

United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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

3/1  
For HCRS use only

received

date entered

## 1. Name

historic PARSONS-TAYLOR HOUSE

and/or common

## 2. Location

street & number Northeast corner of 4th and Ferry Streets  not for publication

city, town Easton  vicinity of congressional district 15

state Pennsylvania code 42 county Northampton code 095

## 3. Classification

| Category  | Ownership                                   | Status  | Present Use                                |
|---|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> district               | <input type="checkbox"/> public             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private | <input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied                   | <input type="checkbox"/> park              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> structure              | <input type="checkbox"/> both               | <input type="checkbox"/> work in progress             | <input type="checkbox"/> private residence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> site                   | <b>Public Acquisition</b>                   | <b>Accessible</b>                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> religious         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> object                 | <input type="checkbox"/> in process         | <input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted              | <input type="checkbox"/> scientific        |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> being considered   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation    |
|   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> no                           | <input type="checkbox"/> other:            |

## 4. Owner of Property

name George Taylor Chapter of the DAR

street & number 4th and Ferry Streets

city, town Easton  vicinity of state Pennsylvania 18042

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Northampton County Courthouse

street & number 7th and Walnut Streets

city, town Easton  vicinity of state Pennsylvania

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

National Survey of Historic  
title Sites and Buildings

has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1973  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records National Park Service, Department of the Interior

city, town Washington  vicinity of state D. C.

## 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 Parsons-Taylor House is a simple 2 bay Georgian stone structure that is  $2\frac{1}{2}$  stories high with a gable roof. Sawed-off joist run the entire width of the building between the first and second stories. Framed on these joist is a reproduction of the pent roof that was an original part of the house. Further up the wall is a projecting course of stone that was originally designed as flashing to protect this joining from the elements. Similar remains of original joist are found over the gable end door. Framed on them is a reproduction of the small hood that originally sheltered the door. Absence of stone flashing suggests that the pedimental shape of the modern hood is authentic.

The three 15 light windows on the first story are shuttered while the 4 upstairs are not. A simple cornice molding runs across the front facade. The twin chimneys are located on the north side of the building and are set flush with the outer wall. There are two doors, one located on the west wall and one located on the south wall. Both give access to the single room of the first floor.

The single large room that makes up the first floor has plastered south, west and east walls. The north wall contains a stair, fireplace and painted wood panelling. The windows in the east wall of this floor and that above have been converted into glass-doored bookcases since they are blocked by an adjoining building.

A 3 part circular stairway connects the 4 levels of this house. In the basement are 2 massive arches supporting the fireplaces above and located at the eastern end of the opposite wall are the remains of a narrow stairway that once lead out to Ferry Street.

The second floor is divided into two rooms with allowance between for a small connecting hall and the stairwell. Each of these rooms has a panelled chimney wall. A base board and concave cornice run around the other walls. The original random-width pine flooring remains in both rooms. Downstairs the flooring is a modern reproduction.

In the attic, handmade square nails are evident and the original roofing of oak shingles can be detected. A new roof has been put on over the top of the old one. Near the chimney are stairs that lead up to a trap door which once gave access to the roof in order that any fires started on the wooden shingles by stray sparks could be extinguished. Two closely spaced 12 light windows pierce the south wall.

The Parsons-Taylor House is constructed of random cut stone from a nearby quarry bonded by burnt limestone mortar. The principal members of the framing are fastened with wooden pegs and nails that were hand made from iron rods. Screws have only been used to fasten the hardware and are most likely of a later date.

## 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 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/         |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering                       | <input type="checkbox"/> music                          | <input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899            | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy                     | <input type="checkbox"/> theater         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1900-                | <input type="checkbox"/> communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> industry                          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation  |
|   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> invention                         |   | <input type="checkbox"/> other (specify) |

Specific dates 1753-57

Builder/Architect

Architect: William Parsons

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Parsons-Taylor House is an extremely significant legacy from Pennsylvania's colonial era. It is important for both its architecture and its links to William Parsons and George Taylor.

The Parsons-Taylor House is a fine survivor of the "Delaware Valley" architectural variation of the Georgian style, that once predominated in the rural areas of the colony's eastern margin and also in adjacent New Jersey. It is linked by such features as door and window placement, exterior detailing and interior ironware to such structures as the 1767 Schwartzlander Homestead in Bucks County and the 1768 Johnson House in Germantown. The Parsons-Taylor House is also unique as the sole survivor of this style in the Lower Lehigh Valley.

