

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form**

This form is used for documenting property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (formerly 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information. For additional space, use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items

New Submission       Amended Submission

**A. Name of Multiple Property Listing**

Industrial and Commercial Buildings Related to the Textile Industry in the Kensington Neighborhood of Philadelphia

**B. Associated Historic Contexts**

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

Development of Kensington's Textile Industry, 1683-1969

**C. Form Prepared by**

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**D. Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation.  
(         See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature and title of certifying official      |      Date

Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission  
State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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## E. Statement of Historic Contexts

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### Introduction

Beginning in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Kensington neighborhood of Philadelphia was dominated by the textile and textile-related industries. Kensington, known as a “giant mill town set in the midst of a metropolis,” contained anywhere from 39% to 56% of all textile factories in all of Philadelphia.<sup>i</sup> For over one hundred years, it was known as “one of the greatest industrial centers in the world, and through its influence Philadelphia [became] the leading manufacturing city in the United States....”<sup>ii</sup> Not solely limited to textile products such as carpets, clothing, hosiery and curtains, Kensington was an interdependent community that also contained waste mills, dye works, foundries, machine shops, bolt shops, and box factories to facilitate a comprehensive manufacturing process.<sup>iii</sup>

In describing the textile industry in Philadelphia in 1926, one critic remarked, “its typical exhibit is a 50-year-old factory building somewhere in Kensington with two competitors on the same floor, each the master of a handful of looms and doing his own beaming.”<sup>iv</sup> This narrow picture is aptly complemented by a broader one from another observer in 1912 that states, “from the tower of the Bromley Mill at 4<sup>th</sup> and Lehigh Avenue, there is within the range of vision more textile mills than can be found in any other city in the world.”<sup>v</sup> It is this balance of individual enterprise and incomparable production that gives Kensington its identity as an intimate community with an enduring and notable national impact.

This Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) focuses on textile-related industrial and commercial resources that date from 1800 to 1969, in keeping with the period of significance of Kensington’s industry. Its purpose is to provide a framework for examining and understanding the remaining commercial and industrial buildings in the Kensington area of northeast Philadelphia that relate to the textile industry. While numerous reminders of this important aspect of Philadelphia’s history remain, some notable buildings have been lost and are now vacant lots.

The MPDF focuses on the textile industry of Kensington rather than its entire manufacturing history, as it was textile production that elevated Kensington to a prominent place on the regional and national stage. While there are other individual companies in Kensington, such as Disston Saw Works and Stetson Hat Company, that have achieved individual prominence, there is no other comprehensive industry that has had the same level of impact on this one community. Kensington is currently a neighborhood with mixed resources, and the earlier emphasis on industry remains evident. As a general industrial area from the 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, Kensington is a fairly typical industrial enclave, in comparison to both the city and the larger region. However, its significance is derived both from its powerful textile industry, which was one of the largest in the world with an unparalleled quantity, quality and range of products, and from the unique way that its system of manufacture developed and flourished in comparison to other local and regional textile centers of similar type and scale. Consequently, it is on this distinction that the MPDF chooses to focus.

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<sup>i</sup> Sam Bass Warner, *The Private City: Philadelphia in Three Periods of Its Growth* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1968), 179; Philip Scranton, *Figured Tapestry: Production, Markets, and Power in Philadelphia Textiles, 1885-1941* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 117.

<sup>ii</sup> George Morgan, *The City of Firsts* (Philadelphia: Historical Publication Society, 1926), 248.

<sup>iii</sup> Jamie Catrambone and Harry C. Silcox, eds., *Kensington History: Stories and Memories* (Philadelphia: Brighton Press, 1996), 9, 25.

<sup>iv</sup> Alphonse B. Miller, “Philadelphia.” *American Mercury* (December 1926), 202.

<sup>v</sup> John J. MacFarlane, *Manufacturing in Philadelphia, 1683-1912* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Commercial Museum, 1912), 39.

The resources covered within this MPDF are limited to the relevant industrial and commercial buildings. These building types were selected because they could be specifically attributed to the textile industry at a given point. Other resources located within Kensington, such as schools, houses, or transportation systems, cannot as easily be associated with or attributed to a single industry and are not addressed here.

In order to accurately evaluate the range of textile-related resources in the Kensington neighborhood of Philadelphia, the MPDF will examine two general categories of operation: industrial and commercial. Under the larger industrial umbrella are two types of businesses; those that are directly related to the textile industry, such as carpet and hosiery manufacturers and those that are generally associated with the textile industry, such as dye works and waste manufacturers. As both share the same industrial function, it is logical that both should share the common building type of factories and warehouses.

The commercial category is much smaller and also less consistent. It concerns resources within subcategories such as businesses, professional or organizational offices, or financial institutions that are directly associated with and dependent on the textile industry, such as office buildings, labor union halls, or banks. Unlike the industrial category, which has a recognizable building type, commercial enterprises can be found in a range of settings. While some, like banks, are often easily identifiable as their building was constructed for their individual purpose, others, like union halls, more often adapt to space within existing buildings and therefore are more frequently discovered through secondary research.

An important aspect to comprehensive evaluation of textile-related resources is the definition of significant terms. The “textile industry” as an entity is not a static thing, but one with shifting terms and classifications that evolved throughout the centuries. Many reports and histories from the 19<sup>th</sup> through the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries divide the textile industry into “textile production” and “clothing and apparel.” For the purposes of this MPDF, those categories are considered to be two parts of the larger whole. Further examination of the “textile production” and “clothing and apparel” categories reveals the sub-categories of production within this larger group. These vary throughout the research, but examples include cotton, cotton and wool, wool, hosiery, carpets, silks, dyers, dry goods, twine and nets, hair cloth, print and dye works, proper clothing for men, women and children and miscellaneous clothing, such as hats, gloves and umbrellas. Although the products may have differed, in most cases the industrial buildings share many similarities.

## 1. The Early History of Kensington

The Kensington neighborhood of Philadelphia is located in the northeast portion of the city, close to the Delaware River. The neighborhood was initially settled by six Swedish families on land north of the Cohocksink Creek and marshlands, and in the vicinity of the Great Elm near the Lenape settlement known as “Kachamensi.” The area came to be known as the Shackamaxon Tract, and it was acquired by William Penn in 1683. In the 1730s, the area was formally planned by Barbadian merchant Anthony Palmer and named “Kensington” after the London neighborhood.<sup>vi</sup> The rough boundaries were Frankford Avenue to the west, Delaware Avenue to the east, E. Norris and E. York Streets to the north and Cohocksink Creek to the south.<sup>vii</sup> The lots were quickly purchased as those located farther south in Old City were more expensive and less available.<sup>viii</sup>

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<sup>vi</sup> Catrambone and Silcox, 9.

<sup>vii</sup> The creek was originally crossed via a wooden drawbridge. John F. Watson and Willis P. Hazard. *Annals of Philadelphia, and Pennsylvania, in the Olden Time: Being a Collection of Memoirs, Anecdotes,*

By 1810, Kensington was already “becoming a manufacturing settlement” and had 869 buildings of varying types.<sup>ix</sup> On March 6, 1820, this settlement officially became known as the Kensington District of the Northern Liberties Township and the same boundaries were maintained.<sup>x</sup> By 1834, the district had been divided into five wards. It was also in 1834 that the Philadelphia and Trenton Railroad established its southern terminus in Kensington. The railroad, in combination with the ports along the Delaware River, opened the neighborhood to the import of raw materials and the distribution of finished goods. By 1846, the district had been re-divided into seven wards within the same boundaries. This configuration remained essentially consistent with four minor revisions, mostly to the northern boundary, through the mid-1850s.<sup>xi</sup> In 1854, Kensington was annexed by the City of Philadelphia as a result of the Act of Consolidation. This consolidation not only modified the boundaries of Kensington, but also made a single and continuous ward numbering system throughout the entire city. The formal title of “the Kensington District of the Northern Liberties Township” was also modified and the neighborhood simply became colloquially referred to as Kensington. The area was now comprised of wards sixteen through nineteen, which were bounded by Poplar Street to the south, N. 6<sup>th</sup> Street and Germantown Avenue to the west, Lehigh Avenue to the north and the Delaware River to the east. The consolidation also afforded a new level of political and economic stability to the neighborhood, which both negated some of the existing stereotypes and led to a significant increase in development.

By the late 1860s, the ward divisions were again adjusted within the same boundaries. There were no changes to wards sixteen and seventeen, but the eastern portion of the nineteenth ward was incorporated into the eighteenth ward, which then extended north to Lehigh Avenue, and also used to create the thirty-first ward.<sup>xii</sup> Since that time, there have been no other changes to the ward boundaries within the period of significance.

As with most portions of Philadelphia, the development of Kensington initially began along the Delaware River and moved westward. This was understandable because, other than Baltimore, no city in the northeast “had such propitious physiographic circumstances for water power....”<sup>xiii</sup> The first areas to be densely developed were along Germantown and Frankford Avenues, as well as along Cohocksink and Aramingo Creeks. The eastern portion of the district, to the east of N. Front Street, had smaller commercial and residential enterprises beginning in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. It was not until the 1840s and 1850s that larger-scale development occurred in the western portion. This was largely because of the sale of large land-holding estates, including Richmond Hall, which was owned by William Ball, Batchelor’s Hall, which was owned by William Masters, and Fairhill, which was owned by Isaac Norris.<sup>xiv</sup> These dissolutions provided for larger, open lots, which allowed for industries of a more significant scale. The last large and intact parcel of land in northeast Philadelphia was the Leamy Estate located at the southeast corner of N. Front Street and Lehigh Avenue. It was sold in the late 1850s to the Episcopal Church for the construction of a hospital, the Episcopal Hospital, designed by Samuel Sloan,

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*and Incidents of the City and its Inhabitants, and of the Earliest Settlements of the Inland Part of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: E.S. Stuart, 1884), 479.

<sup>viii</sup> Catrambone and Silcox, 9. The initial settlers were mostly Scottish and Irish.

<sup>ix</sup> Ellis Paxson Oberholtzer, *Philadelphia: A History of the City and Its People* (Philadelphia: S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1912), 1:424. Old City, in contrast, had 13,241 buildings.

<sup>x</sup> The other townships were Penn, which contained the Spring Garden District, Roxborough, Germantown, Bristol, Oxford and Frankford.

<sup>xi</sup> Oberholtzer, 2:309.

<sup>xii</sup> The thirty-first ward is what is currently considered to be Fishtown.

<sup>xiii</sup> Malcolm Clendenin, *Building Industrial Philadelphia*, Thematic Context Statement (Philadelphia: Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia, 2009), 2.

<sup>xiv</sup> Remer, Rich. “Old Kensington.” <http://www.hsp.org/node/2994>. Accessed on January 27, 2012.

beginning in 1860.<sup>xv</sup> This expansion of the neighborhood also necessitated a comparable demand for transportation, which was in part answered by the introduction of two horse car lines along N. 3<sup>rd</sup> and N. 5<sup>th</sup> Streets, beginning in the late 1850s. While the densest period of development spanned ten or twelve years beginning in the early 1870s, the entire Kensington neighborhood was fully developed by 1900.<sup>xvi</sup>

The earliest inhabitants of Kensington were primarily immigrants of English, Scottish, or Irish descent. They had settled the area in small numbers from the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, when land was more affordable and available than in Philadelphia proper. In 1820, Kensington had a population of 7,259, only 141 of who were native-born. The vast majority of the population – approximately 86% at that time – was born in Ireland.<sup>xvii</sup> This characteristic was also typical of greater Philadelphia, which claimed to have the “purest Anglo-Saxon citizen body in the United States” at that time.<sup>xviii</sup>

The influx of English, Scottish, and Irish immigrants increased during the Industrial Revolution in Great Britain in the 1830s and 1840s.<sup>xix</sup> Finding themselves displaced by machinery, large numbers of skilled workers from all textile trades relocated to Philadelphia to ply their talents. This continued through the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century where, in 1906, 25% of the weavers in Philadelphia were from Great Britain.<sup>xx</sup>

One of the earliest industries in Kensington was shipbuilding, which was logical as the area had plenty of access to both wooded open space and the Delaware River.<sup>xxi</sup> In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a variety of manufacturing industries settled in Kensington, drawn by the open space and access to the Delaware River. The arrival of the railroads in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century spurred even more industrial development and led to the success of the shipbuilding, textile, carpet, tanning and leather-working industries, including the William Cramp Shipyard (Beach Street, Norris Street and Delaware River, partially demolished), the John B. Stetson Hat Company (a complex of two dozen buildings around E. 4<sup>th</sup> and Montgomery Streets, demolished), the Schoenhut Toy Factory (at the corner of Adams and Sepviva Streets, demolished), the Bromley Carpet Mills (201-263 East Lehigh Avenue, demolished), and Henry Disston’s Keystone Saw Works (Front and Canal Streets, demolished). While the buildings of these early prominent industry leaders have been lost, many other important resources remain.

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<sup>xv</sup> Richard Webster, *Philadelphia Preserved* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1976), 309.

<sup>xvi</sup> “Kensington.” <http://www.workshopoftheworld.com/kensington/kensington.html>. Accessed on December 1, 2011; Warner, 181.

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

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

<sup>xix</sup> The first Catholic Church in Northeast Philadelphia was in Kensington. St. Michaels was established in 1833. Warner, 315.

