

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Washington Avenue Historic District

and/or common Washington Avenue Factory District

2. Location

street & number 10th to Broad Street, Carpenter to Washington not for publication

city, town Philadelphia vicinity of

state PA code 42 county Philadelphia code 101

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input 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 type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name see attached

street & number

city, town vicinity of state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Philadelphia City Hall, Department of Records

street & number Broad and Market Streets

city, town Philadelphia state PA

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Historic Sites Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1981 federal state county local

depository for survey records Bureau for Historic Preservation, William Penn Museum

city, town Harrisburg state PA

7. 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 Washington Avenue Historic District comprises the remaining four blocks of one of the last industrial neighborhoods in Philadelphia. Here seven large factories, some of them stretching the entire length of their block, line the north side of Washington Avenue, forming an almost impenetrable wall rivalling the so-called Chinese wall of the Pennsylvania Railroad's center city viaduct. Not coincidentally, the scale of these buildings is also a product of the late 19th century and the early 20th century, and to a considerable extent was made possible by the railroad empires of Philadelphia. These buildings were located here because of the position of the tracks of the Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore Railroad in the middle of Washington Avenue, connecting one factory to the next -- and to the rest of the nation.

The overwhelming scale of the manufacturing buildings along Washington Avenue underscores their impact on their community, which provided the thousands of workers that wove cloth for John Williams and C.J. Milne, sewed garments for John Wanamaker, moved the various supplies of Curtis Publishing, wrapped cigars for American Cigars, produced the chemical and pharmaceutical products of the John Wyeth Laboratories, or manufactured candy for National Licorice. Despite the apparent dissimilarity of products and the different workplaces which ranged from employing mostly men (Curtis) to mostly women (Wanamaker's) to men, women and children (Milne), the buildings are remarkably similar, occupying at least one quarter of a city square and usually more, with a prominent, regular brick loft fronting on the principal street and a power plant to the rear. Those power plants do much to explain other neighboring industries. Coal yards were the major trade on the south side of Washington Avenue; the Main Belting Company stood on the north side of Carpenter Street across from the John Williams Textile Mill. If coal kept the steam engines running, it was leather belting that transformed power from the great engines to the personal work stations. Further, it can be assumed that the Milne and Williams cotton goods were sewn into finished garments just to the west at the Wanamaker Clothing Factory, thereby providing a clear sense of the interrelationship of work in the mature, industrialized city. Factories, power plants, coal yards and railroad tracks form the most memorable streetscapes of such a district, but one more building type should be noted: the two-story, red brick rowhouses that housed the workers, and which form the extended setting of the industrial district. Industry arrived late on Washington Avenue, though it had become a significant shipping center by the 1850s with the arrival of the PW&B Railroad. From its Prime Street Station (as Washington Avenue was called) departed

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tens of thousands of Civil War troops; across the street an army hospital received the wounded. The military transportation industry is still in evidence in the location of the 1903 United States Marine Corps Quartermaster Department building (Rankin & Kellogg, on the National Register) at the southwest corner of Broad and Washington, which adopted the materials and the giant order of the earlier Wanamaker Factory. After the Civil War, it was shipping which dominated the region with coal and lumber yards lining the south side of Washington Avenue, and secondary businesses related to these materials developing among them. A saw and planing mill and Hall and Garrison's Interior Decorating Works are typical. In 1875 the north side of the 1000 block (site of the Milne Factory) was a cemetery; the site of the Curtis Building was a lumberyard; the Wyeth sites at 10th and 12th Streets were coal yards; The Wanamaker Factory was the location of the 13th and 15th Street Passenger Railroad stables and car barn. Only the western half of the 1100 block (now American Cigar) was given over to intensive industrial development -- a cotton and woolen mill in a building demolished before 1900.