The Parsons-Taylor House was constructed on town lot No. 176 by William Parsons between 1753 and 1757.

William Parsons was born in England in 1701. He arrived at Philadelphia in 1720, where he practiced the cobbler's trade. Proving to be a competent and industrious craftsman, he accumulated enough funds to marry the pietistic Christiana Zeidig and to also pursue the study of mathematics.

William Parsons soon displayed a great proficiency in mathematics and he utilized this skill to become a close friend of Benjamin Franklin. Parsons helped Franklin to found the Junto Debating Club, which later became the American Philosophical Society, the Library Company of Philadelphia and the Union Fire Fighting Company. His civic service culminated in 1741, when he was elected to the Common Council of Philadelphia.

William Parson's abilities as a mathematician enabled him to become a successful surveyor. In 1741 he became the Surveyor General of Pennsylvania. Among his most notable accomplishments was the laying out of Reading. A combination of ill health and marital discord forced him to resign his post and accept a series of lesser governmental positions in Lancaster County. However, he continued to undertake special surveying projects for the Proprietary Government such as his membership on the commission which determined the southern boundary of the "Lower Counties of Delaware", in 1750.

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The final phase of William Parson's life centered on the establishment of Northampton County and its governmental center of Easton. As the agent of the principal proprietor, Thomas Penn, he laid out the site of Easton and established the new county's government at the "Forks of the Delaware" in 1752. Remaining at Easton, William Parsons served as Justice of the Peace and School Commissioner. During the troubled times of the French and Indian War, he organized the frontier defense against attack and cared for displaced settlers. He also helped to organize the Easton Indian Councils which greatly aided the conquest of the "Forks of the Ohio." Worn out by these endeavors, William Parsons died in his new house on December 17, 1757 and was buried in the Old Lutheran Graveyard which later became the site of Easton's present public library.

After the death of William Parsons, his dwelling became the property of John Hughes. Hughes died in 1772 and for the next decade the house became a rental property that was used to generate income for his estate. There is no accurate record of the various tenants who occupied Parson's home during the early years of the Revolutionary War. In 1780, George Taylor leased this stone dwelling and once more brought it into the historical limelight.

Pioneer industrialist, civic leader and a signer of the Declaration of Independence, George Taylor played a large role in the early development of the Lehigh Valley. Born in 1716, he arrived in Pennsylvania in 1736 and entered the burgeoning colonial iron industry. Through hard work and a fortunate marriage, he became the manager of the prosperous Worwick Furnace in 1742. For over a decade, he managed this important iron making plantation.

In 1755, George Taylor assumed the management of the famous Durham Furnace. As the operator of this iron plantation, Taylor did much to help the industrial development of the Upper Delaware Valley.

George Taylor began his governmental career in 1761 when he was appointed as a justice of the peace for Bucks County. He soon switched the focus of his activities to neighboring Northampton County, which he served as justice of the peace and assembly representative. In 1774, he was an original member of the Northampton County Committee of Correspondence. He later served on the succeeding Council of Safety for this county. Taylor also became a militia colonel, although he saw no active duty.

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In July of 1776 he was selected by the assembly as a delegate to the Second Continental Congress. In this capacity he signed the Declaration of Independence and helped to negotiate a treaty with the Iroquois at the Lutheran-Reformed Church of Easton during the following winter. His public career was capped by his election to the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania in March of 1777, but disease and financial distress forced him to soon retire from public life.

Due to a dispute over the seizure of "Tory" properties, George Taylor lost control of the Durham Plantation in 1778. Although he later resumed operations at this site through the means of new partners, he was never able to bring back its profitability. Moving to New Jersey, Taylor operated the Greenwich Forge, near Phillipsburg until his death in 1781. During his final year, he returned to Easton where he leased the Parson's house. He died in the upstairs bedroom of this structure on February 23, 1781. Initially buried in the New Lutheran Cemetery, his remains were moved during the 1860s to the present Easton Cemetery near modern Route 22.

The Parsons-Taylor House continued to serve as a private residence until the 1870s when it was converted to a butcher shop. It was rescued from this fate in 1906 by the George Taylor Chapter of the D.A.R., whose members have restored and continued to maintain this historic structure.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property .0128

Quadrangle name Easton, PA-NJ

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UMT References

A 

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| 1    | 8 | 4 | 8 | 2       | 2 | 0 | 0 | 4        | 5 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 0 |
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| Zone |  |  |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Verbal boundary description and justification** Starting at the corner of 4th and Ferry Sts. moving N along Westside of Ferry St. for 26.5' ; west for 21'; then South for 26.5'; then East along Northside of 4th St. for 21' to starting point.

