NHL: America at Work, Science & Invention

Form 10-300
(Rev. 6-72)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY – NOMINATION FORM

*(Type all entries complete applicable sections)*

STATE: Pennsylvania
COUNTY: Philadelphia
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

## 1. NAME

COMMON: James Logan Home or Stenton Mansion

AND/OR HISTORIC: James Logan Home, "Stenton"

## 2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: 18th and Courtland Streets

CITY OR TOWN: Philadelphia

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: 2

STATE: Pennsylvania — CODE: 42

COUNTY: Philadelphia — CODE: 101

## 3. CLASSIFICATION

| CATEGORY (Check One) | OWNERSHIP | | STATUS | ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ District ☒ Building | ☒ Public | Public Acquisition: | ☒ Occupied | Yes: |
| ☐ Site ☐ Structure | ☐ Private | ☐ In Process | ☐ Unoccupied | ☐ Restricted |
| ☐ Object | ☐ Both | ☐ Being Considered | ☐ Preservation work in progress | ☒ Unrestricted |
| | | | | ☐ No |

PRESENT USE *(Check One or More as Appropriate)*

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ Agricultural | ☐ Government | ☐ Park | ☐ Transportation | ☐ Comments |
| ☐ Commercial | ☐ Industrial | ☐ Private Residence | ☐ Other *(Specify)* | |
| ☐ Educational | ☐ Military | ☐ Religious | | |
| ☐ Entertainment | ☒ Museum | ☐ Scientific | | |

## 4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: City of Philadelphia, administered by the Society of Colonial Dames

STREET AND NUMBER: City Hall

CITY OR TOWN: Philadelphia

STATE: Pennsylvania — CODE: 42

## 5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: Department of Records

STREET AND NUMBER: City Hall

CITY OR TOWN: Philadelphia

STATE: Pennsylvania — CODE: 42

## 6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: n.r. ☒ Federal ☐ State ☐ County ☐ Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Library of Congress/Annex

STREET AND NUMBER: Prints and Photographs Division

CITY OR TOWN: Washington

STATE: D.C. — CODE: 11

STATE: Pennsylvania
COUNTY: Philadelphia
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY NUMBER
DATE

## 7. DESCRIPTION

| CONDITION | (Check One) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | ☒ Excellent | ☐ Good | ☐ Fair | ☐ Deteriorated | ☐ Ruins | ☐ Unexposed |
| | (Check One) | | (Check One) | | | |
| | ☒ Altered | ☐ Unaltered | ☐ Moved | ☒ Original Site | | |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL *(if known)* PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Built by James Logan, circa 1728, Stenton is a two-and-a-half story brick house with a hipped roof, flat deck and dormer windows. The structure measures 40 feet 8 inches in depth by 52 feet in length. The 20-inch-thick brick walls are of Flemish bond, with black headers. The front facade has an Early Georgian simplicity and is completely regular in composition. Semi-circular stone steps lead up to the central doorway, unframed by classic pilasters. Flanking it are two narrow side-lights, perhaps the earliest instance of this motive in Georgian architecture. The rectangular transom over the door, giving additional light in the entrance hall, is, however, of common occurrance in the architecture of this period. The interruption of the brick belt course over these central openings suggest that there may originally have been a sheltering porch of some kind--perhaps a hood. Rudimentary brick pilasters or piers flank the entrance hall unit and also mark the corners of the house. Large 12x12 light windows divide the facade in regular bays and the first floor windows are topped by segmental arches of gauged brick. Unshaped blocks at the cornice take the place of academic modillions.

Neither the side or rear facades of Stenton are symmetrically composed: here doors and windows occur where demanded by the plan, and even at the odd level of the stair landing in the rear. A covered one-story porch at the back of the house connects to a long story-and-a-half service wing extending about 100 feet to the rear.

The interiors of the house, in the main, are formal. The large square entrance hall is paved with brick and paneled to the ceiling. There is an open fireplace on the right, and beyond an archway in the rear, a smaller hall, where the stairway ascends to the second floor. The staircase has a handrail meeting square newel posts at acute angles rather than at right angles by means of curved ramps and easings, as in a later era. On either side of the main hall are parlors, each with a fireplace and adjoining cupboards. From the parlor on the left a door leads to a small breakfast room at the rear, which is also upon the left of the stair hall. From the parlor on the right a similar door leads to the large dining room in the rear. Each of these rear rooms also has its own fireplace.

Quite unusual was the long library with its range of six windows and two fireplaces, which extended across the entire front of the second story. Here James Logan housed his fine library, one of the best in the colonies. This great room has been subdivided into two room. There were also two small back bedrooms, each with its fireplace, and a small back staircase led from the second floor to the third floor, where the woodwork of the small bedrooms was unpainted.

