

J.E.

THE STRAND

Southwest Corner of Strand and Harmony
Sixty Foot Plot, Original Number Twelve
Immanuel Church Parish House and Two
Adjoining Houses to the South.

(See Photos #24, #25 and #26)

Original Plot - 12

Early in the English period, Derrick Albertsen is listed by the Duke of York's government among the "responsible house keepers and their families" at New Castle. Albertsen's claim in 1675 to some mill property that had been granted to him by the Dutch deputy, William Beekman, points to his Dutch citizenship before the English came. No certain previous owner* of the 60-foot plot extending between the strand and the Green bordering Harmony Street has been found, and the earliest record found of Albertsen's ownership is in that of John Boyer's purchase of the Tile house site adjoining in 1678, which cites this corner property as belonging to the "heirs of Derrick Albertsen." Albertsen owned other property in town and surrounding country. He was a justice of the court for some years and in 1675 wrote to the Duke's governor at New York, that he and John Moll were the only justices to be relied upon to form a court in Sod weather. Hans Block "being ancient" - Foppe Jansen (living on the Jersey side) "cannot come over when there is ice in the river," "Mr. Chew living so far as Appoquinimy", and now Mr. Moll was about to go to Maryland "where his business will keep him most part of the winter." Hans Block and John Moll sign this statement with Albertsen in an appeal to the governor to name more justices to complete the bench and "to

• There is some slight indication that William Maurits or Thomas Brown, whose daughter Maurits married, may have had the plot in 1655.

send over a new law book and some paper books to keep the records in order, none being here to be purchased."

A few years later Albertsen, himself, was dead; administrators were appointed by the court to serve jointly for the heirs and orphans of both Derrick Albertsen and Martin Rosemont. The two men had a partnership, in what activity is not mentioned but involved holding some property jointly. The estates are settled and the administrators released by the signature of two of the heirs in 1690. The heirs who signed were Cornelius Derrickson, who must have been a son of Derrick Albertsen, and Abraham Enloes who must have represented the heirs of Martin Rosemont.*

The administrators of the estates were Edmund Cantwell, Johannes deHaes, Peter Alrichs and Ephraim Herman. Johannes deHaes may have bought part or all of the whole plot from the Albertsen heirs, for the next certain owners of parts of it are his son Roeloff and his daughter Rebecca. Meanwhile, when Joseph Wood bought the Tile house from the daughters of John Boyer in 1735, this adjoining plot is described in the deeds as "late of Adam Baldrige"; but as all the indexed records of Saldrige property are cited as in Book R which no longer exists, his connection with this property cannot be traced. In 1708 when Roeloff deHaes acquired the waterlot on the opposite side of the Strand, deHaes owned this plot, at least the Strand end of it, 60' wide, so Baldrige may have been his tenant.

* For Rosemont in New Castle, see Summary of Colby house history, #110 Delaware Street.

(Plot 12, continued)

In 1726, the "house and lot", belonging to the estate of Roeloff deHaes, was sold by the sheriff to George Monro, glazier, to satisfy a debt recovered by Adam Petersen against the executors of the deHaes estate. The executors were Rowland Fitzgerald and Col. John French. The description of the lot at this time is that it is 60' on the Strand and 40' deep on Harmony Street. On the Strand, 6" is allowed for eavesdrop of the Tile House, then owned by Dr. Patrick Reilly, and on Harmony Street the 40' depth takes the plot back line 10" past the corner of Col. John French's little brick house." Dr. Reilly had bought 52' on Harmony Street at the Market Place end from Rebecca deHaes Burney, Roeloff's sister, in 1716. This left a stretch of ground on Harmony Street between Col. John French's little brick house and Dr. Reilly's corner plot on Second Street, all or most of which may have been acquired by Col. French when he settled the Roeloff deHaes estate; for his widow later owned much of it. See Harmony Street summary.

George Monro, who acquired the Strand plot in 1726 was a native of Scotland. When he mortgaged part of this property in 1727 (the Roeloff deHaes house "with porch and entry" on the corner 25'), the deed gives his wife as "Margaret". Scharf's history says George Monro married Lydia Hall, niece of Col. David Hall, the Revolutionary hero, and later governor of the state. The birth of his son, Dr. George Monro, prominent Delaware physician (who married Jemima, daughter of the Revolutionary leader Col. John Haslet), is said to have been 1760. George Monro, who owned the

corner part of the plot for 70 years, may well have rebuilt the house of Roeloff which was on this corner, but no certain record remains.