<sup>xx</sup> Rowland Berthoff, *British Immigrants in Industrial America, 1790-1950* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1953), 40. The industry relied on the British through the 1920s.

<sup>xxi</sup> “Old Kensington.”

## 2. Kensington and the Textile Industry

### *The Textile Industry in Philadelphia*

In order to understand the system of textile manufacture that was unique to Kensington, it is important to first place it within the greater context of textile manufacture throughout the City of Philadelphia.

The majority of early textile manufacturing in Philadelphia was concentrated in five areas of the city, a trend that continued from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The first place to develop industrial density was Manayunk, which is to the northwest and located on the Schuylkill River. This gave the site a notable advantage, as the water provided the early mills both power and transportation.<sup>xxii</sup> However, because of the relative remoteness from central Philadelphia and its lack of access to road or rail, Manayunk operated more as an independent enclave rather than a centralized hub.<sup>xxiii</sup> Kensington, in northeast Philadelphia and near the Delaware River, was the second area to emerge as a dense manufacturing district. It was comparable to Manayunk in terms of density and type of product, but covered a larger area and had more employees, mills and range of product. Its geographical location also provided several distinct advantages. The land itself consisted of large, open and elevated surfaces with good drainage, which “afford[ed] the best possible location for industrial establishments.”<sup>xxiv</sup> It was only two miles directly north of central Philadelphia and had water, road and rail access, which brought supplies in and finished goods out. Lastly, it had available land at affordable prices. Although light manufacturing occurred in Old City, farther south on the Delaware River, the area was heavily developed and did not have the available space for any manufacturing on a larger scale. Germantown, which is directly east of Manayunk, was developed shortly thereafter and, like Manayunk, was a self-contained community with invaluable access to waterpower from Wissahickon Creek. The communities known as Spring Garden and Frankford were the last industrial areas to be developed. Like Kensington, they afforded easy access to transport and to the city while offering available and affordable space. The city as a whole offered such a density and range of manufacturers, and possessed such natural, transportation, and other attributes for success, that one 1937 critic stated “ever since the production of manufactures on the American Continent, Philadelphia has held a high place in the manufacture of textiles.”<sup>xxv</sup>

In most of these areas, but particularly in Manayunk and Kensington, the textile industry was the dominant one, and was in fact so dominant that it was considered to be Philadelphia’s “first important industry.”<sup>xxvi</sup> Not only did it manufacture fundamental products, it also did not necessarily require an initial capital investment in buildings, machinery or training. In contrast to heavy metal production, for example, the early textile industry could subsist on individuals or families who worked out of their homes on their own equipment. The demand was constant and the possibility for starting a business and seeing it succeed was high. The only outlying issue was the ability to procure talented workers who did not need additional training. Meeting this challenge does not appear to have been difficult. As explained by John Lord Hayes, a local manufacturer, in 1876, “Philadelphia, with its cheap homes, its abundant and cheap market, and the faculty, which it seems to possess above all other cities, of appropriating the talents of the artisans which resort to it, is the paradise of the skilled workman.”<sup>xxvii</sup> And it must indeed have been considered a paradise, or at least the most preferable option, as hundreds of thousands of

<sup>xxii</sup> Weigley, 275. The benefit of the Schuylkill Falls was eventually moot once the industry was dominated by steam-powered machinery.

<sup>xxiii</sup> Manayunk is approximately ten miles from Philadelphia.

<sup>xxiv</sup> Lorin Blodgett, *Census of Manufacturers of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Dickson and Gilling, 1883), 76.

<sup>xxv</sup> Diplomatic and Consular Reports, *United States: Report for the Year 1900 on the Trade, et cetera, of Philadelphia*. No. 2612 Annual Series (London: Harrison and Sons, 1901), 17.

<sup>xxvi</sup> Federal Writers’ Project. *Philadelphia: A Guide to the Nation’s Birthplace* (Philadelphia: William Penn Association, 1937), 113.

<sup>xxvii</sup> John L. Hayes, 1876.

Irish, English, Scottish, and German immigrants flocked to Philadelphia in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, bringing their already-honed skills with them.<sup>xxviii</sup>

Not surprisingly, there is little information on the textile industry in Philadelphia or Kensington in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. A 1948 survey of Pennsylvania manufacturing notes the presence of cloth fulling mills in Philadelphia in 1720.<sup>xxix</sup> By 1764, the use of manufacturing cotton with power machinery in Philadelphia was one of the “most influential of the early movements to promote textile manufacturing.”<sup>xxx</sup> In 1772, John Hewson established the first calico printing business with a loan from the Pennsylvania Assembly.<sup>xxxi</sup> Hewson was considered to be a “pioneer” in the industry and made dresses for Martha Washington.<sup>xxxii</sup> In 1791, the first carpet manufacture in the United States was established by William Peter Sprague and the first textile mill was established by James Davenport in the future Globe Mill.<sup>xxxiii</sup> By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Philadelphia was prominent in the manufacture of thread, cotton, worsted, yarn, hosiery and textile tools and machinery.<sup>xxxiv</sup>

In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the textile industry in greater Philadelphia saw little development because of the “the primitive appliances for spinning, the scarcity of capital, the effects of the war of 1812, a low tariff and the numerous Indian and border troubles ....”<sup>xxxv</sup> However, there were numerous independent enterprises that saw this dearth in the market as an opportunity for development. In 1804, “the first mill of any considerable size to engage in textile manufacture [in Philadelphia] was [the Globe Mill,] established by Seth Craige at Germantown and W. Girard Avenues in Kensington.”<sup>xxxvi</sup> The site first housed Governor’s Mills, which was established by William Penn to grind grain around 1701. By 1824 the cotton mill had 300 employees, but it closed in 1852.<sup>xxxvii</sup> In 1808, the Philadelphia Manufacturers Society was established with a capital of \$50,000 to introduce various types of manufacturing methods and products, including broadcloths and twilled cotton sheeting. This was essentially accomplished by financing small, independent enterprises, including home-based operations and almshouses.<sup>xxxviii</sup> Although not a manufacturer itself, its founding indicates that the larger industry was both organized and well-funded enough to generate such a group. In 1815, William H. Horstmann established the first silk manufacture in the United States in Old City.<sup>xxxix</sup> In 1825, the first knitting mill was established in the Germantown neighborhood, simultaneously opening Philadelphia to another

<sup>xxviii</sup> Warner, 70.

<sup>xxix</sup> Sylvester Kirby Stevens, *Pennsylvania: Titan of Industry* (New York: Lew Historical Publishing Co., 1948), 89. Fulling is a specific method of manufacturing cloth.

<sup>xxx</sup> Perry Walton, *The Story Of Textiles: A Bird’s-Eye View of the History of the Beginning and the Growth of the Industry by which Mankind Is Clothed* (Boston: John S. Lawrence, 1912), 148.

<sup>xxxi</sup> Harold E. Gillingham, “Calico and Linen Printing in Philadelphia.” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 52:2 (April 1928), 98. The printing business was located at Beach Street, near Warren Street and the Aramingo Canal to ensure access to fresh water.

<sup>xxxii</sup> Stevens, 92.

<sup>xxxiii</sup> Watson and Hazard, 125; William R. Bagnall, *The Textile Industries of the United States, Including Sketches and Notices of Cotton, Woolen, Silk and Linen Manufactures in the Colonial Period, Volume I: 1639-1810* (Cambridge, MA: The Riverside Press, 1893), 224. The first carpet manufactured by Sprague was placed on the floor of the United States Senate. Diplomatic and Consular Reports, 18. Davenport received the first patent for textile machinery in the country, which was issued on February 14, 1794.

<sup>xxxiv</sup> Stevens, 92. Worsted wool is wool that has been well twisted, therefore making it more durable.

<sup>xxxv</sup> “The Carpet Industry of Philadelphia.” *Annual Report of the Secretary of Internal Affairs of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Part III, Industrial Statistics, Volume XVII* (Harrisburg, PA: Meyers, 1889), 4D.

<sup>xxxvi</sup> Globe Mill was powered by the adjacent Cohocksink Creek. Oberholtzer, 1:441.

<sup>xxxvii</sup> Oberholtzer, 1:441. There is no clear explanation as to why the mill closed.

<sup>xxxviii</sup> Oberholtzer, 1:443.

<sup>xxxix</sup> “The Development of the Silk Industry in the United States.” *Posselt’s Textile Journal* 7:5 (November 1910), 115.

industry and another industrial neighborhood. By the late 1820s, there were 104 textile mills in Philadelphia, which employed 9,500 people.<sup>xi</sup> In 1843, the first hosiery manufacture in Philadelphia was established by Martin Landenberg and, in 1850, the first patents for knitting machines in the United States were issued in Philadelphia.<sup>xii</sup>

It was into this ambitious environment that textile manufacture in Kensington first took root. In more established textile centers like New England, factories integrated all production activities under one management and one roof due to the availability of a substantial amount of initial capital to create both the business and the buildings.<sup>xiii</sup> In Kensington, however, a specialized cottage industry developed where thousands of workers capitalized on their individual and diverse skills to create “versatile, independent, partial-process firms... [that] relied on one another’s specialization for the completion of the total sequence of production steps.”<sup>xiiii</sup> For example, in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a spinning mill would send its spun yarn out to be dyed in an adjacent factory. The dye works would then transfer the dyed yarn to a carpet manufacturer. The manufacturer would outsource the carpet to a local craftsman who worked out of his home. The finished carpet would then be returned to the carpet factory where it would be shipped to the local box manufacturer and sold direct to a wholesaler, thus circumventing the national and regional distributors.<sup>xiv</sup> And all of this would occur within a five-block area.<sup>xv</sup>

These enterprises began with minimal capital investment, often out of homes or rented space and machinery was acquired gradually as finances allowed. As such, “diffusion of the industry in small establishments” became a “prominent characteristic of the Philadelphia [textile] manufacture.”<sup>xvi</sup> After the War of 1812, this system was “firmly ensconced” in Kensington and allowed for the growth of hundreds of small companies that “provided the encyclopedia of supplies and services which made highly specialized manufacture possible.”<sup>xvii</sup> The ability to produce this range of products was then sustained by “the economies and efficiencies of the densest concentration of manufacturing plants and skilled labor” in Philadelphia.<sup>xviii</sup>

This system of cottage manufacturing, with items made equally both inside and outside of the factory, was successful in that it easily adapted to the rapidly growing environment in which it existed. In 1820, Kensington had a population of 7,259 and, by 1830, it was approximately 16,000.<sup>xix</sup> These numbers, in terms of population, output of products and numbers of companies continued to grow through the end of the Civil War. During this period, Kensington had the highest value of product and largest workforce of any other township.<sup>1</sup> This density was focused in the 6<sup>th</sup> ward, which was bounded by Frankford Avenue and N. 2<sup>nd</sup>, N. Oxford and

<sup>xi</sup> Weigley, 275.

<sup>xii</sup> J. Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, *History of Philadelphia: 1609-1884, Volumes I-III*. (Philadelphia: L.H. Everts and Co., 1884), 2307; Scharf and Westcott, 2306.

<sup>xiii</sup> Philip Scranton, *The Philadelphia System of Textile Manufacture, 1884-1984* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia College of Textiles and Science, 1984), 7.

<sup>xiiii</sup> *The Philadelphia System of Textile Manufacture, 1884-1984, 7; The Philadelphia System of Textile Manufacture, 1884-1984, 28.*

<sup>xiv</sup> These textile related businesses, such as paper box manufactures, foundries and textile machine shops served as vital a function as those enterprises that manufactured textiles directly.

<sup>xv</sup> This format changed slightly as determined by each product. For example, cotton and wool yarns are dyed before they are assembled. Dress goods and trimmings, however, are assembled first and then shipped out for dyeing and returned. George Washington Engelhardt, *Philadelphia, Pa., the Book of its Bourse & Co-operating Public Bodies* (Philadelphia: Lippincott Press, 1898-1899), 370.

<sup>xvi</sup> John L. Hayes, 1876.

<sup>xvii</sup> Webster, 310; Warner, 179.

<sup>xviii</sup> Warner, 179.

<sup>xix</sup> *Kensington: A City within a City*, ix.

<sup>1</sup> Scharf and Westcott, 2236.

Franklin Streets.<sup>li</sup> In 1850, Kensington had 126 textile firms, or 39% of those in all of Philadelphia.<sup>liii</sup> In contrast, during that same year, Germantown had 35 textile firms, West Philadelphia had 15, South Philadelphia had 21, Manayunk had 24, Spring Garden had 34, Northeast Philadelphia had 12, Northern Liberties had 23 and Old City had 36.<sup>liiii</sup>

### 3. The Development of Kensington's Textile Production Facilities

#### *The Kensington System*

By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the textile industry in greater Philadelphia achieved an unprecedented level of prominence and earned its title as the "world's largest and most diversified textile center."<sup>liv</sup> In 1850, the value of textile manufacture was \$65 million with 326 textile firms and 12,369 employees. By 1855, the value of textile fabric in Philadelphia was more than that of all the city and state of New York and more fabric was produced here than in any other city in the United States.<sup>lv</sup> The top five industries in Philadelphia in 1855 were textile production, valued at \$23,561,568, iron and steel, valued at \$14,775,213, clothing and apparel, valued at \$21,415,701, wood, valued at \$6,153,715 and publishing and bookbinding, valued at \$6,444,403.<sup>lvi</sup> These figures clearly illustrate why Philadelphia, at this time, was considered to be "the center of a greater number of factories for textile fabrication than any other city in the world."<sup>lvii</sup>

Under "textile production," cotton, including printed cloth and yarn, was the highest valued of these with 101 manufacturers and 6,449 employees producing goods valued at \$5,879,963.<sup>lviii</sup> The value of mixed cotton and wool products was \$5,698,776, produced by 66 manufacturers with 3,434 employees.<sup>lix</sup> Print and dye works were valued at \$3,888,888, produced by 35 manufacturers with 895 employees.<sup>lx</sup> This breakdown of number of manufacturers and employees and value of products is helpful to determine not only the importance of each product, but also the amount of skill required to produce them. For example, although there are only one-third as many print and dye works as cotton manufacturers, each establishment yields a far higher value of product. This was likely because the work of the printers and dyers was valued more highly than the average cotton manufacturer and the products were valued accordingly. The above categories, as well as the remaining categories of textile and clothing manufactures in the census, are as follows:

<sup>li</sup> Philip Scranton, *Proprietary Capitalism: The Textile Manufacture at Philadelphia, 1800-1885* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 198.

