very high stories) to a one- and two-story pent house, whose 18-foot-wide two-story front rises 32 feet above the Granary's center bay; it extends the entire 127-foot depth of the Granary. At each of its levels the Granary has a flat concrete roof.

The Granary's front, or west facade, is divided into three bays, which are blank except for two sets of industrial steel-frame windows at the top of each bay -- a 24-pane window (nine rows of eight panes) above a 56-pane window (seven rows of eight panes) -- and one set of 24 steel-frame panes in each bay at the first-floor level. The north and south end windows are boarded up on the first floor. (Photos 3,7) Rising above the center bay is the two-story pent house with a large window (installed 1978) on each floor. The outer concrete piers of both the pent house and the main body of the Granary extend approximately a foot above the roof lines to form small corner pedestals. (Photo 3) At the ground level a one-story four-bay flat-roof reinforced-concrete extension (approximately 15 feet deep) extends the length of the front. The southernmost bay, at the southwest corner, is open on both sides to form an entry porch. The two northernmost bays have modern large-pane windows, and the other bay is blank with a metal door. (Photos 6,7) Each of the five piers extend above the roof line, and over the blank bay indented within a diamond-shaped recess is the date "1925." (Photo 6)

Except for the top and bottom floors the seven bays on the Granary's south side are blank. (Photos 1,3,6) At the ground story steel-frame industrial windows are set within recesses. The number of panes varies. There are 32 panes in the westwardmost window, 56 in the next two bays, a metal door and two eight-pane windows in the center bay, two 24-pane windows in the fifth bay, and 56 panes in the sixth and seventh (or easternmost) windows. At the top story all but the center bay have two sets of industrial steel-frame windows like those on the western facade, i.e., a 24-pane window above a 56-pane window. The center bay extends one story (approximately 20 feet) above the other bays. On the center bay, approximately five feet below the sill level of the adjacent 56-pane windows and approximately two feet above the lintel level of the adjacent 24-pane windows are two concrete balconies, enclosed by cyclone-wire fencing and supported by heavy concrete brackets. A metal double door opens onto each balcony, and above the lower balcony is a 12-pane window and above the upper balcony is a six-pane window. (Photos 1,3) Steel-frame-and-glass shed-roof additions flank the top floor of the center bay. Built in 1978, these additions serve as indoor extensions of the roof-top patio and garden. (Photos 1,3,9) Recessed from the plane of the south facade is the one- and two-story pent house which extends east and west along the center line of the building. The center and end bays rise two stories; the remaining four bays have one story. Large double-pane modern windows on both floors dominate each bay of the pent house. As in the case of the other facades, the corner piers -- of the main building, of the center bay, and each of the two-story bays of the pent house -- project above the roof lines to form small pedestals. (Photos 1,3)

Like those of the Granary's front, the three bays of the east facade, the rear, are blank except at the top and bottom. (Photos 2,4) Rolling overhead metal freight doors fill the ground-story center and southern bays. Projecting approximately 15 feet from the northern bay is the one-story former train shed that wraps around the north and west sides of the Granary. Blank on its south side, the shed's east end has two bays, each with a large modern steel-frame plate-glass window on the lower level (one story below grade). The northern bay also has a large plate-glass window (installed 1978) on the second level, which is slightly below grade. The railroad tracks that once entered the east end of the she are still in place. (Photo 4) Two steel-frame industrial windows are at the top story of both end bays of the Granary. The southern bay has a 12-pane window above a 28-pane window, and the northern bay has a 24-pane window above a 56-pane window, like those on the front's top story. On the center bay a 24-pane steel-frame window is flanked top and bottom by double metal doors; the upper door has a projecting hoist arm. Rising above the center bay is the two-story east end of the pent house with a large-pane double window (installed 1978) on each floor.

The Granary's north side, facing the Reading Company's railroad tracks, rests on the coursed rock-faced ashlar foundation one story below grade. Three former openings (probably windows) in this foundation are filled with concrete blocks; the ashlar foundation extends eastward of the building to form a retaining wall along the submerged tracks. (Photo 8) The lowest story on the north side, partially below grade, is the one-story former train shed that also continues along the west front. This concrete shed is divided into nine bays, five of which are filled with concrete blocks -- two at each end and the fourth one from the west end. The other four have large industrial four-pane windows. (Photo 8) Operable air-conditioning machinery and inoperable grain dryers rest on the train shed's flat roof. Seven blank bays rise above the ground level to a 24-pane steel-frame window above a 56-pane steel-frame window at the top. The one exception is the bay next to the easternmost bay, in which a door opens onto a platform at the point where the 24-pane window would be. This platform is part of the grain drying equipment. The equipment consists of two large vertical tubes extending from a point approximately eight feet above the roof line to two large rectangular drying units (approximately 30 feet high), whose platform rests on the roof of the one-story train shed. (Photos 2,8) Rising above the cornice and recessed from the north facade's plane is the one- and two-story pent house, with large modern windows (1978) on its lower floor, but with its upper-floor windows filled in. (Photo 5)

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1925	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1925

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Granary is a fine and increasingly rare example of a grain elevators near Philadelphia's central business district. It stands as a dynamic expression of economic, social, and architectural change. It is both a relic of Philadelphia's historical role as a commercial and industrial center and evidence of Philadelphia's present activity in historic preservation through adaptive re-use.

