

The Peter Wilson House
1027 Main Street
River Edge, Borough of Riverside
Bergen County, New Jersey

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of New Jersey

Historic American Buildings Survey
Seymour Williams, F.A.I.A., District Officer
133 Central Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey

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The Peter Wilson House
1027 Main Street
River Edge, Borough of Riverside
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Owner: J. Pell Zabriskie, Riverside

Occupants: Mr. and Mrs. Newman White

Date of Erection: In or before 1820

Architect: Unknown

Builder: Peter Wilson, Li. D. (1746-1825), original
owner

Present Condition: Poor

Number of Stories: One and one-half, over high
basement

Materials of Construction:

Foundation - brownstone ashlar

Exterior walls - timber frame, clapboarded,
above brownstone basement

Interior walls - lath and plaster on wood
framing

Chimney - brick, built into inside of
gable end wall

Roof - gable, wood shingled

Historical Data:

The identity of the original owner of
this house as named above has been recovered by
search of title thereof in the County records,
reported as follows:

By an unrecorded deed of 1st May 1790,
one George Wilson of Hackensack Township, Bergen

County, conveyed to Peter Wilson^(a) of Flatbush, Long Island, N.Y. a 100 acre tract in Now Barba-
does Township, said County, bounded south by the
road from the village of Hackensack to New Bridge,
southwest and northwest by Mill Brook. In 1933
the remaining 90 $\frac{1}{4}$ acres thereof were bounded south
by Main Street, west by Park Avenue and east by
Kinderkamack Road (Riverside Avenue).

Having retired from Columbia College in
February 1820 on a \$1500 annual pension to this
modest house outside of the then village of
Hackensack, Dr. Peter Wilson made his will on 5
December 1820, proved 17 October 1825, in which
he devised his entire estate to the "use and
occupation" of his wife Catherine during widowhood
and in the event she preferred to reside with her
children, then the same property to be divided
equally among his children, George, Catherine,
Phoebe, Elizabeth, Margaret and Abraham. The wife,
sons Abraham D. and George Wilson and son-in-law
Samuel Harris he appointed executors, with power
to sell any or all of his property.

By deed of 21 February 1831, Catherine
Wilson, widow and co-executor abovenamed, conveyed
to Robert E. Ludlow in trust for Eliza E. Stevenson,
for \$3,960, the same 100 acre farm acquired by her
late husband by deed of 1790 as first described
above. Grantor states that of the three other
executors, Samuel Harris was deceased and George

(a) Peter Wilson, Ll. D., b. 23 Nov. 1746 in Banff,
Scotland, student in Mariochal College, Univ. of
Aberdeen, came to N.Y.C. was a teacher there in 1763,
first principal of Washington Academy, Hackensack,
N.J., about 1770, represented Bergen Co. in State
Leg. 1777-1783, editor of Laws of N.J., Ll. D. from
Union College 1793, eminent for learning, piety and
profound interest in politics, elected prof. of
Greek and Latin, Columbia College, N.Y.C. 1789, principal
of Erasmus Hall, Flatbush, L.I. by 1790, returned to
Columbia College for 26 years as professor and as
provost, resigned in Feb. 1820 and retired to Hackensack,
N.J., where he d. 18 Aug. 1825 in 79th yr. (Clayton and
Nelson, Hist. of Bergen and Passaic Counties, N.J., 1882,
pp. 183-186). See transcript of biographical inscription
on his gravestone in Hackensack R.D. Chyd. publ. in Barber
and Howe, Historical Collections of the State of N.J.,
1844, p. 84.

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and Abraham D. Wilson had refused to act, and that she had chosen to reside with her daughter Eliza Wilson. The widow died in 1843. As the result of court proceedings foreclosing the mortgage given by grantee, the property was sold and conveyed to Abraham Van Buskirk of New Barbadoes Twp. by deed of 13 December 1841.