<sup>lii</sup> *Proprietary Capitalism: The Textile Manufacture at Philadelphia, 1800-1885*, 182. That same year, the population of Kensington was 46,744 or approximately 11% of the total Philadelphia population of 408,762. Blodgett, 196.

<sup>liiii</sup> *Proprietary Capitalism: The Textile Manufacture at Philadelphia, 1800-1885*, 182.

<sup>liv</sup> Weigley, 482

<sup>lv</sup> Philadelphia Board of Trade, *Manufactures of Philadelphia: Census of 1860* (Philadelphia: Collins Printing, 1861), 3.

<sup>lvi</sup> Philadelphia Board of Trade, 15-20. Further examination of the "textile production" and "clothing and apparel" categories reveals the sub-categories of production within this larger group. These vary throughout the research, but examples include cotton, cotton and wool, wool, hosiery, carpets, silks, dyers, dry goods, twine and nets, hair cloth, print and dye works, proper clothing for men, women and children and miscellaneous clothing, such as hats, gloves and umbrellas.

<sup>lvii</sup> Stevens, 326.

<sup>lviii</sup> Philadelphia Board of Trade, 15.

<sup>lix</sup> Philadelphia Board of Trade, 15.

<sup>lx</sup> Philadelphia Board of Trade, 15

	# of Companies	# of Employees	Value
Cotton	101	6,449	\$5,879,963
Mixed cotton and wool	66	3,434	\$5,698,776
Print and dye works	35	895	\$3,888,888
Carpets	124	2,680	\$2,915,618
Wool	32	1,181	\$2,277,525
Silk (mills, trimmings, finishers)	44	1,564	\$1,933,725
Hosiery (cotton, wool, zephyrs)	102	2,673	\$1,882,745
Dyers	35	240	\$801,588
Hair cloth	3	110	\$102,040
Dry goods (finishers)	3	32	\$82,000
Twine and nets	3	33	\$13,100

Table 1

According to the Census of 1860, the total value of textile manufacture had grown to \$135 million with 464 firms and 18,521 employees.<sup>lxi</sup> This was an extraordinary level of growth in a relatively short period and attests to not only the strength but also to the long-term viability of the textile industry in Philadelphia. It is also interesting to note that, between 1850 and 1860, the average number of employees only increased by two, from 38 to 40.<sup>lxii</sup> These numbers have twofold significance. First, they indicate that it was not that the method of manufacture had undergone any significant change but merely that the volume that had grown. Second, they reinforce the presence of the cottage industry in Philadelphia. Unlike in Lowell and other manufacturing cities, which had enormous factories with all operations under one roof, those in Philadelphia were typically smaller enterprises with each portion of the process being completed in a different location, often at home on personally owned equipment.<sup>lxiii</sup> Even as the industry grew and began to dominate the national stage, this pattern continued through the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 1857, there were 4,700 handlooms in Philadelphia, which were operated by 15,000 people.<sup>lxiv</sup> A recorded 2,000 looms were used to produce carpets, 2,000 were for general textile manufacture and 700 were for hosiery manufacture.<sup>lxv</sup> Consequently, Philadelphia was the “great seat of handloom manufacturing and weaving in America.”<sup>lxvi</sup>

The productivity of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century came not only from what was produced, but also from Philadelphia’s ability to stay competitive with other regions, namely New England. One such advantage was gained during the Civil War, when the northeast was unable to get the same quantity and quality of raw materials as Philadelphia. It also did not have the same density of military outposts, such as depots and arsenals, and therefore not the same amount of local demand.<sup>lxvii</sup> As such, Philadelphia was able to offset any decline in workforce or productivity, in direct contrast to other manufacturing areas.

Another approach to local sustainability was through the Philadelphia Textile School, which was founded in 1884 by prominent local manufacturers, including Dolan, Dobson, Stetson, Arrott, Bromley and Butterworth.<sup>lxviii</sup> After the Centennial Exposition in 1876, it was felt that the United

<sup>lxi</sup> *Proprietary Capitalism: The Textile Manufacture at Philadelphia, 1800-1885*, 47.

<sup>lxii</sup> *Proprietary Capitalism: The Textile Manufacture at Philadelphia, 1800-1885*, 47.

<sup>lxiii</sup> This was in contrast to the method throughout much of New England where steam power was used in large factories.

<sup>lxiv</sup> Weigley, 326. Because of their expense and size, family members or neighbors often shared looms.

<sup>lxv</sup> Weigley, 326. Handlooms were the typical method for home production.

<sup>lxvi</sup> Weigley, 326.

<sup>lxvii</sup> *The Philadelphia System of Textile Manufacture, 1884-1984*, 7.

<sup>lxviii</sup> Stevens, 1336.

States had inferior textile products to those produced in Europe. The institution, which was the first of its kind in the country, was essentially a trade school intended to train unskilled or lesser-skilled workers to manufacture a higher level of product. The textile mills were not wholly dependent on these trainees, however, but could also rely on its foreign-born workers who settled in Philadelphia with a deep-rooted and impressive skill set. This again was an advantage over the textile factories of New England, which were typically filled by native-born employees who needed to be trained. Because Philadelphia workers needed less training on the whole, prices and products could therefore be competitive within the larger East Coast market.<sup>lxix</sup>

In order to appropriately understand the enormity of the textile and textile-related industries in Philadelphia at this time, it is important to know the range of specific products that fall within these parameters. Unlike New England, which primarily manufactured staple goods, such as cotton sheeting print and broad cloths and blankets, Philadelphia primarily produced specialty goods, such as lace, carpets and upholsteries.<sup>lxx</sup> In an 1898 publication, a *partial* list of product types as compiled from local trade directories. The list is as follows:

woolen and worsted dress goods, worsted suitings and trouserings, wool cassimere, chinchillas and overcoatings, cheviots, shirtings and flannels, cheeks and cottonades, chambrays, gingham, plaids, tickings, linseys, doeskins, cotton and linen velour, cotton dress goods, umbrella goods, sponge cloth, beavers, mohairs, worsted and cotton plushes, ladies' cloakings, summer coatings, astrakan and imitation furs, hosiery and knits goods, gloves and mittens, cotton hosiery, merino hosiery, fancy knit woolens, jerseys, sweaters, cardigan jackets, hand-knit zephyr goods, French balbriggan underwear, fleece-lined underwear, jersey cloth, jersey flannel, Swiss ribbed vests, cashmere mittens, Shetland shawls, sporting knit goods, stockinets, full-fashioned lisle threads and cotton hosiery, cotton and woolen seamless cut hosiery, surgical and elastic hosiery, cotton plaited ribbed underwear, silk and worsted mitts, rag carpets, rag carpets warps, upholstery goods, tapestries, lambrequins, portieres, serpentine and chenille curtains, cotton summer curtains, Turcoman curtains, silk upholstery goods, upholstery coverings, hair cloth, light-weight silk draperies, lace curtains, damask tapestry covers, turkey-red cloths, cotton table damask, table diaper, Turkish towels, terry cloths, crochet quilts, honeycomb quilts, Marseilles and Jacquard quilts, toilet quilts, crochet shawls, shoulder shawls, soft and glazed thread, tidies, cotton and worsted lace, wool, cotton and merino yarns, cotton hosiery yarns, knitting yarns, woolen carpet and backing yarn, cotton and jute mixed carpet yarns, shelia and knickerbocker yarns, luster coatings, mohair and alpaca brilliantines, mohair yarns for the plush and braid trade, jute yarns, Moresque yarns, cotton and silk noils, furniture gimp, alpaca braids, tapes and bindings, counterpanes, coverlets, horse blankets, covers and lap robes, seamless cotton bags, linen twine, cotton rope, harness twine, cotton binding, hammocks, school bags, horse netting, window screen cloth, elastic and non-elastic wedding and bindings, insulated electric wire, cotton batting and wool and cotton waste.<sup>lxxi</sup>

Not only are a number of these items so specific as to have been subsequently rendered completely obsolete, but they also attest to the range of items produced and to the high skill level of those who produced them. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, any textile good that one could conceive of desiring was made in Philadelphia.

When describing the textile industry in greater Philadelphia at this time, it is important to remember that over half of it was located in Kensington. Consequently, Kensington is repeatedly and endlessly given effective descriptors such as the "textile enclave," "little England," "rug, carpet and textile capital of the world," "heart of the textile district," "regional

<sup>lxix</sup> Warner, 70.

<sup>lxx</sup> *The Philadelphia System of Textile Manufacture, 1884-1984*, 6.

<sup>lxxi</sup> Engelhardt, 325-333.

textile nexus,” “focal point of the textile industry,” and “greatest textile manufacturing center in the world.”<sup>lxxii</sup> While these might perhaps seem hyperbolic or superlative, they attest to the tremendous importance of the industry and the role it played in Kensington.

Beginning in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, textiles dominated Kensington, with metalworking being its only, and far secondary, competitor.<sup>lxxiii</sup> This was also the period of the most significant growth for the industry as individual workers, formalized companies and the industry as a whole settled into a steady routine of supply and demand. This resulted not only in the establishment of the majority of the larger firms but also the doubling of both the workforce and production between 1869 and 1882.<sup>lxxiv</sup>

This expansion resulted in hundreds of textile and textile-related companies by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Of the most prominent industries, the following table illustrates the range, size and value of products that were found in Kensington in 1882.<sup>lxxv</sup>

	# of Companies	# of Employees	Value
Carpet	175	7,502	\$13,812,050
Wool	65	5,712	\$13,791,000
Hosiery	66	6,576	\$7,375,000
Cotton	51	3,087	\$4,461,200
Silk	24	1,439	\$2,951,500

**Table 2**

When compared with the table from the 1860 census (Table 1) that evaluated all of Philadelphia, the staggering growth in the numbers is evident. In 1882, the value of wool and carpets in Kensington was nearly five times what it was in all of Philadelphia in 1860. The value of hosiery nearly quadrupled and the value of cotton and silk were comparable between the two censuses. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, there was no question as to the dominance of the textile industry in Philadelphia and the position of Kensington as its leader.

But perhaps the best way to appreciate the impact of the Kensington manufacturers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century is to adapt and apply the superlative method mentioned above. For approximately fifty years, Kensington annually produced 4,800,000 felt hats; 12,000,000 dozen hose; 2,000,000 dozen undershirts and underwear; 28,000,000 million yards of woolen goods; 34,000,000 million yards of worsted goods; 2,860,000 pairs of curtains; and 180,000,000 million yards of cotton piece goods.<sup>lxxvi</sup> Within its boundaries were the largest hat, lace and carpet factories in the world, in terms of both square footage and volume of production and Kensington had no equal in terms of density of factories, range of product, volume of product, or number of employees.<sup>lxxvii</sup> A late 19<sup>th</sup> century critic painted an accurate portrait when he stated that “none

<sup>lxxii</sup> Weigley, 482; Weigley 488; “Philadelphia, The World’s Textile Capital.” *Philadelphia Public Ledger, Advertising and Selling – Convention Issue* (July 1916), 57; *The Philadelphia System of Textile Manufacture, 1884-1984*, 16; *Figured Tapestry*, 117; Engelhardt, 332.

<sup>lxxiii</sup> Blodgett, 77.

<sup>lxxiv</sup> For a comprehensive review of Kensington manufactures, see *Workshop of the World: A Selective Guide to the Industrial Archeology of Philadelphia by the Oliver Evans Chapter of the Society for Industrial Archeology* (Wallingford, PA: The Oliver Evans Press, 1990); Blodgett, 156.

<sup>lxxv</sup> Blodgett, 68 and 77. These numbers also include the 20<sup>th</sup> ward, which was west of Kensington and largely residential. As such the numbers are essentially reflective of Kensington. The high value of wool is understandable as 20% of all domestic and imported wool in the United States went to Kensington in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Weigley, 482.

<sup>lxxvi</sup> Morgan, 248.

