

## DELAWARE STREET

#206 - The "Penn House"  
(See Photo No. 46)

Summary: The oldest part of this house, a small, stoutly-built two-story dwelling (similar to the old part of the Colby house) was on this site when Reynier Vanderculen sold a half-interest in it to Dr. Gerardus Wessells in 1685. The land that then went with the house, extended along Delaware Street to a point about opposite the east side of present Second Street, and began "one foot west of the house".

The original house may have been there in 1670, when Peter Alrichs bought the tract along Delaware Street (from the west line of #124 to Third Street) from Mathias and Emilius deRinhg; or Alrichs may have built the house between 1670 and 1683 when he sold it to Renier Vanderculen. Before 1685, the house may have been included in the "buildings" and "improvements" on the larger plot of which this is part, but it is not specifically mentioned.

Dr. Wessells mortgaged the house and ground to John Darby (innkeeper on the Strand) in 1686, and some time later Reynier Vanderculen had the property back, for in 1696 he sold it, as previously described, to Cornelius Empson, "gentleman". At that time Empson was a judge in the court at New Castle and a member of Penn's assembly for the Delaware and Pennsylvania counties. In that same year, Empson sold his house and lot on the Strand to Richard Clark. The house at #206 Delaware Street would have been a convenient residence for a justice of the courts, and it may have been Empson who built the front part of the house.

(The Penn House, continued)

The ownership of the site and of the house on it is **fully** accounted for between 1670 and **1686-7**, by original records that disprove the claim that Arnoldus **delaGrange** either built or owned it. It is possible that Peter **Alrichs** rented it to **delaGrange** before he sold to Vanderculen, but there is no **known** source that would give such information. Also the "**legend**" seems to have been born in comparatively recent times. John Moll had a house on the **VanLeuvenigh** site and two others in the town when Penn came and it seems more likely - based on an actual court case in **1681** - that **Arnoldus delaGrange** rented one of them or was a guest of Moll in one of them, and that it was in a leased or loaned house that **William** Penn visited **delaGrange**.

Record of ownership immediately following that of Cornelius Empson **has** not yet been found (there are still some sheriff sales in **New Castle** between 1696 and 1721 to be checked and other **clues** to be **sought**). The next certain ownership of the house and the undivided plot of ground is by Thomas Allett, innkeeper, **who by** his will left the property to his wife Ann. Ann **Allett** sold the undivided plot to **Isaac** Janvier and Joseph Hill in 1722. Two years later, Hill and Janvier divided the plot. Isaac took the Penn house, in which he lived and the site of the **Delaware** House. In **1729**, Isaac **Janvier** sold the Penn **House** to his brother, Francis Janvier. Francis **Janvier's** family and descendents had it and lived in it until 1842, when William B. Janvier, who lived next door at

(The Penn House, continued)

#208, sold the **house** with a 22-foot front lot, to Cornelius D. Blaney, Esq., for \$1,140. The heirs of **Alpheus T. Hanson**, the next owner sold the house to **George W. Turner**, who remodeled the house front. Through his heirs it **was** conveyed to Harriet (**Turner**) Sternberg and her husband. From **Mrs. Sternberg's** son, the house was recently bought by **Mr. and Mrs. Marshall Burris**. Rather than repair the chimneys of the original house, the present owners have destroyed the two fine old fire places of the old house, one in each of the two back rooms on the first floor; (and probably the little corner fire place **upstairs** in the main house).

Throughout its history, #208 seems to have been a residence, without commercial use of any part of it. The possible exception **is** that **Allett** had an inn here. It seems more likely that he was one of the renters of the **Gilpin** house or perhaps the first keeper of the original Delaware House.

-----Detailed history on file-----

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**(The Penn House, continued)**

At present, there is nothing on the front of the house **which dates** prior to G. W. Turner's occupancy **which** terminated at his death in 1891. **It is** probable that the present front **was** built in the 1850's or 60's and has been altered since then. **The** gable on the alley is a gambrel type gable with the front raised by Turner to produce the third story which shows on the present facade. The brick work on the **gable** end are laid in common bond with rows of stretchers every fourth course. The bricks are large and irregular with many black glazed headers.

The small wing in the rear of the main **house** still retains **very** old frames and double hung sash **six** lights over six, and small in dimension. **The** windows on the first floor of the front gable are also old but larger in scale and six lights over nine.

Addenda - "Penn House"<sup>w</sup>

#206 Delaware Street

Since the **summary** of the **Penn house** was written, a **study** of **wills** and other records, **indicates** that Michael Trombolt (**Trummel**, or **Grummel**) innkeeper of New Castle, died possessed of this house in 1708; that he left it to his daughter Ann, wife of Peter **Godwin**; that following the death of **Godwin** in 1707 (leaving **his** wife Ann and **son** Peter one half of his estate, real and personal), **Ann** married Thomas **Allett**, innkeeper,

The foregoing partly fills the previous gap between the purchase by Cornelius **Empson** in 1696 and **possession** by Thomas Allett before 1721. No evidence of how Michael Trombolt became **possessed** of **the house** and tract of ground belonging to it has been found. Cornelius **Empson** may have been acting as attorney for Trombolt in 1696 as he did in the buying and selling of other New Castle property.