The interior of the house is maintained by the Society of Colonial Dames. The inventories of Logan's furniture, have been preserved, and through these lists, and many gifts of the Logan family, and various other bequests, the Society has furnished the rooms, using the year 1840 as their terminus ante quem.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD *(Check One or More as Appropriate)*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ Pre-Columbian | ☐ 16th Century | ☒ 18th Century | ☐ 20th Century |
| ☐ 15th Century | ☐ 17th Century | ☐ 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) *(If Applicable and Known)* 1728

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE *(Check One or More as Appropriate)*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Aboriginal | ☐ Education | ☐ Political | ☐ Urban Planning |
| ☐ Prehistoric | ☐ Engineering | ☐ Religion/Philosophy | ☐ Other *(Specify)* |
| ☐ Historic | ☐ Industry | ☒ Science | |
| ☐ Agriculture | ☐ Invention | ☐ Sculpture | |
| ☒ Architecture | ☐ Landscape Architecture | ☐ Social/Humanitarian | |
| ☐ Art | ☐ Literature | ☐ Theater | |
| ☐ Commerce | ☐ Military | ☐ Transportation | |
| ☐ Communications | ☐ Music | | |
| ☐ Conservation | | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Stenton, built in 1728 as the county seat of James Logan is significant not only as a memorial to its little-known but highly influential builder, but also as an outstanding example of Early Georgian architecture. Logan, one of the founders of the American scientific school, is relatively unknown today. He arrived in Pennsylvania as secretary to William Penn and he has been described by a recent biographer as "a kind of universal man in the Rennaissance tradition--statesman, writer, scientist, philosopher,";[1] and as a scientist he demands consideration in any study of American science. The two-and-a-half story house characterized by simplicity and proportion is today maintained in Germantown in excellent condition by the City of Philadelphia and the Society of Colonial Dames.

History

James Logan, one of the founders of the American scientific school, is relatively unknown today. Perhaps because he wrote little, perhaps because Benjamin Franklin's image is so dominant, the Nation has shown little interest in a man who erudition and work almost equalled the sagacity and achievements of Franklin. Logan "was a kind of universal man in the Renaissance tradition--statesman, writer, scientist, philosopher," says a recent biographer; and as a scientist he demands consideration in any study of American science.

Born in the north of Ireland in 1674, Logan arrived in Philadelphia in 1699 as William Penn's secretary. Logan, during the next fifty years, occupied a key position in the affairs of Pennsylvania, contributing much to the rapid and successful development of the colony. His seat in the colony's council underscored his political influence, and between 1731-39 he acted as the chief justice of Pennsylvania's court system. Moreover, throughout Logan's career he was the colony's best and most respected negotiator with the Indians. His public life did not prevent him from amassing a fortune from the fur trade, however, which enabled him to retire to his country estate, "Stenton," in 1730. Even so, when Pennsylvania faced a crisis in 1736, Logan did not hesitate to re-enter public service, and he became acting governor.

Logan's strenuous public career did not prevent him from pursuing his interest in science. Even as a youth, his fascination with mathematics and botany had been great, and as an adult he studied both subject intensively. He assembled the outstanding scientific library in the English

[1]Frederick B. Tolles, "Philadelphia's First Scientist, James Logan," Isis, 47 (1956), p. 20.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

## 9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES


S. Sydney Bradford, "James Logan Home, 'Stenton', National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings form 10-317, March 24, 1964.

Frank Cousins and Phil M. Riley, The Colonial Architecture of Philadelphia, (Boston, 1920).

Harold E. Dickinson, A Hundred Pennsylvania Buildings, (State College, Pa., 1954),

Brooke Hindle, The Pursuit of Science in Revolutionary America, 1735-1789, (Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1956).

Fiske Kimball, Domestic Architecture of the American Colonies and of the Early Republic, (New York, 1920).