<sup>lxxvii</sup> Morgan, 248; Stevens, 248; Stevens, 325; Weigley, 533.

are of like size in the world that presents such a scene of industry as the Kensington District of Philadelphia.”<sup>lxxviii</sup>

### *Industrial Focus – The Carpet Industry*

One of the most important manufactures in Kensington during the period of significance was the carpet industry. Carpets were known as “Philadelphia’s pride” and Kensington was Philadelphia’s “great carpet center.”<sup>lxxix</sup> In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, 7,500 of the 10,000 yards of carpet produced in the United States were produced in Kensington and no where else in the city of Philadelphia.<sup>lxxx</sup> This concentration was continued in the next few decades and strengthened with the influx of skilled immigrants. Usually from England, Northern Ireland or Scotland, “the carpet weavers quickly showed their desire to be near each other and Kensington became their favorite seat of operations.”<sup>lxxxii</sup> Their journey was also hastened by the increased industrialization in Great Britain, which essentially made their skill set obsolete and forced their relocation en masse beginning in the 1830s.<sup>lxxxii</sup>

In the earliest carpet factories, owners gave pre-dyed yarns to people who worked out of their attics or sheds on two or three handlooms and on commission.<sup>lxxxiii</sup> Every few days a carpet would be completed, and it would be delivered to the local factory as a final product.<sup>lxxxiv</sup> These carpets were typically either wholly ingrain carpets or other simple forms produced on handlooms.<sup>lxxxv</sup> Although similar products were manufactured in Hartford, CT, and Lowell, MA, Kensington had “not merely goods of finer quality than elsewhere, but very excellent qualities of cheaper ingrains and stair carpets, which the country greatly needed.”<sup>lxxxvi</sup> Consequently, ingrain carpet became “the first important product of Philadelphia in floor coverings... [and] remained, for a long period, the one great staple of Philadelphia’s carpet industry.”<sup>lxxxvii</sup>

The second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the largest growth in the Kensington carpet industry and carpets became the primary industry in terms of number of establishments, employees and value, producing approximately 40,000,000 yards of rugs and carpets each year.<sup>lxxxviii</sup>

In 1860, all of Philadelphia had 124 manufacturers with 2,680 employees on 1,900 handlooms and a value of \$2,915,618.<sup>lxxxix</sup> The largest mill in Philadelphia, which was located in Kensington, had 150 handlooms at that time.<sup>xc</sup> In 1882, Kensington had 175 carpet manufacturers with 7,502 employees on 4,329 handlooms and a value of \$13,812,050.<sup>xci</sup> In 1896, Kensington produced \$21,210,076 worth of carpets on 3,135 power looms and 1,500 hand looms with 11,699 employees and had more mills than in all of the United States and

<sup>lxxviii</sup> Engelhardt, 332.

<sup>lxxix</sup> Weigley, 482; Weigley, 326.

<sup>lxxx</sup> *Kensington: A City within a City*, ix.

<sup>lxxxii</sup> “The Carpet Industry of Philadelphia,” D4.

<sup>lxxxiii</sup> *Manufacturing in Philadelphia, 1683-1912*, 22; Blodgett, 156.

<sup>lxxxiv</sup> “Kensington.”

<sup>lxxxv</sup> “The Carpet Industry of Philadelphia,” D5.

<sup>lxxxvi</sup> Blodgett 156.

<sup>lxxxvii</sup> “The Carpet Industry of Philadelphia,” D6. Ingrain carpets are reversible carpets made from pre-dyed fibers. Consequently, they are one of the least expensive types.

<sup>lxxxviii</sup> “The Carpet Industry of Philadelphia,” D9.

<sup>lxxxix</sup> Morgan, 248.

<sup>xc</sup> Blodgett, 156.

<sup>xci</sup> “The Carpet Industry of Philadelphia,” D6.

<sup>xcii</sup> Blodgett, 66 and 77. There were approximately 200 carpet factories in the whole of the country at this time. “The Carpet Industry of Philadelphia,” D29.

Great Britain combined.<sup>xcii</sup> The entire remainder of Philadelphia only produced another \$3,964,981 worth of carpets with 2,232 employees.<sup>xciii</sup>

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Kensington produced approximately 50% of the carpets in the United States, which were valued at nearly \$25 million.<sup>xciv</sup> After World War I however, changing tastes and disposable incomes caused a significant decline in the carpet industry. Approximately 11,000 workers, which represented one-third of Kensington's workforce, shifted to hosiery manufacture, which was similar enough to employ the same skill set while having a much more positive outlook for growth.<sup>xcv</sup>

Like the rest of the textile industries, the general category of carpets had a number of sub-categories, each with a very specific use. The most expensive type of carpet was a Wilton carpet, which was typically used in public spaces, such as parlors or front halls.<sup>xcvi</sup> The next grade of carpet was a Brussels carpet, which was typically used in more private spaces, such as bedrooms.<sup>xcvii</sup> Although their names referred to their original countries of origin, the Wilton and Brussels carpets produced in Kensington were "the finest grade of carpets in America."<sup>xcviii</sup> Other types of luxurious carpets included tapestry velvet, which was made like a Brussels carpet but had a longer pile to resemble a Wilton carpet, damask Venetian, which was an inexpensive carpet that was usually striped and used in passageways, Oriental carpets, which had a dense pile and an elaborate pattern, and Smyrna carpets, which had a long heavy pile and were most commonly used in hotel lobbies.<sup>xcix</sup> Of this latter category, one contemporary observer stated that Kensington "practically controls the markets of the world in Smyrna rugs."<sup>c</sup>

Middle class households purchased ingrain carpets, which were reversible carpets made from pre-dyed fibers. Within ingrain carpets, the types ranged from cotton chain to half wool to extra super, from least expensive to most expensive.<sup>ci</sup> The least expensive type of carpets was rag carpets, which were essentially assembled from scraps.

The most important single carpet manufacturer in Kensington, and perhaps the world, was John Bromley and Sons. Founded in Kensington in 1845 with a single handloom, the company moved to their permanent site at E. York and Jasper Streets in 1860 (Inventory #33).<sup>cii</sup> They began manufacturing stout ingrain and Venetian carpets for Bailey Brothers, who were wholesale distributors.<sup>ciii</sup> Under the name Albion Carpet Mill, the company employed 150 men and fifty women with an annual production value of \$400,000.<sup>civ</sup> In the mid-1880s, they

<sup>xcii</sup> Engelhardt, 333; "A Great Strike Threatened." In the entire United States there were only 4,790 ingrain power looms in all. Engelhardt, 336-338.

<sup>xciii</sup> Engelhardt, 333.

<sup>xciv</sup> Diplomatic and Consular Reports, 17; *Manufacturing in Philadelphia, 1683-1912*, 9.

<sup>xcv</sup> "Kensington." Hosiery manufacture also had the advantage of being produced almost exclusively on powered looms beginning in 1898. This significantly decreased both the time and expense of production. *Work Sights: Industrial Philadelphia, 1890-1950*, 103; *Workshop of the World: A Selective Guide to the Industrial Archeology of Philadelphia by the Oliver Evans Chapter of the Society for Industrial Archeology*, 5-4, 5-5.

<sup>xcvi</sup> Wilton carpets are woven of wool on a Jacquard loom with cut loops that form a dense velvet-like surface.

<sup>xcvii</sup> Brussels carpets are similar to Wilton carpets but the loops are not cut.

<sup>xcviii</sup> Engelhardt, 338.

<sup>xcix</sup> Engelhardt, 336-338.

<sup>c</sup> Engelhardt, 338.

<sup>ci</sup> Engelhardt, 335.

<sup>cii</sup> Charles Robson, ed., *The Manufactories and Manufacturers of Pennsylvania of the Nineteenth Century* (Philadelphia: Galaxy Publishing Co., 1875), 219.

<sup>ciii</sup> Robson, 219.

<sup>civ</sup> Robson, 219.

expanded again with a second factory complex located at 201-263 E. Lehigh Avenue resulting in what was the “largest rug and carpet complex in the world by the turn of the century” with 475,566 square feet.<sup>cv</sup>

Other prominent manufacturers included Bromley Brothers, who were the aforementioned sons of John Bromley and established their own company in 1868.<sup>cvi</sup> The factory burned completely in 1871 and was rebuilt shortly thereafter with a manufacturing building, dye house, drying house, boiler rooms and a picking building. They employed 135 males, fifty females and produced \$500,000 worth of carpeting a year. The company also had the exclusive rights to “patent imperial damask.”<sup>cvi</sup>

The Monitor Carpet Mills, another notable firm, was established in 1863 and moved to W. Oxford and N. Howard Streets in 1866. One of the first manufacturers to use steam looms, it employed 135 men, 45 women producing 650,000 yards of carpeting per year.<sup>cvi</sup>

The Oxford Carpet Mills was established in 1832 and moved to W. Oxford and N. Howard Streets in 1850. One of the biggest factories of its type in the country, it had an annual production value of \$300,000 and shipped throughout the United States.<sup>cix</sup> The proximal location of these latter companies lead to the statement that the intersection of W. Oxford and N. Howard Streets was the “earliest seat of the ingrain carpet industry” in the United States.<sup>cx</sup>

### *Kensington in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*

By the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the number of textile manufactures in greater Philadelphia had grown to 1,349, nearly three times what it had been in 1860.<sup>cx</sup> The number of people employed at these establishments was 80,150, nearly five times that of 1860 and accounting for 35% of the city’s 229,000 total workers.<sup>cxii</sup> These impressive numbers helped to maintain the position of the industry as one of the largest in Philadelphia in terms of the amount of capital investment, number of establishments and number of employees.<sup>cxiii</sup>

Philadelphia was also able to maintain a diversity of products at this time. Although the manufacture of cotton goods declined after 1900 because of the growth of comparable factories in the south, Philadelphia had the highest product value in the country in hosiery and knits, carpets, hats, textile dyeing and finishing, shoddy and upholstery.<sup>cxiv</sup> It also produced one-third of all silk made in the United States and five out of nine of the exclusive lace mills in the United States.<sup>cxv</sup> In 1909, Philadelphia textiles were valued at \$153 million, more than twice that of its next closest competitor, which was Lawrence, MA, whose products were only valued at \$70

<sup>cv</sup> Webster, 317. The architect of the earliest portion of the building was likely Walter Harvey Geissinger, the “city’s leading industrial architect.” Webster, 317. Geissinger (1859-1950) worked for the predecessor to Ballinger Co. and almost exclusively designed industrial buildings in northeast Philadelphia.

<sup>cvi</sup> Robson, 42. The brothers were James, Thomas and George Day.

<sup>cvi</sup> Robson, 42.

<sup>cvi</sup> Robson, 78.

<sup>cix</sup> Robson, 39.

<sup>cx</sup> Blodgett, 66.

<sup>cx</sup> Stevens, 248.

<sup>cxii</sup> Stevens, 325.

<sup>cxiii</sup> Weigley, 481.

<sup>cxiv</sup> Weigley, 533; *Manufacturing in Philadelphia, 1683-1912*, 12. Kensington compensated for this decline by focusing on more specialty and higher-end items, which eventually received international attention.

Willits, 29. Shoddy goods are those manufactured from the byproducts of other items.

<sup>cxv</sup> Stevens, 324.

million.<sup>cxvi</sup> Its value was three times that of New York City and Paterson, NJ.<sup>cxvii</sup> A 1912 survey of industrial Philadelphia referred to it as “the largest textile city in the world.”<sup>cxviii</sup> While such a statement might be considered hyperbole in another context, its validity is undeniable and should be understood as an accurate assessment of a remarkable period of Philadelphia history.

In Kensington, the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century followed much the same pattern as that of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The only significant change was the role played by the labor unions. While the nature of the industry made their creation necessary, the nature of Kensington allowed them to develop and prosper. This was in part because as all of the workers lived adjacent to the factories and neither they nor their employers had an easy ability to look elsewhere for work or workers. Moreover, as the vast majority of the companies were independent, there were no outside resources for them to rely upon. Unions consequently took advantage of this captive audience and held strikes in 1903, 1910, 1917, 1919, 1921, 1922, 1931 and 1934.<sup>cxix</sup> By the 1920s, the hosiery workers union was so powerful that it ensured the Kensington workers had the highest industry salary in the entire country.<sup>cxx</sup>

The first significant manufacturing shift in Kensington was just prior to World War I when factories began receiving orders, not for curtains and carpets, but for blankets, sweaters and underwear, which would be more useful to mobilized troops. These contracts were made not only with the United States government, but also with the British, French, Russian and Italian governments.<sup>cxxi</sup>

Once the war had ended and the contracts were no longer needed, a substantial vacuum was created in Kensington’s industrial sector. In an attempt to recover from this, the Philadelphia Textile Manufacturers Association was established in 1920 to “benefit and develop the textile industry in the city of Philadelphia and vicinity.”<sup>cxxii</sup> This was generally considered to be a successful effort as the late 1920s has Kensington with 350 textile mills operated by 35,000 employees.<sup>cxxiii</sup> This upturn was once again scuttled by the arrival of the Depression, which understandably had a significant impact on the strength of the industry. This was reinforced by the fact, which previously had been considered to be such an asset, that all of the entities were so interdependent. Once one collapsed, there was nothing to support the remaining one(s).

In 1933, however, industry saving measures subsequently arrived. The National Industrial Recovery Act, created under the New Deal, was written in two sections, the first of which essentially created the Works Progress Administration. The second portion concerned industrial growth and “authorized the promulgation of industrial codes of fair competition, guaranteed trade union rights [and] permitted the regulation of working standards...”<sup>cxxiv</sup> This brief revival was tempered by the fact that, by 1934, the “textile empire” of Kensington was only half of what

<sup>cxvi</sup> Woolen and worsted goods accounted for \$54.9 million of this. *Manufacturing in Philadelphia, 1683-1912*, 9.

