

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**  
(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)  
(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
Belfield

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
Charles Willson Peale House, "Belfield"

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
2100 Clarkson Avenue

CITY OR TOWN:  
Philadelphia

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:  
002

STATE:  
Pennsylvania

CODE:  
42

COUNTY:  
Philadelphia

CODE:  
101

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
Dr. and Mrs. Daniel Blaine

STREET AND NUMBER:  
2100 Clarkson Avenue

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:  
 Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
Library of Congress/Annex

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Division of Prints and Photos

CITY OR TOWN:  
Washington

STATE:  
D.C.

CODE:  
11

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Charles Willson Peale purchased his Germantown residence in 1810 and lived there until 1820, when he moved back to Philadelphia. When the artist settled on his farm, it consisted of 104.5 acres, the house sitting on top of a hill. The house remains on that site, but its land now consists of only about eight acres.

Erected around the middle of the eighteenth century, "Belfield" has been altered over the years. Peale himself made changes in the house which he said in 1810 had a gambrel roof, dormer windows, and numerous rooms. During Peale's occupancy, the house's main entrance was on the east, which had two-and-a-half stories and faced a road. Now, the main entrance is on the garden and one-and-a-half-story side on the west. A nineteenth-century owner added a story to the house and the present gambrel roof dates from about 1900. Despite such changes, the house still appears much as it did in Peale's day.

The interior of the house has also been altered to some degree. But the living room apparently has remained largely unchanged. Located on the north side of the house, the living room is said to have been Peale's studio.

The kitchen on the east side of the house was detached in Peale's time, but has since been connected to the house by a two-story wing. The original barn is now in use as a garage, and the springhouse and the two-and-a-half story tenant farmhouse are private residences.

A portion of the original garden site is still maintained as such and it contains the remains of two root cellars and a fishpond. A remnant of Peale's greenhouse still stands, incorporated into an 1890 greenhouse. All these elements are integral to the landmark.

The remainder of the original purchase is today occupied on the south and west by a public park and a cluster of seven houses, on the north by Lasalle College, and on the east by Central High School.

BOUNDARIES

Beginning at the SW corner of Olney Avenue and North 20th Street proceed W 400' along the S sidewalk of Olney Avenue, then S 490', then E 65', then S 295', then E 40', then S 230' to the N curb of Belfield Avenue, then E 265' to the NW corner of Belfield Avenue and North 20th Street, then N 1020' along the W sidewalk of North 20th Street to the point of origin.

These boundaries have been determined by including the building and the land which are still integrally connected with the historically significant phase of the farm's history, and by excluding the portions of the original purchase which have been converted for unrelated uses.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **1810-1820**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			_____

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Charles Willson Peale was the preeminent painter in America between 1774 and 1793, noted especially for his miniatures and portraits, which included seven likenesses of George Washington. In 1810, at the age of sixty-nine, Peale transferred the management of his famous museum to his son, and retired from commercial painting to the country, where he had purchased a farm and over one hundred acres of rolling land in Germantown, Pennsylvania. The property, first named "Farm Perservere" and later, "Belfield," was soon enhanced by an extensive formal garden and a textile mill, both products of Peale's active ingenuity. In 1820, Peale returned to Philadelphia to live, and finally sold "Belfield" in 1826. Today, the farmhouse and many of the outbuildings still remain as a working farm of eight acres at 2100 Clarkson Road.

BIOGRAPHY

Charles Willson Peale was born in Queen Anne's County, Maryland in 1741. The future artist's skill with his hands quickly showed itself and before he was twenty-two he had constructed coaches, built clocks, produced silver, and made saddles. Peale's ability to make things is probably best remembered by the set of false teeth that he subsequently made for George Washington, which imperfect denture caused the sunken mouth that appears in Gilbert Stuart's portraits of Washington.