## 10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

| LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY | | | | | | OR | LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CORNER | LATITUDE | | | LONGITUDE | | | | |
| | Degrees | Minutes | Seconds | Degrees | Minutes | Seconds | | |
| NW | ° | ' | " | ° | ' | " | | |
| NE | ° | ' | " | ° | ' | " | UTM 18.486920.4430270 | |
| SE | ° | ' | " | ° | ' | " | | |
| SW | ° | ' | " | ° | ' | " | | |

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 4

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

| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
| | | | |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
| | | | |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
| | | | |

## 11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Richard E. Greenwood, Survey Historian

ORGANIZATION: Historic Sites Survey, Landmark Review
DATE: 8/5/74

STREET AND NUMBER:
1100 L Street

CITY OR TOWN: Washington
STATE: D.C.
CODE: 11

## 12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

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

National ☐ State ☐ Local ☐

Name (NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

Title

Date

## NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

*Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation*

Date 1/23/79

ATTEST:

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

William Lebovich

~~Keeper of The National Register~~

Date 1/15/79

SEE INSTRUCTIONS


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No definitive dates have been arrived at for the various outbuildings. It is likely that both the kitchen and the barn were built just before the close of the 18th century, while the two further additions to the kitchen were subsequent to 1800. The detached one-and-a-half story stone kitchen stands at the right rear corner of the house, with its southern wall on a line with the north wall of the main house. The first addition onto the kitchen is the one story orangery, which is lined with large windows reaching from the ground almost to the roof on the southern facade. Adjoining the orangery is the carriage house, now converted into rest rooms.

The stone barn stands some 150' from the house, to the north. It is presently under restoration by the Society of Colonial Dames. The stone foundations of the ice house are still standing, and there is also a log cabin which was moved to the grounds in the 20th century.

BOUNDARIES:

Beginning at the SE intersection of Windrim and 18th Streets, thence S along the Eastern sidewalk of 18th St., approximately 480', thence E following the boundary fence, thence NE, thence N, thence W, thence NW to Windrim Ave., continually following the boundary fence, thence SW approximately 90' along the Windrim Avenue sidewalk to the point of origin. This boundary encloses the extent of the original Stenton grounds that still possess their historic integrity. The remaining historic grounds are occupied by industrial and residential units and a playground on the remaining portions of the block. **The log house does not contribute to the national significance of the landmark.**

colonies. His near 400 scientific and mathematical works even surpassed Harvard College's library in 1735. Logan is reputed to have imported Pennsylvania's first copy of Sir Isaac Newton's Principia Mathematica. More importantly, he read and understood that monumental work, though only self-taught in mathematics.

With such a library at his command, Logan applied himself to various scientific problems. Numerous published papers resulted. One dealt with the motion of the moon. Another suggested improvements in the quadrant; and third outlined improvements in lenses. Ironically, although Logan's great scientific love was mathematics, he realized his greatest accomplishment in botany.

Through a carefully thought out and controlled experiment, Logan proved the vital role of the male element, pollen, in the fertilization of corn. The theory of "preformation," that the wind carried the male element to the female element in plants, first stimulated Logan when in 1726 he read William Wollaston's Religion of Nature Delineated. Additional reading convinced him that a male seed was just as vital to plants as the female seed, and in the summer of 1727 he tested his hypothesis on corn. Logan removed the tassels from some stalks and the filaments from others, and then he watched the development of the kernels. The results clearly showed "that the pollen was the male element and that it was necessary for the production of viable seed."[2] He repeated the experiment in 1728, but delayed making his findings public until 1735-36.

The announcement of Logan's experiment excited many in Europe. Not the members of the Royal Society of London at first, it is true, for when Logan's report was read most of those present paid small attention as they concentrated on dissecting a German cabbage and an Indian turnip. Elsewhere, scientists hailed Logan, the great Dutch botanist, Linnaeus, writing Logan in 1738 that he should be placed "among the demigods of science."[3] Subsequently, the Dutchman used the results of Logan's investigation in a paper on the sexuality of plants that received a prize from the Imperial Academy of Sciences at St. Petersburg in 1760. And Logan's botanical discovery remained influential for several decades after 1800.

Even if Logan had not succeeded in his experiment with corn, he would still be remembered in the history of American science. It was Logan who did so much to stimulate the botanical career of John Bartram. The first books on botany that Bartram read, for example, came from Logan's library. In addition, when Logan died on October 31, 1751, he left his library to the City of Philadelphia, a scientific treasure of immense value for such a young city.

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[2]Ibid., p. 28.

[3]Ibid., p. 29.

Form 10-300a
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

*(Continuation Sheet)*

| STATE | |
|---|---|
| Pennsylvania | |
| COUNTY | |
| Philadelphia | |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY | |
| ENTRY NUMBER | DATE |
| | |

James Logan Home

*(Number all entries)* #9 Bibliography Page #2

Hugh Morrison, Early American Architecture (New York, 1952)
Charles W. Snell, "James Logan Home, 'Stenton,' National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings form 10-317, June 23, 1967.
Frederick B. Tolles, "Philadelphia's First Scientist, James Logan," Isis, vol. 47, (1956).

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