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River Side of the Strand between
Delaware and Harmony Streets

B-8 and B-9: Opposite the Read House and Garden
Present Owner: Mrs. Philip Laird

In confirming the original 120' plot on the west side of the Strand opposite the south 120' of the present Laird river lot, Governor **Lovelace** in 1672, recited that part of it had been granted to Isaac Tayne Sr., on September 27, 1655 by peter Stuyvesant. This is one of the few grants by **Stuyvesant** made at the time he recaptured Fort Casimir from the Swedes, that gives the date of the month. A recording of the original Dutch patent must have been before Governor Lovelace, or his property commissioners, when the English deed was written. Tayne, in the meantime had bought additional ground adjoining, from Foppe Jansen Outhout, and the deed of 1671 was for 120' between Bernard Ekon and Hendrick Jansen Van **Jeveren**.

The son and heir of Isaac Tayne, Isaac Tayne Jr. traded 90' of this plot to Ephraim Herman in 1680, for a plot down the Strand, and Herman secured the remaining 30' from Johannes **deHaes** who had bought it at public sale. There was a house on the north 60' of the plot and one on the south 60' in 1669; both probably built in the Dutch period, the northern one Foppe **Jansen's**. The copy of the confirmation to Tayne, dated in the deed record, 1670, has an added clause, "**and a bank lot on the Strand,**" indicating that whoever recorded the patent recognized that the right to the use of the riverside in front of Strand properties **went** with the grant **of the** west side land.

For Ephraim **Herman's** ownership and use of water lots B-8 and B-9, see the condensed summary on Piers, **Wharves**, and **Ferries**. Following Ephraim's death **about** 1690, his widow Elizabeth, who acquired the whole of the property by purchase of her brother-in-law's share (**Casperus** Herman, the second of the only two sons of **Augustine** Herman), married John Donaldson, a prosperous merchant of **New Castle** with interests up and down the river and in **Maryland**.

By the **same** ancient ceremony of turf and twig, by which **William** Penn received title to all the land of the Delaware Counties, John (and Elizabeth?) Donaldson sold to Robert French in 1701, a large house on the west side plot on the Strand (with rights of the water lot). The deed recites that John Donaldson "**did** by turfe and **twigg** and by lock and key give possession of his dwelling house (and lots) at **New castle**^u to Robert French, Robert French was an attorney, a merchant and a leading citizen, greatly depended upon by **William** Penn, Penn gave French the legal confirmation to his bank lot, **B-8** and **B-9**, **120' x 600'** in 1701.

Following Robert French's death in 1713, his widow married Robert **Gordon**, another prominent merchant, who doubtless used the "**front** or bank lot with the improvements thereonⁿ which Robert French left to his wife for her lifetime. Her son, **David** French inherited it, **and as** he had **no** children, his sister Katherine's children and their deecedents, the Maxwell's, **Sykes'** and **Patten's**.

At **an early period** there **was** a dwelling, or other building on the Strand side of the 120' bank lot next to **#33**. **In a deed of**

conveyance for the site of #33 in 1793, that site is bounded to the north with the lot...of William Maxwell, "whereon a house formerly stood." Tradition has it that heavy storms washed away the "improvements" on this bank lot, wharf or landing platform being washed down the river in the time of George Read Sr. When George Read Sr., just before his death in 1798, bought the house on the Strand in which he had lived for many years, the purchase included the 120' bank lot opposite.

So far no record has been found in this search to indicate any commercial use of this plot in the time of George Read Sr. and George Read Jr., other than the tying up of small vessels during the time the wharf was there. The water came much closer to shore than now. After piers were built in this part of the harbor, mud flats filled in some of the present area and the rest has been filled in over the succeeding years and a strong sea wall built.

After the death of George Read II in 1836, the bank lot property was in the possession of his heirs and executors, until 1846, when William T. Read was authorized by the Orphan's Court to sell the Read mansion house and garden together with the bank lot opposite. The purchaser was William Couper, son of Dr. James Cooper, Sr. The bank lot extended 120' on the Strand from #33, then late of James McCullough and the former #47 (since removed by the late Philip Laird.) The depth was 600' into the river.

From the heirs of William Couper, the property on both sides of the Strand was bought in 18^a/~~20~~ by Mrs. Philip Laird, the present owner.