<sup>cxvii</sup> *Manufacturing in Philadelphia, 1683-1912*, 14.

<sup>cxviii</sup> *Manufacturing in Philadelphia, 1683-1912*.

<sup>cxix</sup> *Work Sights: Industrial Philadelphia, 1890-1950*, 65.

<sup>cxx</sup> *The Philadelphia System of Textile Manufacture, 1884-1984*, 16.

<sup>cxxi</sup> “Philadelphia Mills Given Large Orders for Armies.” *New York Times* (18 October 1914), 10.

<sup>cxxii</sup> Stevens, 594.

<sup>cxxiii</sup> *Workshop of the World: A Selective Guide to the Industrial Archeology of Philadelphia by the Oliver Evans Chapter of the Society for Industrial Archeology* (Wallingford, PA: The Oliver Evans Press, 1990), 5-5; “Beatty’s Mills,” 8:5. There were 850 textile mills in greater Philadelphia.

<sup>cxxiv</sup> “National Industrial Recovery Act.” [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National\\_Industrial\\_Recovery\\_Act](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Industrial_Recovery_Act). Accessed on January 27, 2012.

it was during its peak after World War I.<sup>cxxv</sup> In 1940, Kensington had only 265 remaining textile firms.<sup>cxxvi</sup> Although World War II, provided another form of temporary industrial relief, the post-war years saw an increasing dispersion and, by the end of the 1960s, Kensington had only seventy-five remaining textile businesses.<sup>cxxvii</sup>

This exodus was supported by numerous factors, most of which related to the new vision of industrial and residential America. Giant corporations were seen as advantageous for their ability to conduct research, develop products on efficient assembly lines, build modern, suburban complexes and outsource labor to southern states at cheaper costs. They also were less reliant on the unions that dominated Philadelphia and were increasingly seen as a hindrance to maximizing business. Consequently, both the factory model and the factory itself became wholly obsolete and the textile industry succumbed to large-scale producers of standardized threads and fabrics (and clothing) operating in increasingly modernized facilities in low-wage areas of the country, namely the South.<sup>cxxviii</sup>

This notion was paralleled by the growing realization that city living was no longer the only option for the middle classes. As suburban life became more economically feasible, the accessibility of a new house with a grassy lawn and a shiny car far surpassed the faded glory of the factory town.<sup>cxxix</sup> This decline continued through the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and, today, little of the vibrancy and neighborhood cohesion remains. What has lasted, however, are the monumental structures dedicated to industry and productivity, enduring testaments to a once vital "city within a city."<sup>cxxx</sup>

#### 4. Associated Industries and Businesses

In addition to the larger textile-specific production industries, there were also numerous supporting industries, such as packaging plants, waste factories and machine shops, and industry-related commercial entities reflected by office buildings, banks, or other buildings. The other industrial facilities operated in much the same manner as the textile-specific industries and were similarly completely interdependent. They also were of the same general scale and appearance as the more standard textile buildings. The only significant addition to these associated factories is that, depending on the type of production, a foundry building might also be included on the site.

According to the census of 1882, several of these industries are specifically listed as being "leading establishments" of Kensington. The Quaker City Dye Works are listed as dyers and finishers with 235 employees and "powerful machinery" (Inventory #8). T.A. Harris is listed as a dye works with seventy employees and located at 147 Thompson Street. R.E. Bender is listed under embroidery with twenty employees and located at 304 Master Street. John J. Glazier and Brother is also listed under embroidery and located on Taylor Street between Jasper Street and Kensington Avenue.<sup>cxxxi</sup>

The census of 1882 also lists twenty-one textile machinery manufacturers and thirty-four dye works, dyers and finishers, including H.W. Butterworth and Sons, located at 2410 E. York Street

<sup>cxxv</sup> *Figured Tapestry*, 466.

<sup>cxxvi</sup> *Workshop of the World: A Selective Guide to the Industrial Archeology of Philadelphia* by the Oliver Evans Chapter of the Society for Industrial Archeology, 5-5.

<sup>cxxvii</sup> "Beatty's Mills," 8:5.

<sup>cxxviii</sup> Walter Licht, *Getting Work: Philadelphia, 1840-1950* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999): 11.

<sup>cxxix</sup> Clendenin, 4.

<sup>cxxx</sup> Engelhardt, 332.

<sup>cxxxi</sup> Blodgett, 67 and 78.

with 132 employees (Inventory #24) and Firth Brothers and Company, located at Emerald and Adams Streets with 165 employees.<sup>cxxxii</sup>

Another type of industry-related resource and the most significant of these, in terms of financial impact, were the local banks. The most prominent of these was the Textile National Bank of Philadelphia, which was established in 1904 at Kensington Avenue and E. Huntingdon Street (Inventory #38). It was the only known bank in the world “for the special convenience of textile manufacturers.”<sup>cxxxiii</sup> It was organized because of then-current trade conditions and the need for a more convenient neighborhood bank. Its first president, John H. Bromley, stated that, “in the textile trade longtime accommodations are essential, and the varying prices of cotton and cotton products seem to make it imperative that men personally conversant with the peculiarities of the trade should figure as controlling factors in the financing of the business . . . . The new bank will make a specialty of textile trade accounts.”<sup>cxxxiv</sup> The Kensington National Bank was established in 1826 on Beach Street to “serve the local purposes of that thriving industrial neighborhood (Inventory #1).”<sup>cxxxv</sup> In 1877, the bank constructed a new building at Frankford and W. Girard Avenue, which was designed by Frank Furness. The Eighth National Bank was established at N. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and W. Girard Avenue in 1870 (Inventory #1). Five of its eleven board members were directly involved in the textile industry. The Ninth National Bank was established in 1885 at N. Front and Norris Streets (Inventory #19). Ten of its thirteen board members were directly involved in the textile industry.<sup>cxxxvi</sup> The Industrial Trust, Title and Savings Company was established in conjunction with and located adjacent to the Ninth National Bank (Inventory #22). The two institutions officially merged in 1923.

## 5. Trade and Labor Unions

In order to accommodate the growth of the industry, nearly 30% of the total population of Kensington, or 30,000 people, was professionally engaged in textile manufacturing.<sup>cxxxvii</sup> In 1893, Kensington had 351, or 56% of the textile firms in all of Philadelphia. Germantown had 60, Manayunk had 39, Frankford had 38, North Philadelphia had 44, South and West Philadelphia had 37, Old City had 25 and Northern Liberties had 31.<sup>cxxxviii</sup> Not only does this illustrate the continued prominence and tremendous growth of Kensington when compared with the previously referenced statistics from 1850, but it also indicates a shift in manufacturing in the remainder of Philadelphia. Germantown experienced limited growth with an increase of 25 establishments, Old City and Manayunk declined considerably and South, West and North Philadelphia maintained similar numbers.

This dense concentration of workers associated with the textile and textile-related industries naturally led to both informal and formal outlets for fraternization. Within larger companies, mill owners would typically hire from within their own cultural groups and factories “were legendary for their fraternal structure perpetuated by that shared cultural framework.”<sup>cxxxix</sup> This camaraderie was perpetuated by that fact that males accounted for 60% percent of the

<sup>cxxxii</sup> Blodgett, 150 and 172.

<sup>cxxxiii</sup> “Manufacturing in Philadelphia.” *The Textile American* 3:6 (June 1905), 12; “Textile Bank for Philadelphia Textile Manufacturers.” *Textile World Record* 27:5 (August 1904), 177. The building was completed in 1909.

<sup>cxxxiv</sup> “Textile Bank for Philadelphia Textile Manufacturers.” John H. Bromley founded Bromley and Sons Mill, one of the largest carpet mills in the world.

<sup>cxxxv</sup> Oberholtzer, 2:184.

<sup>cxxxvi</sup> *Figured Tapestry*, 90-93.

<sup>cxxxvii</sup> Blodgett, 64 and 77; “A Great Strike Threatened.” *The New York Times* (20 February 1893): 1.

<sup>cxxxviii</sup> *Figured Tapestry*, 120.

<sup>cxxxix</sup> “Beatty’s Mills.” *National Register of Historic Places* (August 2004), 8:4.

workforce in Kensington's mid-19<sup>th</sup> century mills.<sup>cxl</sup> Due to the size and shape of the handlooms, they were difficult for women and children to operate, thus relegating them to secondary duties.<sup>cxli</sup>

As the 19<sup>th</sup> century progressed, there was a shift from at-home production to factory production. This was in part because companies were becoming more formalized and, while most were not large enough to occupy an entire building, they were simultaneously too large to work out of their homes. Consequently, tenanted textile factories became common and would house multiple related trades under one roof. These buildings were either constructed by a single tenant who then leased space to secondary companies, as was the case with Beatty's Mills, or were occupied by multiple tenants once the original, single tenant had vacated.

Whereas various dependent operations were located within blocks of each other, they were now merely floors away. The second element that spurred factory production was the introduction of steam-powered machinery.<sup>cxlii</sup> While this was not immediate, and one that lent itself more easily to some products, such as carpets, than others, it was the first step to a new method of manufacture. Suddenly, workers found themselves in unpleasant factories, on someone else's schedule and working from someone else's pay scale. The development of the labor union in Philadelphia was one way to combat these changes and retain at least the principles of their previous work environment.<sup>cxliii</sup>

One of the earliest formal organizations under the factory system was the Noble Order of the Knights of Labor, the "largest and one of the most important labor movements in America in the 19<sup>th</sup> century."<sup>cxliv</sup> Founded by Uriah Smith Stephens in 1869 at his house, near Coral and Sergeant Streets in Kensington, the group was more of a male fraternity than a labor union and wanted to unite all workers regardless of "craft, creed or color."<sup>cxlv</sup> Over the next few decades, the Knights of Labor functioned in three primary capacities. They functioned as an "association of trade unions" that negotiated the conflicts between employers and laborers.<sup>cxlvi</sup> Secondly, they were a "neighborhood organization that reinforced the proximity of industrial workers in different trades...."<sup>cxlvii</sup> This facilitation was particularly valuable in Kensington, a neighborhood that had long benefitted from such interdependent relationships. Lastly, it increased communication between workers in various cities in regions, thus consolidating and strengthening their efforts.<sup>cxlviii</sup> The Knights of Labor were so successful that by 1886, it has 25,000 members in twenty-five assemblies throughout Philadelphia.<sup>cxlix</sup> This accounted for nearly half of the textile workforce.

Another prominent organization was the Labor Lyceum, which was a German-based group founded in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The Labor Lyceum had three branches, the Kensington one of which was located at N. 2<sup>nd</sup> and Cambria Streets. The Lyceum "was a laborer's club, a place

<sup>cxl</sup> A manufacturing census from 1850 lists the workforce in Kensington's mills as 60% male and 40% female with no child labor reported. *Proprietary Capitalism: The Textile Manufacture at Philadelphia, 1800-1885*, 190.

<sup>cxli</sup> "The Carpet Industry of Philadelphia," D11.

<sup>cxlii</sup> Weigley, 336.

<sup>cxliii</sup> Weigley, 338.

<sup>cxliv</sup> Kenneth W. Milano, *Hidden History of Kensington and Fishtown* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2010), 63.

<sup>cxlv</sup> Stephens founded the group directly after the local Garment Cutters' Union was disbanded.

<sup>cxlvi</sup> *Figured Tapestry*, 35.

<sup>cxlvii</sup> *Figured Tapestry*, 35.

<sup>cxlviii</sup> *Figured Tapestry*, 36.

<sup>cxlix</sup> An assembly is comparable to a local chapter. By 1885, the Knights of Labor had 750,000 members nationwide.

where laborers gathered and organized against the manufacturers. In Kensington in particular, it was a place for the various textile unions of the mill district. The Kensington textile works appeared to have been a special group within the city as a whole, probably due to the fact that there were so many of them. Some of the meetings at the Labor Lyceum attracted thousands.<sup>cl</sup> The Lyceum was so well known that Mother Jones, the famed community organizer, spoke there on June 15 and 16, 1903.

A second outgrowth of this collegial work environment was the more formal workers' union, a natural development in the "original hub of working class Philadelphia."<sup>cli</sup> Prior to the formation of unions, local riots were more often directed at those of opposing religious or ethnic groups, rather than at employers and companies.<sup>clii</sup> However, by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century workers realized that more benefit could be had from improving their working conditions and salaries than fighting each other in a winless battle. The first textile unions were consequently formed at this time, often as local chapters of British unions, which continued to reinforce local nationalism, if in a significantly more peaceful manner.<sup>cliii</sup> In the 1870s and 1880s, Kensington experienced its first significant economic depression after the end of the Civil War. Not only was there significantly less demand for textiles after the conflict, but the textile industry was also inherently prone to a high rate of unemployment. The system itself reinforced this because while factories would have numerous workers on call, they would only be paid for the work that they did and not on a salaried basis.<sup>cliv</sup> There was also a constant shift in demand between types of goods, as things went in and out of style and as technologies evolved. For example in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, ingrain carpets were extremely popular because they were cheap and of good quality, but the introduction of cheap grass carpets, for example, made ingrain carpet less popular leaving an enormous portion of the industry unemployed. Lastly, Kensington specialized in specialty goods, like trimmings or silk hosiery, which were usually only made to order. If no orders were placed, then nothing was produced and no one was paid.<sup>clv</sup>

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<sup>cl</sup> Milano, 65. There was also a comparable Ladies' Labor Lyceum, which was built in c.1896 and located at 2916 N. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street.