The Granary was built in 1925 as a grain elevator for the Reading Company, whose railroad tracks run along the building's north side to connect the elevator with the port of Philadelphia on the Delaware River. (Photo 4) The reinforced-concrete structure was built on the foundations of an earlier grain elevator, which had been built for the Philadelphia Grain Elevator Company about 1880 and acquired by the Reading Company in 1902. The Reading Company sold the building in 1945. The only significant exterior change since 1925 was on the building's north side: the installation in 1952 of new steel and concrete foundations on the roof of the one-story railroad shed for new grain dryers, which are still there. (Photos 2,4) The removal of a few ventilators, replacement of sashes in the pent house, and opening of some bricked-up windows in the former railroad shed have not significantly changed the building's original appearance. These minor alterations were made in 1978.

At one time grain elevators were common figures in the Philadelphia skyline. A grain-exporting city since the colonial days, Philadelphia became a major port for the foodstuffs trade after 1860, with wheat the leading exported breadstuff. The need for grain elevators grew with the city's foreign trade. A significant drop in foreign demand for American grain was experienced after 1920, shortly before the present Granary was built, but the domestic need for grain products grew with the regional population for nearly another half-century.

Although a utilitarian building anonymously produced by the Reading Company's staff architects, the Granary is a well designed piece of architecture. Since it was to be a low-cost utilitarian structure, emphasis was on construction. Concrete grain elevators had been built since the turn of the century, when they first appeared in Minneapolis, so the material was not new to the building form by the 1920's. The Reading Company's builder, however, used the "continuous-pouring-of-cement" technique. It was innovative at the time, but it fit the Company's needs. It saved time, money, and manpower while increasing structural strength and endurance. Yet a sense of aesthetics was not abandoned. Large-scaled fenestration atop wide bays, the set-back pent house, and the visual syncopation of both the one- and two-story pent house and the vertical extension of the corner piers combine to offset what could have been an otherwise overwhelming, deadening mass of concrete. (Photos 1,3,5)

The Granary looms over its immediate neighbors, mid-nineteenth-century brick row houses, (Photos 4,5) but it fits comfortably within an evolving design structure for the upper end of the Benjamin Franklin Parkway. It serves well as a foil for the classically designed Free Library of Philadelphia one block south on Twentieth Street, (Photo 1) and as a focal point in relation to such nearby tall buildings as One Buttonwood Square one block to the north, and the Park Towne Place apartment complex to the southwest (Photo 9) as well as the more distant hotels along John F. Kennedy Boulevard. (Photo 5)

In December 1977 Kenneth P. Parker, principal associate of Kenneth Parker Associates, national known for their architectural interior design and space planning, acquired the Granary and immediately inaugurated an adaptive use plan. Through judicious use of graphics and dark brown paint the old entrance was clearly delineated without any structural change; (Photo 7) the ground story and former railroad shed were altered to architectural offices; (Photos 8,11) the pent house was converted to living quarters for Mr. Parker; (Photo 10), and a terrace was created on the roof along the pent house's south side. (Photo 9) Thereby the Granary joined a growing list of Philadelphia's commercial-industrial buildings that have found new life through adaptive re-use. Apartment buildings have been made of the best known examples, such as a late-eighteenth-century sugar refinery behind historic Christ Church, a former clothing warehouse on Letitia Street in the Old City area, and a Botany 500 factory on the banks of the Schuylkill River at Walnut Street. The Granary, however, exhibits a greater degree of innovation in having its function radically changed while its appearance has been preserved. Its conversion to joint residential-office use also reflects, and in turn stimulates, the revitalization of the adjoining Spring Garden neighborhood.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Continuation Sheet.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES

A

1	8
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4	8	5	3	2	8
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4	4	2	3	2	4	2
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ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B

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ZONE EASTING NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property occupies plot plan 3N23, city lot 250. It is 90 feet 4 inches front along the east side of North Twentieth Street by 150 feet 8 inches depth along the south side of Pennsylvania Avenue and 243 feet 4 inches depth along the north side of Shamokin Street.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Richard J. Webster, Professor of History and American Studies

ORGANIZATION

West Chester State College

DATE

14 February 1980

STREET & NUMBER

Box 124, New Main Hall

TELEPHONE 215-436-2995

215-399-0784

CITY OR TOWN

West Chester

STATE

Pennsylvania

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE ED WEINTRAUB, State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

See Continuation Sheet.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	18	485328	4423242	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

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STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

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NAME / TITLE

Richard J. Webster, Professor of History and American Studies

ORGANIZATION

West Chester State College

DATE

14 February 1980

STREET & NUMBER

Box 124, New Main Hall

TELEPHONE 215-436-2995

215-399-0784

CITY OR TOWN

West Chester

STATE

Pennsylvania

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

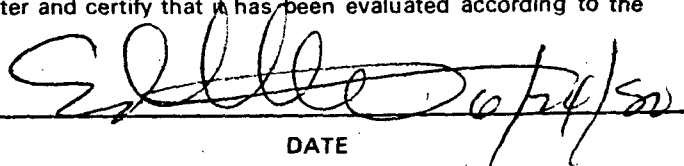
NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL X

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TITLE

ED WEINTRAUB, State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Condit, Carl W. American Building Art: The Twentieth Century.
New York: Oxford University Press, 1961.

