

THE STRANDOriginal Strand Plot between the
Read House and the Tile House. 63'

(See Photos #31 and 32)

Original Plot - 10

The earliest known owner of the 63' plot between the major part of the present Read House property and the Tile House plot, was William Maurits (Morris), an Englishman from Cornwall, who had become a Dutch citizen. The plot then included what is now the north 17' or 18' of the site of the George Read II house, Read's alley, and the south part of the present garden of #54 The Strand. Maurits was at Fort Casimir in 1655 and perhaps earlier. In that year he was married to Jannet Thomas, the 16-year old "ward and daughter" of Thomas Broen (Brown), another Englishman who had acquired Dutch citizenship.

In 1656 Maurits was made tobacco inspector. At least part of his private occupation at the time was dealing in liquors. Maurits also owned the Tile house site adjoining. He probably sold this 63' plot (adjoining the Tile house site) to the New Dutch director of New Amstel, Jacob Alrichs, for between the director's arrival in April 1657 and his death in December 1659, he had bought "house and lot" on this site.

The property is next recorded in the English period, 1667, when a patent for it is confirmed to Hendrick Jansen Van Jeveren, a Dutchman, who in 1656 had been settled on Long Island. Cornelius

Jorrison (George) and his wife Gertie owned house and lot in the early 1670's. After Jorrison's death, his wife married Gerrit Otto, one of the justices of the court. Gerrit and Gertie sold the property to Jan Harmansen, carpenter, in 1678. Harmansen was probably the same Jan Harmansen who came to New Amsterdam from Holland with his sister Jannetje in 1658.

No record of transfer from Jan Harmansen has been discovered. Harmansen married a New Castle wife, Catherine, the widow of Hans Banes, a property owner in the town. Harmansen was naturalized by William Fenn in 1683, and was several times appointed by the court an appraiser of property. In 1684 he bought a lot on Third Street from Hans Coderns, and two years later disposed of his farm of 440 acres near Red Lyon. He last appears in the records in 1689. In 1701, house and lot are in the possession of Joseph Wood, gentleman, who has just been appointed sheriff of New Castle County by William Penn, and who may have owned the house and lived here a few years earlier. In 1701, he was granted the river lot opposite this property.

Joseph Wood was listed as land owner and taxpayer on Long Island in 1687 and he and his family appear in the Long Island records as early as 1675. In Penn's warrants, Joseph Wood is called the son of William Wood, who was a member of Penn's council from Bucks County, 1684 and 1685, and a judge of the provincial court. After coming to New Castle, Joseph Wood acquired interests

in Chester end Darby and bought a tract of land and marsh along the Delaware immediately north of New Castle, also the Tile house property and a plantation in Red Lion Hundred.

Joseph Wood's daughter, Letitia, who married Samuel Lowman, inherited this house in which she and her husband lived. Joseph Wood died in 1721. Samuel Lowman was the collector of the port and in 1722 was commissioned a justice of the court for the three counties of Delaware.

Letitia Wood Lowman survived her husband; her brother, Joseph Wood Jr. of Cecil County, executor of their father's estate, administered his sister's estate also, for a debt against it, this house and lot were seized and sold in 1734 to the highest bidder, Dr. John Finney, for 165 pounds. The appraised value had been 225 pounds. The house like almost all early houses, was built on the north side of the lot, the north line of which was about 25' south of the present entrance walk on the Tile house site. The appraisal value indicates a substantial dwelling at the time. Joseph Wood Jr. had sold the water lot opposite to John Richardson in 1723.

Dr. Finney who had his own fine house (now Amstel house) evidently bought for investment, and rented the property. He sold in 1771 to Thomas Clark whose occupation has not been found. Clark in 1779 sold to Joseph Tatlow who had a stage line and may have had a tavern and stage office here. He had stables at; the back of

the property on Second Street. Captain William Aull, merchant, was the next owner, member of the Aull family who built row houses on Second Street and on the east side of the Strand.

In 1796 William Aull sold a strip along the south side of the plot, about 18' wide to George Read II, who was planning to build the Read house, and provided that a 9' alley should be left between what he sold to Read and the remainder of the plot. The remaining part of the property Aull sold the same year to William Armstrong, innkeeper, as "all that brick messuage and lot of land", containing 42' on the Strand, 9' of which, from the Strand to the Green, was an alley or lane for the use of both parties. A "one-story frame dwelling" adjoining the brick dwelling on the site next the alley, as shown on the 1804 survey elevations, is mentioned in other indentures, which may have been the early house of the Dutch period.

In 1808 Armstrong's tavern property was seized by the sheriff. It must have been acquired by Samuel Barr, for in 1817, it is sold as late of Samuel Barr to James R. Black, trustee, who immediately sold it to Dr. Henry Colesberry. William Callahan bought the brick and frame house on the 42' lot in 1818. So indentures have been found to date for the succeeding owners. That the dwellings survived the fire of 1824, and that the property was then owned by Dr. James Cooper Sr. (who the following year bought the Morrison house site and erected that large brick dwelling) is attested by Dr. Cooper's letter in the Delaware Gazette, May 4, 1824,

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(Plot 10, continued)

thanking his "fellow citizens for their efficient exertions during the late fire", by which his dwelling house was saved together with the adjoining house. (The adjoining house was of brick, two stories, on the south 25' of the Tile house plot - as shown in the photograph of the Tile house plot recently discovered by Mr. Thomas Holcomb.)

Except that the property descended to the heirs of Dr. James Cooper, search to date has not provided sufficient information to tell when the house was torn down, nor when the lot came into possession of an owner of the Tile house lot. This later history should be easy to find, and will be added as soon as there is time.

What must have been a good brick dwelling was on the plot when it was appraised for the court at 225 pounds, before the sale to Dr. Finney. This house may have been built by Joseph Wood, a prosperous man, or it may have been built originally by Jan Harmensen, the carpenter, replacing or adjoining the one-story wooden house with brick chimney which would have been characteristic of the house on the site in 1655, the time of William Maurits.

Detailed and documental history on file

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~~7~~⁶Plot 10, continued)

There is some vestige of this house still remaining as built into the brick garden wall of #54 the Strand and recorded in this report on Photos #31 and #32.

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Addenda

Original Strand Plot **between** the Read House
and the Tile House
Original - 10 #33 and #32

Since the summary of this plot was written, record has been found indicating that Joseph Wood acquired this property in two parts from the heirs of Jan Hermeneon and of Cornelius George, the house first, #32 and then the adjoining lot #31.

And further, that in 1818, Henry Colesberry sold to William Callahan the two-story brick dwelling house together with a one-story frame dwelling house and other improvements, on the west side of Front Street, bounded by George Read Esquire and others, the same premises which lately belonged to Samuel C. Barr, Esq., deceased, which had been sold for \$810 at public sale to Dr. Colesberry, by James R. Black as trustee for Samuel Barr and Elizabeth, his wife in 1817, with houses, gardens, fences. (Elizabeth was Elizabeth Van Leuvenigh Bird, widow of John Bird who died in 1810, after which she married the Reverend Samuel Barr,

Samuel Barr had bought the property at sheriff sale.

William Callahan died intestate, and the property descended through his wife and children,

The successive deeds indicate that Dr. James Couper must have been a tenant only of the property in 1824. In 1861 and 1852, William Couper who then owned the Read house, secured the whole of this adjoining property from the heirs of William Callahan.

The alley next to the Read house, known as Read's alley, was also known for many years as Callahan's alley,