The main influx of heavy industry began in the late 1880s with the arrival in 1889 of John Wyeth's chemical laboratory and pharmaceutical works at the southwest corner of 10th and Washington Avenue, in a building designed by Collins and Autenreith (BG 6 June 1889, since destroyed). Ultimately the same company built several other buildings near the PW&B tracks, including the handsome five-story loft building at the northwest corner of 12th and Washington (Werner Trumbower, BG 24 February 1909) and another building at 16th Street. In 1890, John Wanamaker hired society architect Lindley Johnson to build a warehouse at Broad and Carpenter to hold his goods; ten years later he commissioned the monumental six-story factory at Broad and Washington (Joseph Huston, BG 1 May 1895) that obliterated the earlier buildings. Five years earlier Caleb Milne had retained Hales and Ballinger to design the largest of all, a 376 foot long factory that stretched from 10th to 11th Streets. It replaced their earlier four-story 40'x120' factory at 1824 Lombard Street with a building more than four times the size. A similar jump in scale occurred about the same time for the John Williams Cotton and Woolen Mill. In 1888 the firm was located on the third floor of a mill at 800 S. 11th Street. By 1900 it had moved two blocks south to its new 3-story brick building at Carpenter and 12th Streets, and six years later it had expanded to the west end of its block in a six-story high loft. In 1900, 200 were employed there; ten years later the numbers had tripled. It seems likely that the Milne and Williams products were primarily used by

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Wanamaker's new mill as Thomas Dolan's woolen goods had been in the 1880s. The Main Belting Company was at its location on Carpenter Street before 1900, and was extended in 1902 and again in 1911, suggesting the growth stimulated by the extensive enlargements of the neighboring textile industry.

Three other industries joined the Washington Avenue group after 1900 because of the railroad and the skilled female labor pool. On the 1100 block were the Curtis Publishing Company Warehouse (BG 1 December 1909) by Edgar V. Seeler, architect of their new offices and press at 6th and Walnut Streets, and the adjacent American Cigar Company (1906 by Nimmons and Fellow of Chicago). The National Licorice Company built its modern reinforced concrete plant (William Steele and Sons, BG 1927-28) at 13th and Washington Avenue, completing the group of industrial buildings begun thirty eight years earlier.

INVENTORY

1000 block Washington Avenue: C. J. Milne Factory, Hales and Ballinger, architects; five-story and water tower brick loft building, parallelogram in plan; small pane original sash in most openings; heavy timber loft construction interior; north 10th Street wing of brick construction; galvanized pressed metal arcade marks Post Office below shirtwaist plant, William Steele and Company, 1904; brick power plant in courtyard; corner pressed metal pediments replaced with modern siding; Neo-Georgian water tower with brick pilasters and pressed metal trim; excellent condition. --- Significant

1101 Washington Avenue: Curtis Publishing Company, Edgar V. Seeler, architect, 1909; five-story brick and steel irregular industrial building; coursed brick base to limestone belt course which picks up lintel line; belt course above supports three story giant order carrying cornice, attic story and limestone cornice; small paned windows in pairs below limestone lintels; truck entrances on east side; rail lines on west side, paralleled by coursed wall; excellent condition. ---Significant

1135 Washington Avenue: American Cigar Company; five-story brick symmetrical industrial block, Nimmons and Fellow (Chicago), 1906; articulated corner with segmental headed windows; windows in groups of three below steel lintels in middle eleven bays; attic story above cornice with monumental plaque with name of company and product; mainly intact with original 3/3 industrial sash. --- Significant

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1201 Washington Avenue: John Wyeth Chemical Works, Werner Trumbower, architect, 1909; five-story symmetrical industrial building; most windows grouped in threes marking structural bays; corbeled brick cornice at top of building; some sash altered, but most original. --- Significant

1301 Washington Avenue: National Licorice Company, William Steele and Sons, 1927; three-story reinforced concrete column and slab industrial building; three groups of industrial iron sash in each bay; brick below sill; central raised parapet with name of company in central plaque. --- Contributing

1001 S. Broad Street: John Wanamaker Clothing Factory, Joseph Huston, 1900; six-story monumental factory occupying block between Carpenter and Washington Streets; limestone base, coursed brick at first floor; three story brick giant order carrying arched windows; paired windows above as attic story; pressed metal cornice; rear central tower, power plant and smokestack; original windows replaced c.1960. --- Significant

1200 Carpenter Street: John Williams and Company; four-story brick factory, pre 1900; shallow gable at each end; segmental headed windows; decorative brick cornice; power house and 4-story wing with segmental windows by M. Easby, 1906; west end of block extended in 1906 by C. E. Rahn with a six-story building with square-headed small paned windows; all second-story windows infilled. --- Contributing