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Granary." Interior Design 50 (January 1979): 162-65.

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Architectural Digest 36 (October 1979): 135-39.

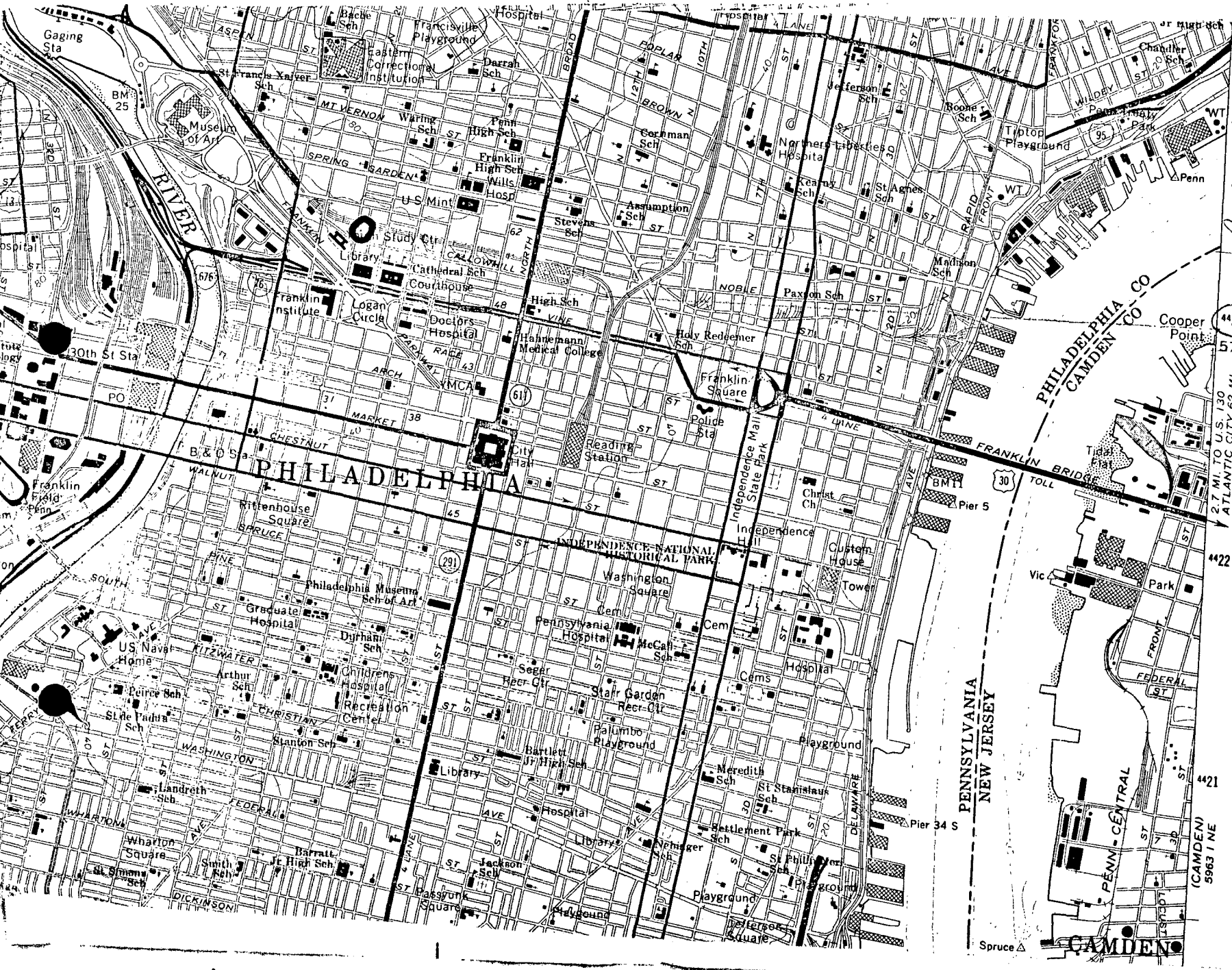
Philadelphia: A Guide to the Nation's Birthplace. Philadelphia: William
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Building Permits 649, 2 February 1925; 441, 22 January 1952.
Department of Licenses and Inspection. City of Philadelphia.

Registry Unit, plot plan 3N23, city lot 250. Department of Records.
City of Philadelphia.



Reading Company

4424

4423

57'30"

2.7 MI. TO U.S. 130
ATLANTIC CITY 62 MI.

4422

4421

(CAMDEN)
5963 I NE

Spruce Δ

PHILADELPHIA CO
CAMDEN CO

PENNSYLVANIA
NEW JERSEY

CAMDEN