About 1763, Peale turned from saddling to painting, having previously exhibited an interest in art, and paid for some instruction by John Hesselius by giving the old artist a saddle. Desiring additional advice, the Marylander travelled to Boston in 1765 and sought guidance from John Singleton Copley. Subsequently, Peale's progress and determination influenced some of his wealthier acquaintances in Annapolis to sponsor his going to London to study under Benjamin West, the American expatriate artist who was a major force in British painting. West, in his kindly, paternal fashion, accepted Peale, even taking the young artist into his household when he was almost indigent, and Peale worked under the master between January, 1767-March, 1769. Historical painting, portraiture in oils, and miniature painting were all studied by Peale while in London.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Royal Cortissoz and Samuel Isham, The History of American Painting (New York, 1927).  
 Jessie J. Poesch, "Mr. Peale's 'Farm Perservere': Some Documentary Views," Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society (Philadelphia, 1956).  
 Charles Coleman Sellers, Charles Willson Peale (Scribners, New York, 1969).  
 Incidental Reports, National Historic Landmark Files, Washington.

**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		UTM	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	

18.486740.4431770

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 8.4

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
 Richard E. Greenwood, Historian, Landmark Review Project

ORGANIZATION: Historic Sites Survey, Landmark Review Project      DATE: 11/12/74

STREET AND NUMBER:  
 1100 L. Street, N.W.

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

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION      NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

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 \_\_\_\_\_  
(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)  
 Designated: 12/24/65  
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)  
 Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Chief, Field & Arch. Surveys

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Boundary File

Keeper of The National Register  
 Acting Director, OHP      Date: 11/12/75

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(NATIONAL HISTORIC  
LANDMARKS)

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Pennsylvania	
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8. Significance second page

Upon his return to America, Peale began painting portraits, and by 1776 had established himself in Philadelphia.

In many respects Peale conforms to our idea of the shrewd, practical, and mechanically talented Yankee. And if there is something of a "mechanical" quality in his painting, then perhaps that is due to Peale's conviction that anyone could learn to paint, that native talent was not necessary. There is no doubt that Peale had ability, but evidence indicates that he finally concentrated on painting because he realized that it could afford a better income and greater prestige than coach-making or saddling. His pragmatic approach to painting is also shown by the fact that he taught his brother James to paint miniatures and then eliminated himself as a competitor; and that in his later years he taught his sons to paint portraits and then practically ceased painting himself. The man's practicality also helped to lead him into a myriad of other activities: he served as a captain of volunteers during part of the American Revolution; he became a member of the Pennsylvania legislature in 1779; he opened a museum in 1782 (which he moved to the second floor of Independence Hall-- Mastodon skeleton, stuffed birds, portraits of Revolutionary leaders, and all-in 1802); and he played a major role in the establishment of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in 1803.

The painter was as personable as he was industrious. As John Adams said, Peale was "a tender, soft, affectionate creature." Peale married three times and outlived all of his wives, by the first two of whom he had a dozen children who survived infancy. The sons received such names as "Raphael," "Rembrandt," and "Reubens," and some of them achieved minor fame as artists.

As he matured, Peale became a very good portrait painter, attracting sitters from even Canada and the West Indies. His early portraits exhibit a stiffness, but subsequently that quality disappeared, perhaps because of his training under West. A rapid worker, Peale usually began with the forehead and worked down: and in some of his portraits he experimented with his colors, some of which have faded. As a portrait developed on his canvas, Peale attempted to portray the character of his sitter, but more often than not the finished painting evidenced the friendly, moderate temper of the painter. His portrait of Thayendanegea, a noted Indian of the time, literally pictures the man, but the face expresses the artist's "hopes for peace interracial fraternity (rather) than . . . the Indian's complex character." <sup>1</sup> Besides his portraits, Peale produced innumerable miniatures, all of which show his great talent for that branch of painting.

Today, a great body of Peale's work is not only valued because of its artistic merit, but also because of its historical value. During the