1217-37 Carpenter Street: Main Belting Company; three-story brick loft, east end pre 1900; later additions; segmental headed windows; most original sash removed and infilled with cement block. --- Contributing

3. 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 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)				
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention						

Specific dates 1889-1927 Builder/Architect various

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The north side of Washington Avenue west of 10th Street maintains the form of the late 19th-century industrial district; it is now one of the last significant concentrations of loft buildings in Philadelphia. These form an unbroken wall that recalls the complex interrelationships between work and life in turn-of-the-century Philadelphia. Here worked the residents of the surrounding community: women and children producing cloth and finished garments, while men manned coal and lumber yards, ran the mill machinery and steam engines, and worked in the transportation business along the railroad. As such, Washington Avenue represented the mature, interconnected work community that characterized Philadelphia around 1900. Of further significance are the buildings, which were the work of several of the city's most important industrial architects -- Hales and Ballinger, William Steele and Sons, Seeler and Roberts, and Joseph Huston -- as well as lesser known men such as Werner Trumbower and Charles Rahn. It was these men, especially Ballinger and Steele, who developed the separate fire towers, gave articulation to separate work processes, and in so doing gave architectural form to the industrial building. Their buildings recall the importance of the textile business in Philadelphia and confirm the fundamental difference between the Philadelphia proprietary capitalism and differentiated production that developed in a varied work environment and the New England mill experience of individual products and commissioned services. Though the New England mills are regarded as the paradigm of the 19th-century textile industry experience, it must be remembered that in 1912, more than 20% of the workforce of the nation's largest manufacturing center -- Philadelphia -- was engaged in the textile business, making that industry the largest in the city. Moreover, the owners of those great factories were titans of Philadelphia industry, including merchant John Wanamaker, cloth manufacturer Caleb Milne, manufacturing chemist John Wyeth and publisher Cyrus Curtis. Interestingly, by 1900 all lived within two or three blocks of each other near 20th and Walnut Streets, shared clubs and churches and presumably discussed business. As a nearly unique surviving workplace, as a focal point for understanding the interrelationship between work and residence and between different types of work, and as the creation of the titans of industrial Philadelphia, the Washington Avenue District meets criteria A,B and C for nomination to the National Register.

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After two generations of change in American industry, as so-called "smoke-stack" industries have departed for warmer and less labor controlled states, Philadelphia's great concentration of factories has largely disappeared. The awesome industrial center at Lehigh Avenue and North American Street (focussed on the demolished Bromley Carpet Mills), the 7th and Glenwood region (focussed on the demolished North American Lace Company) the 20th and Lehigh district, and the lower Germantown cloth districts have all closed, and for the most part been demolished. Those factories that do remain are in large measure isolated survivors, divorced from their original setting in the midst of similarly scaled buildings. On Washington Avenue, the five blocks from 10th to 15th Street are nearly intact and show the scale and continuity characteristic of the industrial spine along the railroad. Fortunately too, though one of the Wyeth laboratory buildings has been demolished on the south side, only a small General Electric factory on the north side has been lost in the three generations since the last building was erected.

The interconnection of workplaces around Washington Avenue gives further evidence about the pattern of organization of Philadelphia's industrial districts. It is clear that work opportunities had to encompass the entire employable population or run the risk of seeing skilled families move to other centers such as Lehigh Avenue and lower Germantown. Here the railroad, coal and lumber yards and the heavy work of the mills, especially at Curtis and Wyeth, brought the employment of men and women into rough balance. But, the interaction of workplaces is also of note. The coal yards supplied the energy to run the steam engines; the leather belts produced by Main Belting on Carpenter Street were used in the cloth and garment mills; the small one- and two-man trimming shops on the side streets were used in the production of finished goods. Each reinforced the success of the others and thus of the region. Interestingly too, the surrounding community continues to supply workers to this day to Torre Fashions in the Milne Plant, as well as to Fishman and Tobin boyswear in the Wanamaker Mill.