<sup>cli</sup> Philip Scranton, *Work Sights: Industrial Philadelphia, 1890-1950* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 62.

<sup>clii</sup> The Weaver's Riots began in 1828 over pay increases and Nativist Riots began in the 1840s. Riots between Catholics and Protestants occurred between 1825 and 1850. Oberholtzer, 2:291; "Kensington."

<sup>cliii</sup> Warner, 180.

<sup>cliv</sup> Joseph H. Willits, *Philadelphia Unemployment with Special Reference to the Textile Industries* (Philadelphia: Department of Public Works, 1915), 22.

<sup>clv</sup> Willits, 25-28.

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## F. Associated Property Types

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### 1. Property type: **Factories, Mills, Plants and Warehouses**

**Subtypes:** *Single textile tenant*  
*Multiple textile tenants*  
*Single textile-related tenant*  
*Multiple textile-related tenants*

### A. Description and Significance:

The most common property subtype within this MPDF is the factory building that was constructed for and occupied by a single tenant that was either directly or indirectly associated with the textile industry. In some cases, such as Beatty's Mills, the mill has a single date of construction. (Inventory #31) In most cases, however, the factory consists of a factory that was built in various stages over a number of years. This type of development is evident at both H.W. Butterworth and Sons and the Quaker City Dye Works (Inventory #24 and 8). This type of expansion was also often caused by the occupancy of a new tenant and their need for additional or reconfigured space.

The less common property subtype is the factory building that was occupied by multiple tenants that were either directly or indirectly associated with the textile industry. These buildings were either constructed as speculative endeavors or were the result of the departure of a larger, single tenant and the need to fill available space. The Cohocksink Mills and the Albion Carpet Mills are examples of this secondary type (Inventory #6 and 35). In many cases, buildings can be classified under each subtype at various points in their history.

Resources may be nominated under Criterion A if they contribute to themes such as Commerce, Industry, Invention, or Social History and are considered to have an important association to the theme (mere association is not enough). This might include a building complex that housed a company considered to be an industry leader, a building where an important invention or innovation in processing took place, or the site of a strike that impacted future labor practices. Association with a theme or a role within the textile industry alone is not sufficient to be considered eligible for the National Register; the resource's specific association must be considered to have been *important* within the Kensington textile industry, or other theme, and the resource must retain the physical integrity necessary to convey its association within a specific period. With regard to this particular MPDF, Criterion A for the theme of Industry is the most likely reason a property would be eligible. Beatty's Mills was jointly listed in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, Industry, and Criterion C, Architecture, in 2004 (Inventory #31). H.W. Butterworth and Sons Company was listed in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, Industry, in 2010 (Inventory #24). The Quaker City Dye Works received a Determination of Eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, Industry, in 2012 (Inventory #8).

Resources may be nominated under Criterion B if the property illustrates the important contributions of a significant individual, most likely in this case a person whose achievements are associated with the textile or textile-related industries. This person could be a company owner, chemist or engineer, or labor organizer, for example. Resources eligible under Criterion B are usually those associated with the person's *productive* career, reflecting the time period when he or she achieved significance.

Resources may be nominated under Criterion C for architectural or engineering significance if the property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction;

represents the work of a master; possesses high artistic value; or is a complex or district whose individual components may lack distinction but together represent a significant entity. Although most industrial buildings were designed for function rather than aesthetics, it is possible that the design of a building, or a portion of that building, would be important enough to nominate it under Criterion C. Various construction techniques, including those for slow-burning construction, could assert or support eligibility. For a resource to be considered eligible as an example of its type or period of construction, it must be considered an *important* example (within the context) of building practices of a particular time and place. Beatty's Mills, mentioned above, was jointly listed on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, Industry, and C, Architecture, in 2004 (Inventory #31). Resources must retain the physical integrity and characteristics necessary to convey their significance or be considered truly representative of a particular type, period, or method of construction.

Resources may be nominated under Criterion D if they are shown to have the potential to answer important research questions about Philadelphia's history. The most common type of property nominated under this Criterion is an archeological site. Buildings and structures, however, can also be nominated under this Criterion if they themselves contain important physical information that could contribute to our future understanding of our history. The relative lack of development in the Kensington neighborhood increases the likelihood of archeological resources; special investigation would be needed to assess if the resource possesses important information about the textile industry or another aspect of Philadelphia's history or pre-history.

### **B. Registration Requirements:**

The primary property types that are eligible for listing within this MPDF are those associated with the textile or textile-related industries and located in Kensington. The primary property type is the industrial factory or warehouse building. A preliminary (not comprehensive) building inventory included with the MPDF identifies 38 of these resources.

Within the larger category of factories, mills, plants and warehouses are four separate sub-categories: single textile tenant building, multiple textile tenant buildings, single tenant buildings that are related to the textile industry and multiple tenant buildings that are related to the textile industry. As all four of these uses result in approximately the same building structure and function, it is appropriate to include them under a single umbrella.

The inclusion of those buildings that have only associated function to the textile industry, such as dye works, textile machinery manufacturers, paper box manufactures, and waste factories, is equally important. They are integral to the story of the textile industry in Kensington and played an equally important role as those places where the actual manufacturing occurred. In all of these property types, the buildings do not need to be constructed exclusively for a textile or textile-related purpose or be used exclusively for that purpose throughout the period of significance.

Although many of these companies originally occupied a series or complex of buildings, most of these complexes do not remain entirely intact. To be eligible, the extant resource must be able to reflect the function of the buildings or site and convey its significance within its period of significance. Alterations to windows, doors, storefronts or exterior finishes do not automatically negate integrity or eligibility, although visible fenestration patterns are generally important. An assessment must be made to understand what important, character-defining features were present during the entity's period of significance, and which ones must remain to enable the current resource to convey its significance within that period.

Another common property type in the Kensington neighborhood is the tenant factory, where one building housed a number of individual companies that often had similar operations. Often, multiple tenants within such a building would be textile-related. If it can be shown that a portion of the building was related to the textile industry, that building falls within the guidance presented in this MPDF. In evaluating such a building for National Register eligibility, consideration will be given both to the space occupied by the textile-related entity in question, as well as the greater building. Both will need to retain the integrity necessary to convey the significance of the tenant occupant within its individual period of significance.

**2. Property type: Associated Commercial Buildings**

**Subtypes:** *Retail spaces*  
*Office spaces*  
*Banks or financial institutions*  
*Trade or labor union halls*

**A. Description and Significance:**

Because of the varied functions of the commercial buildings that were associated with the textile industry, there is no consistent building type. As might be expected, the banks, as well as the office and retail spaces, were likely to be more formal buildings designed for a specific use. They were also generally of a more manageable scale than the industrial buildings, which is perhaps one explanation for their relatively high degree of retention. On the other hand, union halls did not usually have the same degree of financial backing and often adapted to pre-existing buildings, such as music halls or churches, or rented space within office buildings. Only the most formal of organizations, such as the Labor Lyceum, that could afford to build a space specifically for their use. An excellent extant example of such a building is the Hosiery Knitters Union Club, located at 2530-2532 N. 4<sup>th</sup> Street (Inventory #43).

Resources may be nominated under Criterion A if they contribute to themes such as Commerce, Industry, Invention, or Social History and are considered to have an important association to the theme (mere association is not enough). This might include association with a prominent company, considered to be an industry leader, or the site of a particular event or activity, such as the base for a locally important labor union. With regard to this particular MPDF, the majority of resources will most likely be eligible under Criterion A. Association with a theme or a role within the textile industry alone is not sufficient to be considered eligible for the National Register; the resource's specific association must be considered to have been *important* within the Kensington textile industry, or other theme, and the resource must retain the physical integrity necessary to convey its association within a specific period.

Resources may be nominated under Criterion B if the property best illustrates the important contributions of a significant individual, in this case a person whose achievements are most likely associated with the textile or textile-related industries. This person could be a company owner, chemist or engineer, or labor organizer, for example. Resources eligible under Criterion B are usually those associated with the person's *productive* career, reflecting the time period when he or she achieved significance.

Resources may be nominated under Criterion C for architectural or engineering significance if the property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction; represents the work of a master; possesses high artistic value; or is a complex or district whose individual components may lack distinction but together represent a significant entity. For a resource to be considered eligible as an example of its type or period of construction, it must be

considered an *important* example (within the context) of building practices of a particular time and place. Resources must retain the physical integrity and characteristics necessary to convey their significance or be considered truly representative of a particular type, period, or method of construction. As commercial buildings were often designed by architects and with the intent of conveying a certain company persona, and often less-altered by company growth or change than an industrial resource, this Criterion may be more frequently appropriate for this property type. The Kensington National Bank, designed by Philadelphia architect Frank Furness in 1877, was listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places under Criterion C, Architecture in 1980 (Inventory #1).

As described above, resources may be nominated under Criterion D if they are shown to have the potential to answer important research questions about Philadelphia's history. The most common type of property nominated under this Criterion is an archeological site. Buildings and structures, however, can also be nominated under this Criterion if they themselves contain important physical information that could contribute to our future understanding of our history. The relative lack of development in the Kensington neighborhood increases the likelihood of archeological resources; special investigation would be needed to assess if the resource possesses important information about the textile industry or another aspect of Philadelphia's history or pre-history.

#### **B. Registration Requirements:**

The secondary property types are commercial buildings that are associated with the textile industry, such as offices, banks or union halls. These property types are integral to the story of the textile industry in Kensington and played an equally important role as those places where the actual manufacturing occurred. In all of these property types, the buildings do not need to be constructed exclusively for a textile or textile-related purpose or be used exclusively for that purpose throughout their existence. They will need to retain integrity that conveys their significance as a textile-related resource, during the appropriate period of significance.

Unlike their more industrial counterparts, the commercial buildings are more likely to be individual buildings constructed at a single time, rather than evolving complexes. As such, integrity can usually be more easily assessed without the complications of multiple building campaigns and changes made for new technology or products. These resources will also require an assessment of the character defining features necessary to convey significance. As with the other buildings, alterations of windows, doors, storefronts or exterior finishes do not automatically negate eligibility.

Other resources that may have some connection to Kensington's textile industry, such as housing, transportation, schools, churches, and hospitals are not included as property types within this MPDF because they are not exclusive to the textile industry. If further research determines that a school, for example, was specifically funded by a textile company and was exclusively used by children with parents in the industry, it would then be appropriate to consider that school under the guidance provided in the MPDF.

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## G. Geographic Data

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The geographic area covered by this MPDF is limited to properties within the boundaries of the Kensington neighborhood. The Kensington neighborhood is traditionally defined by Wards 17, 19 and 31. The boundaries are W. Girard Avenue and E. Norris Street to the south, Frankford Avenue and Aramingo Avenue to the east, Lehigh Avenue to the north and Germantown Avenue and N. 6<sup>th</sup> Street to the west.

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## H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

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The Multiple Property Documentation Form was initiated by the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia as a way to understand, evaluate, and assess appropriate options for the once-significant and now-dwindling physical fabric of the textile and textile-related industries in Kensington, a neighborhood located in northeast Philadelphia. An initial inventory of relevant properties was developed through primary archival research, literature reviews and aerial and field surveys. This preliminary inventory is not considered to be comprehensive, but reflects a range of textile and textile-related resources found within the Kensington neighborhood. The integrity of the resources was evaluated prior to its inclusion in the inventory.

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in the Kensington Neighborhood of PhiladelphiaName of Multiple Listing  
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<i>Figure #</i>	<i>Description of Figure</i>
1.	Samuel L. Smedley, <i>Atlas of the City of Philadelphia</i> , 1862.
2.	G.M. Hopkins, <i>City Atlas of Philadelphia</i> , 1875.
3.	G.W. Baist, <i>Property Atlas of Philadelphia</i> , 1888.
4.	G.W. and W.S. Bromley, <i>Atlas of the City of Philadelphia</i> , 1895.
5.	G.W. and W.S. Bromley, <i>Atlas of the City of Philadelphia</i> , 1910.
6.	Ward Map of Northeast Philadelphia, 1982.
7.	Advertisement, <i>Public Ledger</i> , 1916.
8.	Reconnaissance Map of Textile-Related Resources in Kensington Neighborhood (not comprehensive)
9.	Inventory of Textile-Related Resources in Kensington Neighborhood (not comprehensive)
10.	Photos of Various Textile-Related Resources in Kensington Neighborhood