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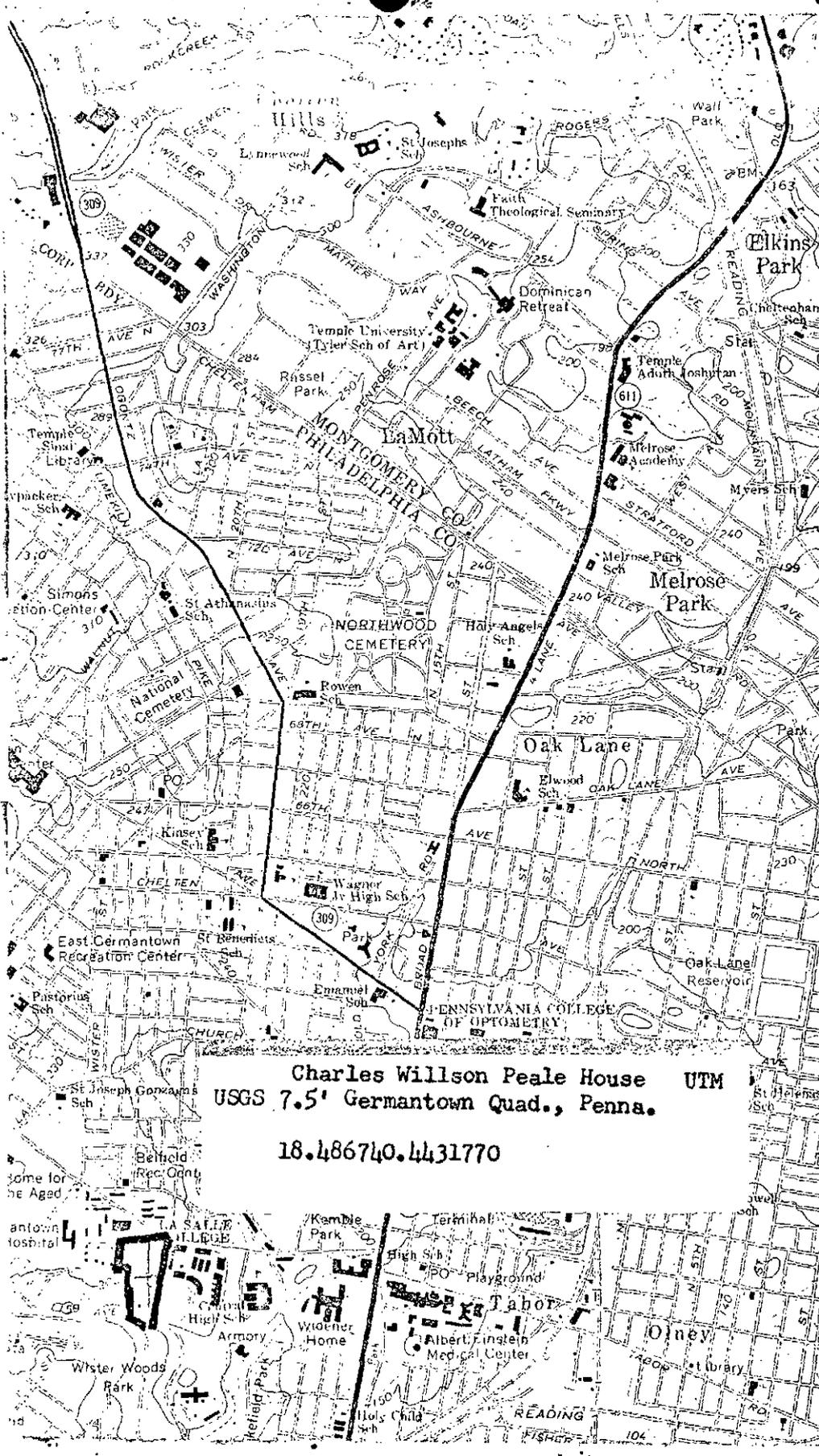
8. Significance third page

Revolution and after 1783, Peale painted a host of portraits of prominent Americans. When at Valley Forge during the bitter winter of 1778, the then soldier-artist painted forty miniatures of his companions, as well as a portrait of Washington. Peale's Washingtons are extremely well known, especially as the artist had the unique opportunity to portray the general at various stages of life. Peale's first Washington was done in 1772, when Washington was forty, and then followed portraits in 1776, 1777, 1779, and 1783. Subsequently, Washington sat for Peale in 1787 and 1795. Whether painting the commander-in-chief during the Revolution or any other officer, Peale paid meticulous attention to uniforms, and his accurate reproduction of Revolutionary military dress has great historical value.

Tremendously energetic, Peale remained active until his death on February 22, 1827.

1 Quoted in Charles Coleman Sellers, Portraits and Miniatures by Charles Willson Peale (Philadelphia, 1952), 3.

\* The textile mill was located on a stream that has been obliterated and the entire area paved over and built up outside the landmark boundary.



Charles Willson Peale House UTM  
 USGS 7.5' Germantown Quad., Penna.

18.486740.4431770

4436

4435

4434

4433

2'30"

4432

(FRANKFORD)  
 5964 II SE