Many of the buildings are of architectural note as well: The Milne factory, for instance, by Hales and Ballinger, formerly Geissinger and Hales, (architects of the Bromley Carpet Mills on Lehigh Avenue) and later the Ballinger Company. From its inception that firm had been at the forefront of industrial design, inventing the "Superspan Truss" and shaping many of the conventional forms of factory architecture. The Milne mill is given interest

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by its towered monumental form and by the highly articulated rear where separate fire towers are placed not at the ends, but at the points where they minimize the journey to the exit. Further, by placing the plumbing tower, the connections to the steam plant and future expansion on the north side, the architects were able to create an economical construction system for the main building. The later buildings of the district, the American Cigar Company and the Wanamaker Mill, show the same general form but used the more conventional but less efficient corner and central placement of stair towers. They, on the other hand, are typical of greater architectural pretension, especially the splendid Wanamaker factory with its great arcaded front, massive cornice and limestone base, and the Curtis plant. The architects of the main buildings are of note too. Hales and Ballinger have already been discussed. Joseph Huston came out of the Furness office and was the architect for William Wanamaker's house on Walnut Street. In this century, he designed the State Capitol with unfortunate consequences for his personal, if not his professional, reputation. Seeler was the architect for several important printing plants, including the Bulletin offices at Juniper and Filbert Streets, the Curtis Publishing offices, and numerous large office buildings near Independence Square. Finally, William Steele and Sons, although better known for industrial designs like the North American Lace Company, are also remembered for Connie Mack Stadium, the wonderful McClatchey Building in Upper Darby and the 401 N. Broad Street Terminal Warehouse for the Reading Railroad. All are important in the architecture of the city.

The clients were of significance too, for as Phillip Scranton points out in Proprietary Capitalism, they found an alternative to the capitalism of the New England stock companies which were tied to the water powered plants along rivers, and were bound by labor sources to modest levels of mechanization, and were constrained by contracts and conservative management to single products. By contrast, the Philadelphia cloth plants were owned by individuals who depended on steam to put plants near permanent residential communities and who were able to surmount seasonal and fashion changes by producing a wider range of finished goods. It was their industry, not the New England experience, that shaped the textile trade in this century. Moreover, it is surely not a coincidence that the major men of the region, Wanamaker, Milne, Curtis and Wyeth lived within three blocks of each other near Rittenhouse. It was their capital, foresight and daring that created the region. Fortunately, it remains essentially intact to provide our age insight into the physical nature of life and work in the industrial age.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Manufacturing in Philadelphia (Philadelphia 1912)
Philip Scranton, Proprietary Capitalism, The Textile Manufacture at Philadelphia, 11800
to 1885 (Cambridge University Press, 1983)
PRER&BG 6 June 1889; 4 December 1895; 1 May 1895; 22 September 1897; 24 February 1909;
1 December 1909 (continued)

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 16
Quadrangle name Philadelphia Quad Quadrangle scale 1:24,000
UTM References see continuation sheets

A	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	D	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
E	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	F	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
G	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	H	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Verbal boundary description and justification
see attached

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	Pennsylvania	code	42	county	Philadelphia	code	101
state		code		county		code	

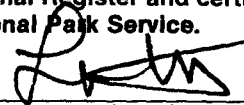
11. Form Prepared By

name/title	George E. Thomas, Ph.D.		
organization	Clio Group, Inc.	date	March 6, 1984
street & number	3961 Baltimore Avenue	telephone	(215) 386-6276
city or town	Philadelphia	state	PA

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 
Larry E. Tise, State Historic Preservation Officer
title

date 2/10/84

For NPS use only
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.
date _____
Keeper of the National Register
Attest: _____ date _____
Chief of Registration

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Philadelphia Inquirer, 11 September 1900

1900 Factory Inspection Report (Temple University Urban Archives)

Louis Blodgett, Manufacturers of Textile Fabrics in Philadelphia, 1888

Gopsills and McElroys Philadelphia City Directories, 1840-1920

Manufacturing Census Schedules, Philadelphia County, 1880, 1900

Freedley, Philadelphia and Its Manufactures, 1862



Washington Avenue Historic Dist

Philadelphia PA.

Zone 18 Philadelphia Quad

A.E	486	280	N.4420	540
L.E	485	700	N.4420	640
R.E	485	720	N.4420	770
S.E	485	790	N.4420	760
T.E	485	780	N.4420	710
U.	485	900	N.4420	700
Z.E	485	930	N.4420	760
CC.E	486	040	N.4420	720
DD.E	486	040	N.4420	700
NN.E	486	280	N.4420	570

S - 485-720
 T - 485-740 780
 D - 485-700 4420-760
 E - 485-700 4420-700
 F - 900 700