George Monro Sr. died intestate, 1793, and the 60' Strand property was inherited by his son, Dr. George Monro, a second son James, and a daughter Mary, who was married to Dr. James McCallmont. George Jr. and James signed over to their sister and brother-in-law their interest in the inherited plot. Dr. McCallmont later bought land on Harmony Street extending the 40' depth of the property to 92', and bought also the plot on the opposite side of the Strand containing a house known as the "Ferry house", and a wharf. This latter lot originally belonging to Roeloff deHaes had been bought by Dr. Reilly or the Tile house in 1718.

That Dr. James McCallmont built the three-story brick house, now #56, before he and his wife Mary had title to the land is not proved by document found but relevant data indicates that George Monro Sr. may have permitted his daughter Mary and her husband to build here with the understanding that they would inherit the ground. Dr. James McCallmont, in turn must have permitted his sister Susanna and her husband Charles Thomas Sr. to build on the corner 23' of this Strand plot before they owned it, for that house is believed to have been built about 1801, at the same time as the Read house, and by the same builder, Peter Crowding. In both cases the erection of the houses may have begun at the time of a sale,

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(0-12, continued)

not to be recorded until the property was paid for. The deed from Dr. James McCallmont and his second wife Martha (McMullin) for the corner part, was recorded in 1812. The property then conveyed to Charles Thomas was 23' on the Strand, widening to 27' back of the frame shop next door on the Strand, and extending in depth along Harmony Street, 140'. The house then on this site, the front part of the present Immanuel Church Parish house, was built as a hotel by Charles Thomas sr. Mr. Laussat Rogers believes from examination of the walls that; the old brick house walls of George Monro's time were used as part of the new house of 1801. Whether the little brick house of Col. French was incorporated in the back part of the house remains to be determined.

Elevations on the 1804 survey show the structures there on the original 60' plot, as the three story brick house of Dr. McCallmont with a party wall between it and the Tile house to the south; the "frame shop" mentioned in the deeds as part of the McCallmont property in the center, and the very tall hotel building of Charles Thomas on the corner.

Just when the frame shop was removed and replaced by the present three stony brick house, #58, is uncertain. Dr. James McCallmont died intestate in 1824. Three years later the brick house, #56, with the frame shop adjoining, and the water lot opposite with its "wharf and storehouse" were bought by Dr. James Cooper at public sale, the highest bidder, from Ann and Sarah McCallmont, the daughters of Dr. James McCallmont. Dr. Cooper paid

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(C-12, continued)

570 pounds for the house and shop with its ground and outbuildings and 600 pounds for the river lot opposite. In 1829 Dr. Cooper sold the property back to George McCallmont, who must have been related to the heirs. (Dr. James McCallmont's family not yet fully traced in this search.)

In 1853, the house and shop, #56, #58, were sold by George Finley McCallmont to Isaac Wright. That same year Isaac Wright sold to John Wright the site of #58 for \$400. The plot remained in the Wright family by bequest or sale until Samuel Wright sold #58, about 1880 or earlier, as a three story brick house, to Joseph King. A conveyance between members of the right family in 1861 was for \$1,000, at which time the present house may have been on the lot. The King family had the property until 1907 when it was sold to John H. Hammers for \$1,200. In 1918, it sold for \$1,900 to Thomas A. Rees and is still owned in the Rees name by Lillie and Frances Rees.

The McCallmont house, #56, after passing from the Wright family, belonged to Louis Duncan. The subsequent history of the house has not yet been satisfactorily traced. . . .
James H. Hammers
(1951)

The Charles Thomas house on the corner descended through the Thomas heirs to William Thompson Read, son of George Read XI. William T. Read married Sallie Latimer Thomas, daughter of Dr. William Thomas (?). After William T. Read's death in 1873, the house came into the possession of his wife's niece, Miss Eliza Thomas, who left it to Immanuel Church.

The search for the history of those three houses, #56, #57 and #58 The Strand, has been completed to the extent that it is apparent that #53 (The Thomas House) and #56 are very early 19th century houses. The Thomas house in its good state of preservation needs very little done to it. Time has not been so kind to #56 as its facade has been stuccoed; later frames and sash have been added and the arrangement of the first floor windows and door are known to have been changed. Further study at the building could develop an authentic and interesting facade which would add very much to the charm and dignity of the Strand. #57, obviously later, is not endowed with any particular distinction but in its present simple lines does not disturb the harmony of the street enough to justify its removal. The frame shop shown on the 1803 survey as being on the site of #57 is a more interesting building and with more research this might lead to an interesting restoration.