The last named transferred it to John C. Zabriskie, of same place, for \$5000 by his deed of 15 October 1849, describing the farm as being then bounded south by the road from Hackensack to New Bridge, west by a lot of John T. Voorhis, southwest and south by lands of John Foster and Mill Brook, northeast by those of John Van Saun and of John Bogart, and east by those of Andrew Demarest.

John C. Zabriskie who thus acquired in 1849 this farm lying in the part of New Barbadoes Township which in 1871 was set off as Midland Township, by his will dated 24 April 1886 and proved 25 September 1895, devised to his wife Sarah Jane Zabriskie for lifetime "all my farm whereen I now live, together with the buildings" excepting 25 acres west of Van Saun Brook, devised to his son Nathaniel B. Zabriskie, and afterwards the entire farm to the son and to a daughter Jane A.

The son and devisee Nathaniel B. Zabriskie, of the Boro of Riverside (in which the farm lay since incorporation in 1891 from Midland Twp.) by his will of 20 January 1908, proved 20 March 1911, devised the farm to his son J. Pell Zabriskie. Likewise, by a codicil dated 1st Dec. 1925 to her will, Jennie A. Zabriskie of North Hackensack devised all her real estate to her nephew the said J. Pell Zabriskie, who remains as owner at the time of our survey of this, the oldest of three houses on the farm.

Reference: Search of title in land and probate records of Bergen County by Joseph Benenati, H.A.B.S. abstractor, reported 16 October 1940

Lewis D. Cook
Supervising Historian

Approved:

Seymour Williams
SEYMOUR WILLIAMS, F.A.I.A.
District Officer

A D D E N D U M

In further regard to Dr. Peter Wilson as the first principal of the Grammar School (Washington Academy) at N.W. cor. of Main and Warren Streets in Hackensack, New Jersey, 1767, his residence in 1787 was a stone house next above the Academy on Main Street. It was standing in 1913, when the words Peter Wilson Cath. Wilson anno 1787 were visible "carved in the stones over the window". This house and the Academy have since given place to modern store buildings. Dr. Wilson had purchased the plot from Isaac Van Giesen, father of his first wife, and erected this house for himself and his second wife. (a)

Peter Wilson married 1st Sara Van Giesen, b. 1752, dau. of Isaac Van Giesen and wife Marytjen Hoppe, of Hackensack, and had issue viz. Maria b. 7 Jan. 1774, and Maria b. 15 Oct. 1775. He married 2nd Catrina Duryea and had issue viz. Sara b. 21 Nov. 1781, George b. 10 July 1783, Peter b. 7 June 1785, George b. 14 Jan. 1787, a child bapt. 17 May 1789, at Hackensack R.D. Church, and Abraham D., Catherine, Phoebe, Eliza, and Margaret, the last five, evidently born after the removal of the family from Hackensack to New York City in 1789, being named in his will dated 5 Dec. 1820. (b)

"In memory of Peter Wilson, Ll. D., who was born in the parish of Ordignhill in the shire of Bamff, Scotland, Nov. 23d 1746 and emigrated to this country in 1763. For many years he was the efficient and successful principal of the academy in this place, and afterwards of that at Flatbush,

(a) Wm. M. Johnson, The Washington Institute, Hackensack, publ. in year book of the Bergen Co. Hist. Soc., 1913-14, pp. 4 et seq.

(b) Wm. Nelson, History of the City of Paterson and the County of Passaic, N.J., 1901, vol. 1, p. 270.

L.I., and for 26 years officiated as professor of languages in Columbia College. A zealous and successful patriot and Christian, and exemplary in all the public, social, and domestic relations which he sustained, he closed a life of indefatigable activity and constant usefulness on the 1st of August 1825, in the 79th year of his age. Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, They rest from their labors and their works do follow them." (c)

(c) Gravestone inscription, Reformed Dutch Churchyard, Hackensack, publ. in Barber & Howe, Historical Collections of the State of New Jersey, 1844, p. 84.

Lewis X. Cook

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