

J.E

THE STRAND

George More Plot - now the garden of the Morrison House, #14, and the site of the Presbyterian Manse, #20

(See Photo #17)

Original Flot - 4

Owners of this 60-foot plot in the Dutch period cannot be certainly determined from surviving records. In 1657 when Andries Hudde sold his house for the Dutch church, Sander Fenix had the 60-foot plot to the south. Later division of these plots indicates that Sander's plot contained 30 feet of this plot - the site of the Presbyterian Manse. In 1673, when the 50-foot plot south of the Dutch Church was granted to Emilius and Mathias de Ringh, the 60-foot site, subject of this sketch, was described as property of George Vale. Following George ~~Wale~~, it is owned by his widow and then by his step-son George More, son of his wife by a former husband. George ~~Wale~~ Sr., husband of Anne, owned large tracts of land in Kent County. After his death in the early 1670's his widow owned land in New Castle County near St. Augustine Creek and bought other land south of St. Georges Creek - but seems not to have lived on either. Her two sons, George More and George Wale (the latter probably a step-son) were old enough to own property in 1667, when they were granted the tract south of the Christina, known as the "old Minquas plantation". Whether George and Anne ~~Wale~~ before the death of George Sr., came to live in New Castle on the Strand site is not known, but the form of the court record implies that George More inherited the house and lot from his mother, widow of George Tale.

(George More Plot, continued)

George More, carpenter, who had the first known dwelling on the site of the "old Dutch house" on Third Street in 1682, and perhaps much earlier, appears frequently in the surviving court records from 1676 to 1635. His name is sometimes spelled Moore, and in the last record, "Moor."

In 1680, George More sold the house and 60-foot lot on the Strand, the site of the garden of the Morrison house, #14, and of the Presbyterian Manse, to Ephraim Herman. The same year, Ephraim Herman traded this 60-foot property with "orchards and dwelling houses" with Isaac Tayne Jr. (Tyne, Tine, "alias Lapier") for a 90-foot plot and the houses on it, up the Strand, now included in the Philip Laird property.

In 1695, the property of Isaac Tayne Jr., which he had by exchange from Ephraim Herman, being inherited by his sisters - Mary, the wife of John Joraain, and Elizabeth the wife of John Bisk, a division of the property was made. Mary Tayne Jordain, following the death of her first husband, had married William Crosse (Croisie, Crosie), glazier. Sarah, her daughter by her first husband, was thereafter known as Sarah Crosse. Sarah married Thomas Janvier and as the surviving heir of her mother was entitled to half the Isaac Tayne property, the other half being the share of her mother's sister Elizabeth Tayne Eisk, wife of John Bisk, tailor. This division accorded with the terms of Isaac Tayne's will.

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(George More Plot, continued)

In the agreement between those concerned, the south half of of the 60-foot lot went to John and Mary Bisk, the north half to Thomas and Sarah Janvier. William Crosse, stepfather of Sarah Janvier, was given a legal one-third interest in the Janvier half of the lot during his life-time.

Thomas Janvier, who married Sarah Jordain, daughter of Mary Tayne Jordain (afterward Mary Crosse, wife of William Crosse) was a Frenchman, who came to America about 1682 and a few years later settled at New Castle. He was naturalized February 21, 1695 by William Markham, Penn's deputy-governor, along with several others of French birth, and given liberty to trade in Penn's territory. From the spellings of the names "Tayne als Lapier", Jordain and Croisie, it is likely that both Sarah Jordain's parents were of French descent and that her step-father also was French.

Thomas Janvier had a large family and his descendants played an important part in the life of New Castle, and in the development of the colony and early state as part of a wider commercial enterprise of the seaboard states. Among those who inherited his Strand property, the site of the present manse, and the lot on the opposite side of the street, where the first Thomas had built house, shop and wharf, were his sons Philip and John, his grandsons Thomas and Richard, and great-grandsons John and Thomas.

John and Thomas, in 1818 organized the Union Line of stages across the Peninsula from New Castle to Frenchtown on the Chesapeake,

(George More Plot, continued)

and acquired an interest also in the Union Line of packet and passenger ships that after 1829 plied the Delaware Canal. In 1830 the Janviers were the able promoters of the earliest passenger railroad, the "New Castle and Frenchtown" and John became president of the board.

William B. Janvier, who was later the builder and owner of #208 Delaware Street, learned the merchandising practice and lore of his day in the shop of John and Thomas across the street from the manse and his first adult job was as clerk in the office of their "Union Line";, which conducted a tavern and ware house on the riverside property.

The fire of 1824, which destroyed shop, tavern and ware house caused great loss to the Janvier family, but all were soon rebuilt and their enterprise then entered its period of greatest expansion in ships, railroadways and foreign trade.

In the 1850's the property was owned by Ann Janvier, who married Dr. Charles H. Black. Ann Janvier Black left the property to her son, Dr. William J. Black, who in 1885 sold it to Samuel Cooper, who that same year sold it for one dollar to the Presbyterian Church for a Manse. So from the time this property was inherited by the first Thomas Janvier in 1695, it remained in the Janvier family* until the year it was sold to the church, nearly 200 years.

* The family line has not been fully traced in this search. An original account of the family by William S. Janvier was lent for that purpose by Miss Mabel Harman of Townsend, a descendant.

(George More Plot, continued)

No early descriptions of the house on the site of the manse have been found. The 1804 survey shows a plain two-story house with entrance door in the center and a central dormer in the attic story, also a central chimney. A house that may have been frame. Whether completely destroyed by the fires of 1824 or only badly damaged has not been discovered, nor has the actual date of building been found so far, but the brick dwelling house is on the site in 1827. The house has the exterior and interior characteristics of the good but unpretentious houses of the early nineteenth century which show the taste and financial competence of the owner and builder.

Site of the Morrison House Garden

The south half of the Isaac Tayne plot which fell to John and Elizabeth Bisk in the division of 1695, seems to have been owned for a good many years by members of the Janvier family. Whether it had a house on it in 1695 is not stated in the indentures of division, although "houses" were mentioned in the exchange with Emphraim Herman. But "house and lot" are mentioned as the bounds for the Morrison house in the early 1700's. Owners of this lot mentioned in indentures for the adjoining properties are Thomas, John, and Richard Janvier.

The 1804 survey shows a three-story house (which contemporary indentures describe as frame) having two front doors with a sign

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(George More Plot, continued)

above the northern one. In 1812, the property was seized by the sheriff as part of the estate of James Rowan and sold to Abraham See.

The house, stable and other buildings were totally destroyed by the fire of 1824 and in 1825, the lot was advertised for sale as part of the real estate of the late Abraham Lee. It was bought by Samuel Johnson, as recorded in 1828. (In this indenture John Janvier is given as the owner of the Manse house.) Dr. James Cooper bought it (the lot) in 1837. His house, #14, now the Morrison house, adjoined to the south. From the heirs of Dr. Cooper, the lot was bought by James T. Morrison, who also bought #14.