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

state code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lance E. Metz

organization Northampton Co. Historical & Genealogical Society

street & number 101 South Fourth Street telephone

city or town Easton state Pennsylvania 18042

# 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Ed Weintraub, Director date   
title Office of Historic Preservation

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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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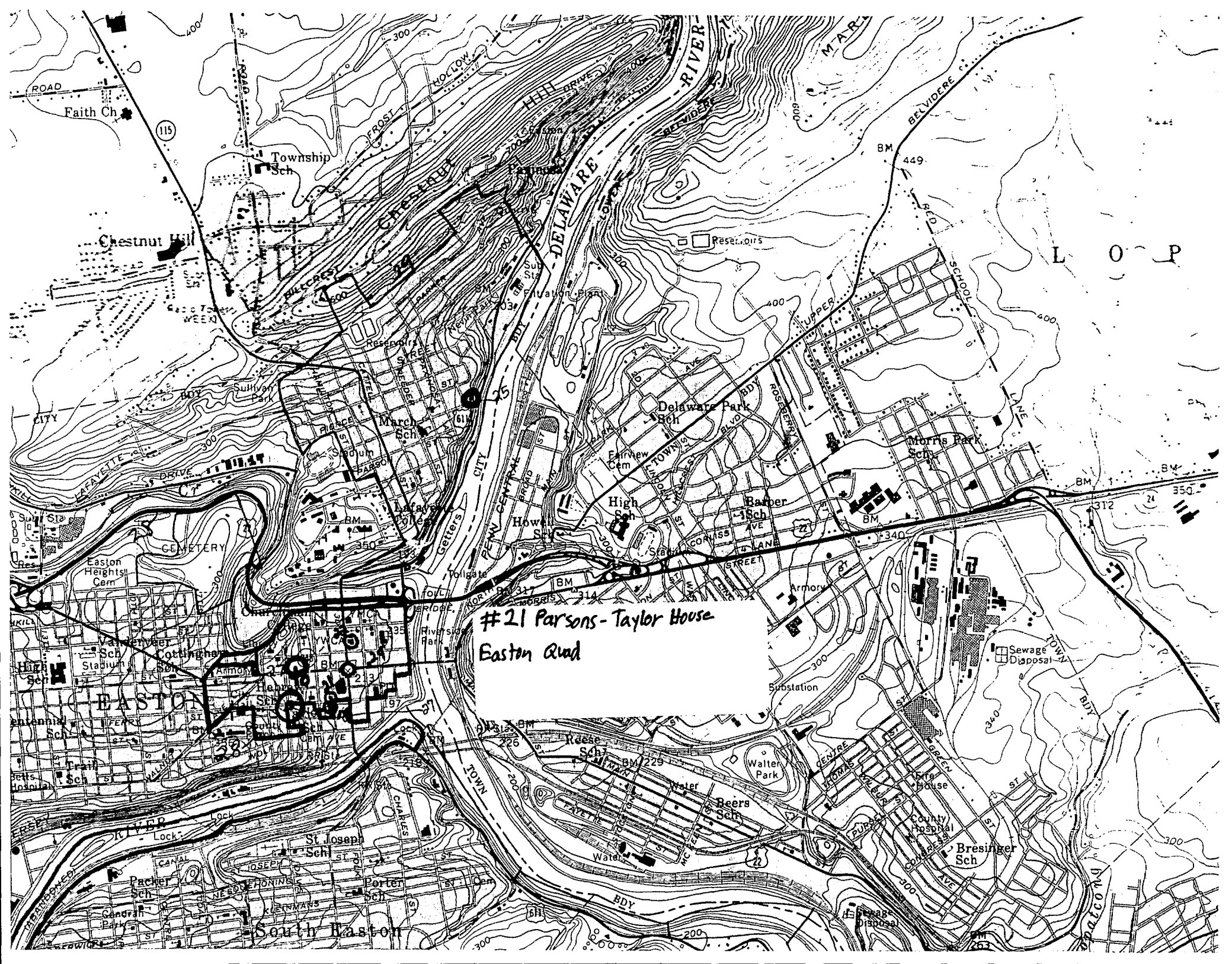
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#21 Parsons-Taylor House  
Easton Quad