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Industrial and Commercial Buildings Related to the Textile Industry in the Kensington Neighborhood of Philadelphia
Name of Multiple Listing Philadelphia County, PA
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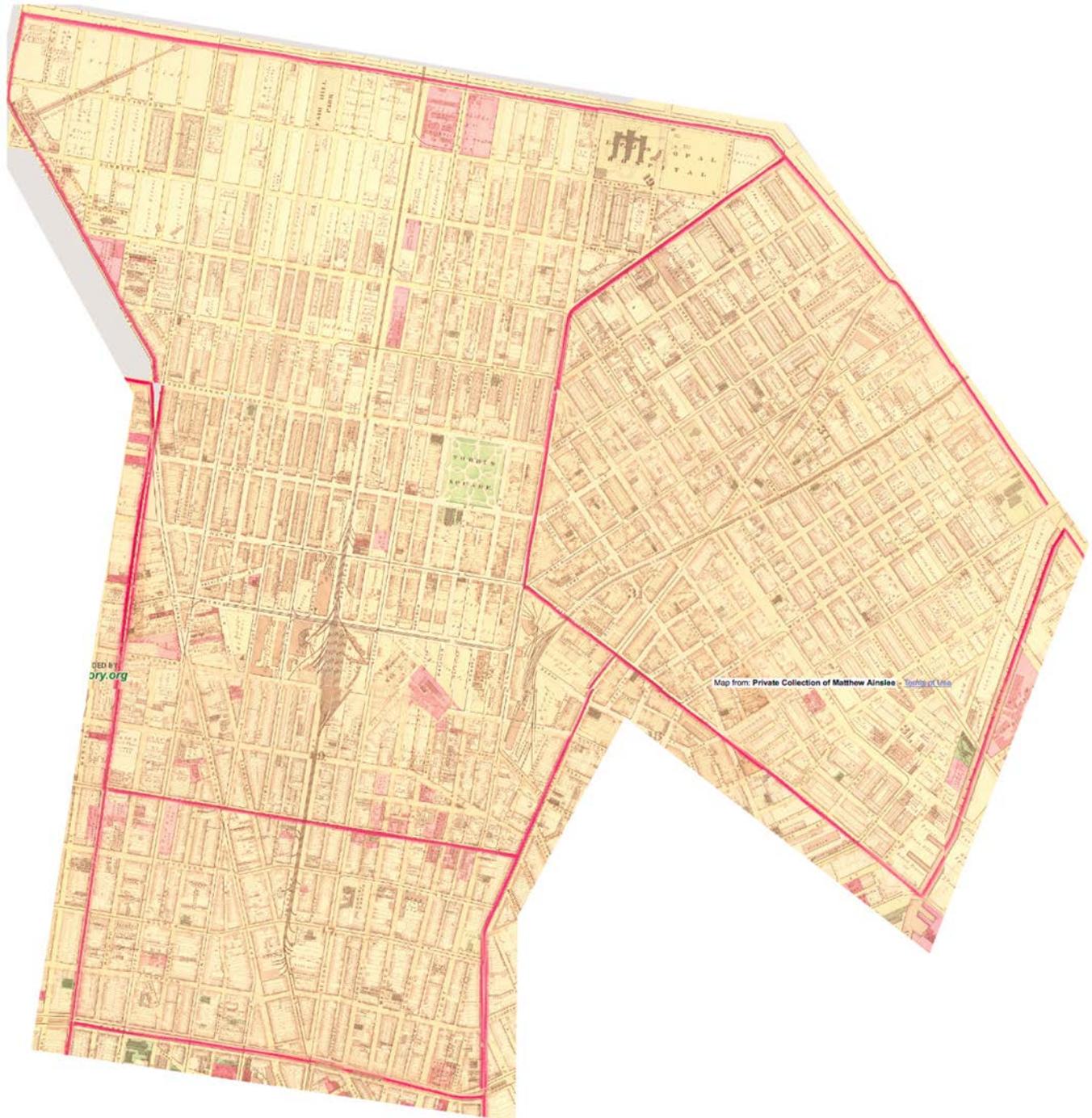
**Figure 1** – Samuel L. Smedley, *Atlas of the City of Philadelphia*, 1862.

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Industrial and Commercial Buildings Related to the Textile Industry in the Kensington Neighborhood of Philadelphia
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----- County and State



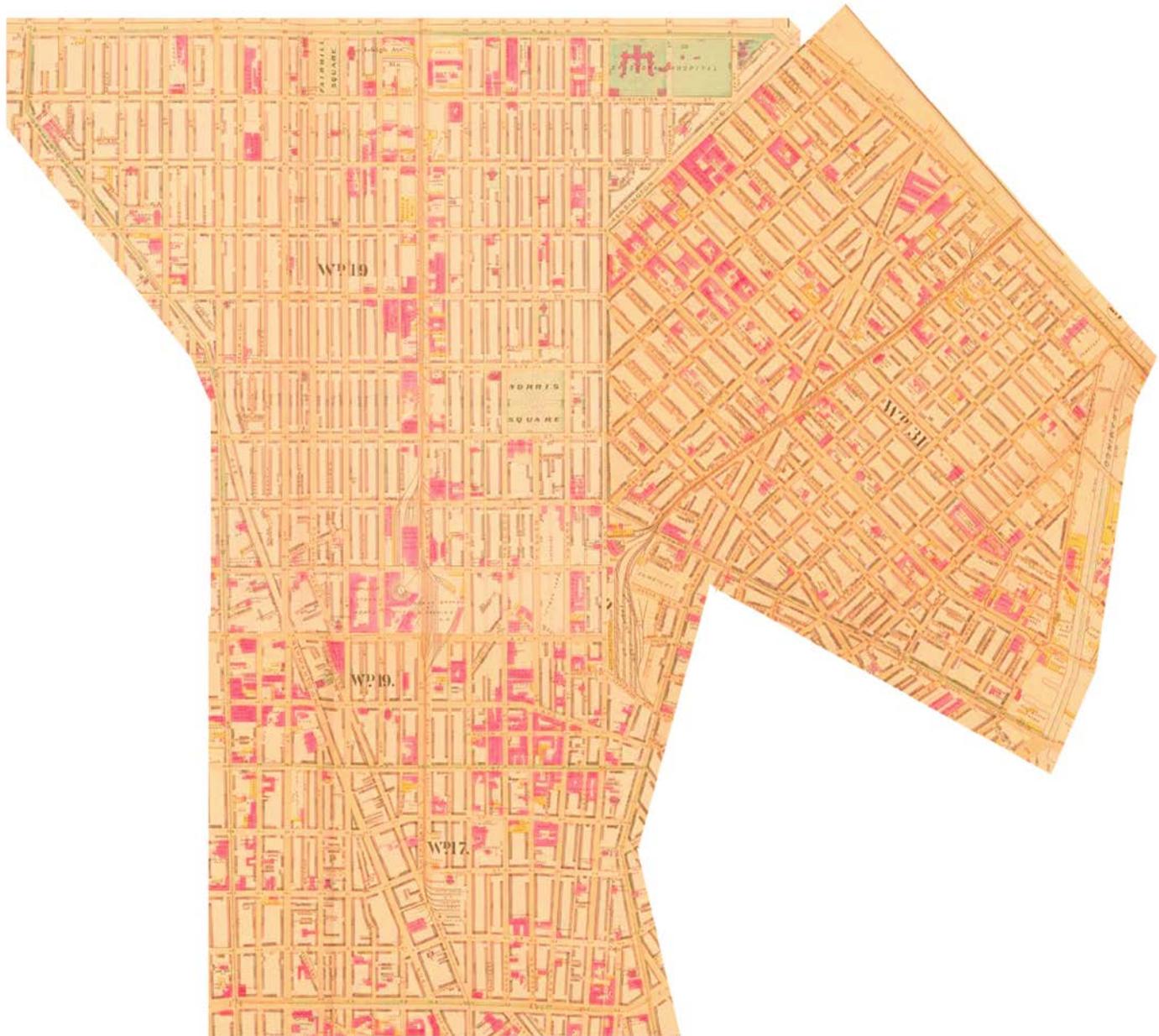
**Figure 2** – G.M. Hopkins, *City Atlas of Philadelphia*, 1875.

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**Figure 3** – G.W. Baist, *Property Atlas of Philadelphia*, 1888.

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Name of Multiple Listing Philadelphia County, PA
County and State



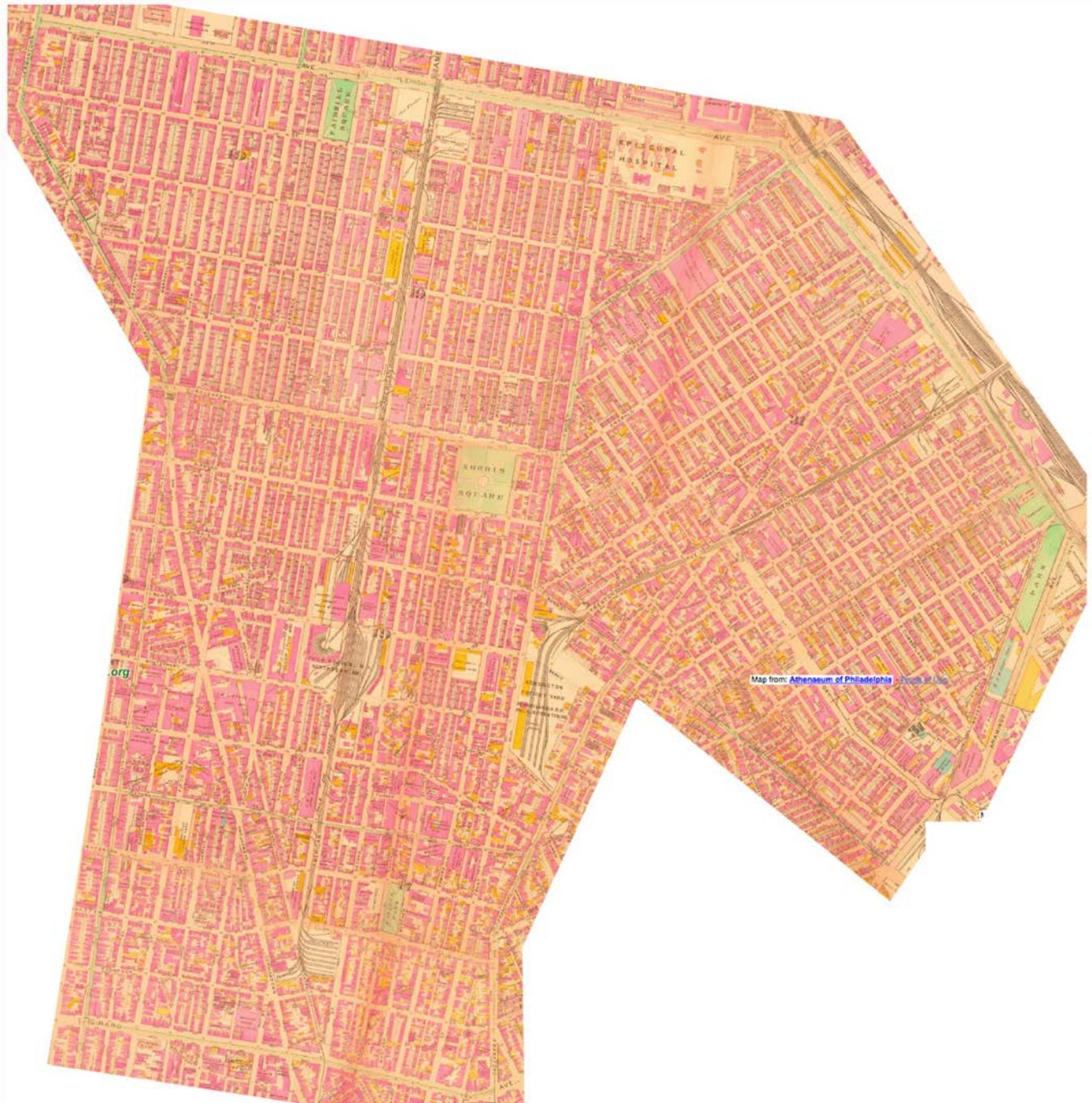
**Figure 4** – G.W. and W.S. Bromley, *Atlas of the City of Philadelphia*, 1895.

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**Figure 5** – G.W. and W.S. Bromley, *Atlas of the City of Philadelphia*, 1910.

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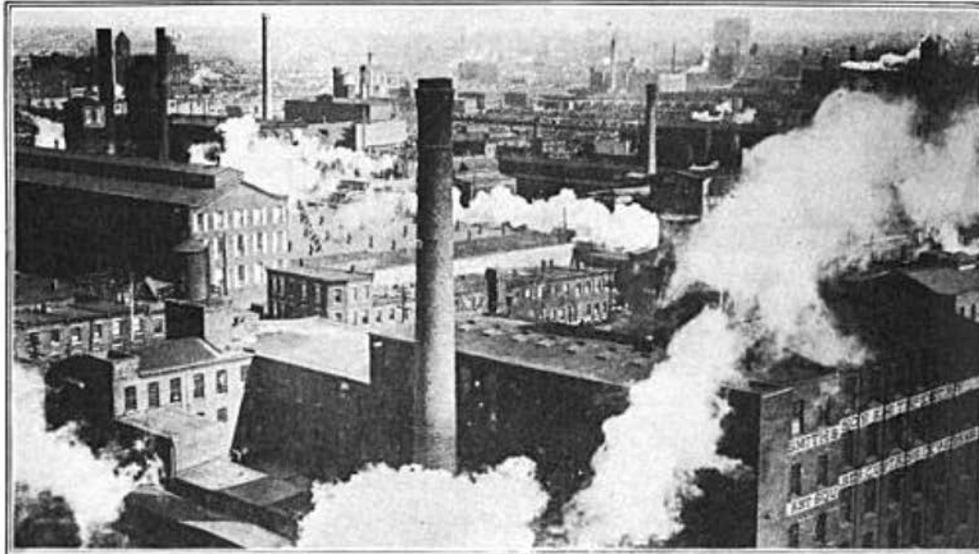
Figure 6 – Ward Map of Northeast Philadelphia, 1982.  
Kensington is traditionally defined as wards 17, 19 and 31.

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# PHILADELPHIA

## The World's Textile Capital

**T**HE above picture shows the rug, carpet and textile capital of the world—the Kensington Mill District of Philadelphia—which produces more than one-third of the rugs and carpets made in America, and employs 11,000 skilled, well-paid, comfortably-housed workmen. Brussels, Wilton and Axminster gave their names to now famous carpets and rugs, but the output of the three combined in their best day did not equal Philadelphia's present textile production.

**T**HESE great textile plants form only one section of the 8,000 manufacturing establishments in Philadelphia, commanded by men of business brains and intelligence, possessed of technical skill, powerful capital and vigorous enterprise. And these men read the Public Ledger daily, because it is the family newspaper of better-than-average Philadelphians, and because of its unusually complete Business Section.

**T**HINK of a "trade" paper combined with a big metropolitan daily newspaper—together, yet distinct. That's the Public Ledger. It affords an unequalled sales-opportunity to manufacturers of products which appeal to Philadelphia's 8,000 huge industrial organizations. It puts them in direct touch with big business buyers—the men to whom the Public Ledger's Business Section speaks daily.

**PUBLIC**  **LEDGER**

Member A. B. C.

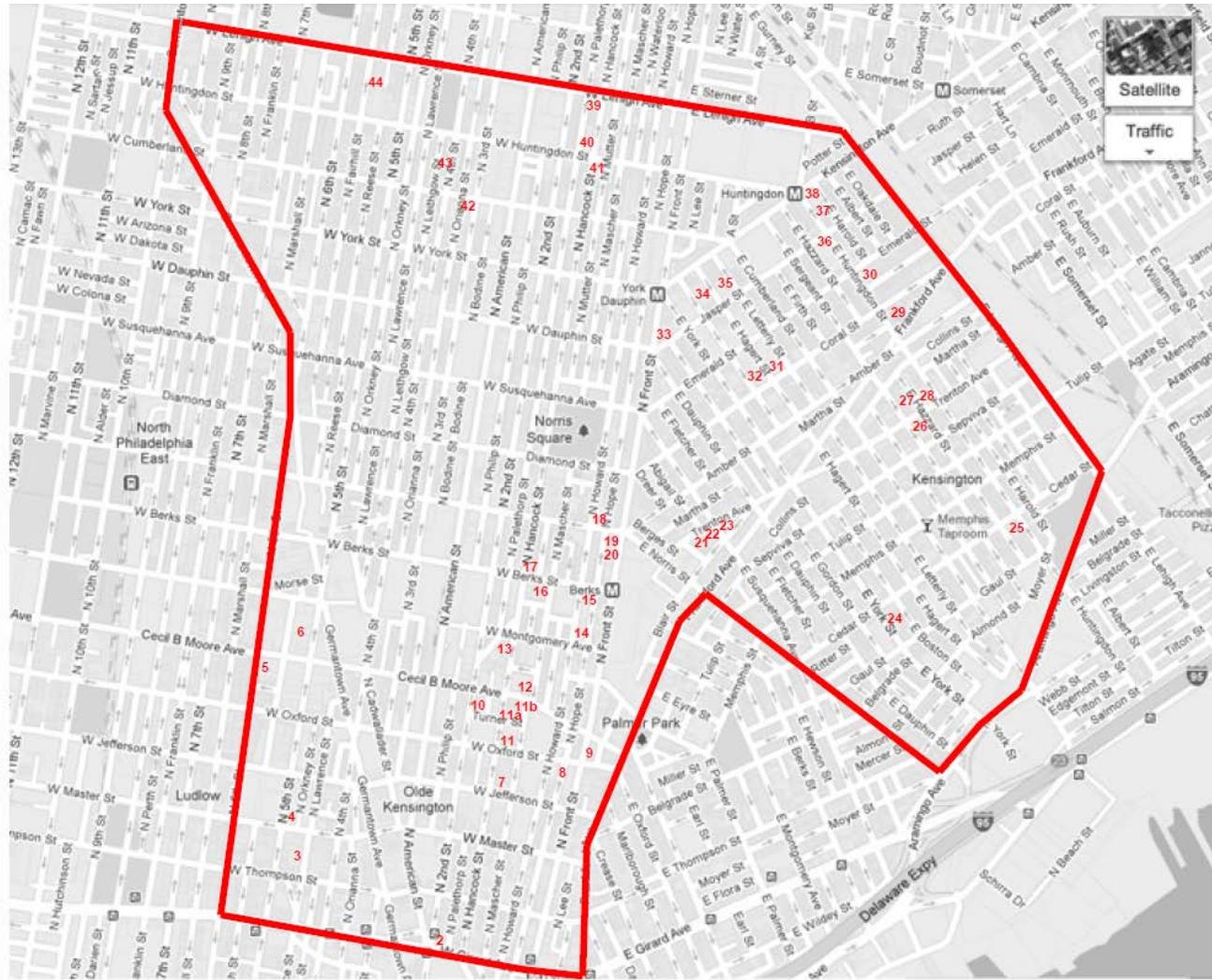
Figure 7 – Advertisement, *Public Ledger*, 1916.

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Buildings Related to the Textile Industry in Kensington  
Property Inventory Map

Figure 8: Reconnaissance Map of Textile-Related Resources in Kensington Neighborhood (not comprehensive)

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<b>Industrial and Commercial Buildings Related to the Textile Industry in Kensington Building Inventory Identified as of May 31, 2012 (not comprehensive)</b>					
<b>Inventory / Map Number</b>	<b>Building Name</b>	<b>Building Address</b>	<b>Building Date</b>	<b>Company Type</b>	<b>Notes</b>
1	Kensington National Bank	Frankford and W. Girard Avenues	1877	Textile bank	Established in 1826. Designed by Furness. Listed on the Philadelphia Register on 8/7/80.
2	Eighth National Bank	N. 2nd Street and W. Girard Avenue	1870	Textile bank	
3	Standard Hosiery Company	1310 North Lawrence Street	1908	Hosiery	
4	Drueding Brothers Company	437-441 W. Master Street	1907, 1922	Leather	William Steele and Sons, architect
5	Sheip Manufacturing Company	1701-1723 N. 6th Street	c. 1900	Wooden? Boxes	
6	Cohocksink Mills	1732 N. Randolph Street	c. 1900	Textiles - tenanted	
7	Joseph Johnson and Company	153 W. Jefferson Street	1875	Morocco leather	
8	Quaker City Dye Works	110-118 W. Oxford Street	c. 1873	Dye works	William Steele and Sons, architect. Determination of Eligibility received on 12/13/11.
9	Harrison Mills	Cecil B. Moore Avenue and Blair Street	c. 1890	Carpets	
10	Keystone Spinning / Weaving Mills	1627 N. 2nd Street	1861	Textiles	Thomas Dolan, owner
11	Belber Trunk and Bag Company	1525 N. Hancock Street	c. 1880	Trunks and bags	Largest manufacturer of fine trunks and bags in US.
11a	Belber Trunk and Bag Company	1641 N. Hancock Street	c. 1880	Trunks and bags	Largest manufacturer of fine trunks and bags in US.
11b	Belber Trunk and Bag Company	150 Cecil B. Moore Avenue	c. 1880	Trunks and bags	Largest manufacturer of fine trunks and bags in US.
12	Columbia Works	155 Cecil B. Moore Avenue	1867	Power looms and textile machinery	W.P. Uhlinger, owner
13	Francis Kelly Company	1722-1740 N. Hancock Street	c. 1895	Waste and shoddy	Primarily jute waste
14	Star Carpet Mills	1801 N. Howard Street	1882	Carpets	
15	Clifton Mills	W. Berks and N. Howard Streets	1880	Carpets and various textile tenants	
16	Nathan Schwab and Sons	160 W. Berks Street	c. 1910	Waste	Later Peter Woll and Sons

Figure 9a: Reconnaissance Inventory of Textile-Related Resources in Kensington, part A.

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17	Peter Woll and Sons	165 W. Berks Street	c. 1891	Curled hair and feathers	From tanneries, leather factories, slaughter houses.
18	Superior Thread and Yarn Company	2001-2021 N. Howard Street	c. 1920	Thread and yarn	
19	Ninth National Bank	1954-1956 N. Front Street	1885	Textile bank	Merged with the Industrial Trust, Title and Savings Company in 1923.
20	Industrial Trust, Title and Savings Company	1950-1952 N. Front Street	c. 1886	Textile bank	Merged with the Ninth National Bank in 1923.
21	Herbert Hosiery Mill	2120 Trenton Avenue	c. 1900	Hosiery	
22	William K. Caldwell Textile Mill	2134 E. Susquehanna Avenue	c. 1900	Textiles	
23	William Hepworth and Sons	2201-2211 Trenton Avenue	c. 1900	Garnetted worsted waste	
24	H.W. Butterworth and Sons	2410 E. York Street	1870	Textile Machinery	NR 6/28/10.
25	Taubel Brothers Hosiery Mill	2400-2422 E. Huntingdon Street	c. 1905	Hosiery	
26	Model Mills	2531 Trenton Avenue and 2155 E. Sergeant Street	1870	Shoddy yarns and carpets	Tenants produced carpets, gingham and shirtings
27	William V. Smalley	2122-2126 E. Hazzard Street	c. 1915	Cotton and wool waste	Warehouse
28	Franklin Carpet Mills	2139-2145 E. Huntingdon Street	1879	Carpets	Robert Carson. Ingrain carpets, 85 emp.
29	Kempf Brothers	2613-2615 Canal Street	c. 1910	Waste pullers	Previously David Lupton and Sons, sheet metal
30	John Greenwood and Son	Emerald, E. Huntingdon and Braddock Streets	c. 1875	Skein yarn dyeing	Also known as the Fairhill Dye Works. Cotton and wool linen and jute yarns. 35 employees in 1922.
31	Beatty's Mills	E. Letterly, E. Hagert and Coral Streets	c. 1886	Cotton and wool	NR 2004.
32	Arrott's Mills	2026 E. Hagert Street	1887	Cotton and wool	Tenants included M. Lafferty (woolen yarn); Bromley (woolen upholstery); McLroy and Chestnut (ingrain carpets); J.G. Carruth and Company (cotton and woolen goods).
33	Bromley Mills	Jasper and E. York Streets	c. 1870	Carpets and woolen yarn	
34	Joseph T. Pearson	1825 E. Boston Street and 1814-1820 E. Hagert Street	1880	Steam packing box factory	Also produced hosiery, lapping and cloth boards
35	Bromley Mills / Albion Carpet Mills	Northwest corner of E. Hagert and Jasper Streets	c. 1882	Textiles - tenanted	Albion was operated by James A. and George D. Bromley. 350 emp.

Figure 9b: Reconnaissance Inventory of Textile-Related Resources in Kensington, part B.

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36	Margerison and Company	Corner of Jasper and E. Huntingdon Streets	c. 1915	Turkish towels and terry cloths	400 broad and narrow looms in 1895. Also owned by W.H. and A.E. Margerison.
37	A.J. Gordon Company	E. Huntingdon between Jasper and Kensington Streets	c. 1900	Knitting, weaving, dress goods, men's wear, couch covers	
38	Textile National Bank	Kensington Avenue and between E. Huntingdon and E. Harold Streets	1909	Textile bank	Herman Miller, architect. John H. Bromley was its first president.
39	Thomas Develon's Sons	W. Lehigh Avenue and N. Hancock Street	c. 1875	Carpets	Also Nottingham Mills (hosiery) and Wilmar Manufacturing Co. (peanut butter)
40	Frederick and Gustav Rumpf Company	N. Palethorp and W. Huntingdon Streets	1882	Full-fashioned hosiery	Also called the Brown-Aberle/Eberle Company.
41	Sykes Brothers Company	N. Hancock and W. Huntingdon Streets	c. 1885	Yarn	Primarily for carpets
42	William Ayers and Sons	N. 3rd and W. Cumberland Streets	c. 1890	Weaving	Primarily horse blankets
43	Hosiery Knitters Union Club	2530-2532 N. 4th Street	c. 1825	Social club	Also American Federation of Full Fashioned Hosiery Workers
44	Quaker City Morocco Company	N. 5th and W. Huntingdon Streets	1891	Leather	"Glazed and kid leather in black and colors"

Figure 9c: Reconnaissance Inventory of Textile-Related Resources in Kensington, part C.

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1 Keystone Spinning/Weaving Mills



Kensington MPDF

4 Clifton Mills



2 Belbar Trunk and Bag



5 Nathan Schwab & Sons



3 Star Carpet Mills



6 Peter Woll & Sons

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kensington mpdf

7 Superior Thread & Yarn

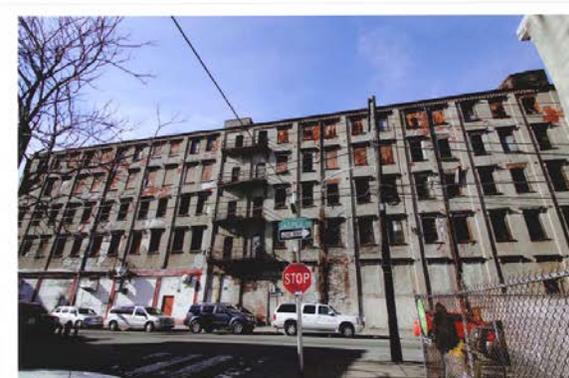


Kensington MPDF

10 Franklin Carpet Mills



8. Ninth National Bank  
and Industrial Trust



11 Bromley Mills



9. Model Mills



12 Thomas W Buck Co