

River Side of the Strand Between  
Delaware and Harmony Streets

B-10, opposite the Garden north of the  
Read House, comprising #47 (removed) and  
#49, both owned by Mrs. Philip Laird

In the Dutch period, this river lot, comprising what became #47 and #49, was 63' on the Strand, opposite the house and lot of the first known owner, William Maurits, a Dutch citizen of English birth, who was tobacco inspector at Fort Casimir in 1656. The Dutch director of New Amstel, Jacob Alrich, who arrived in April 1657, bought house and lot. He died in 1659, and the next record found is in 1667, when the English governor confirmed the property to the Dutch Hendrick Jansen Van Jeveren. The succeeding owners, Cornelius Jorrison, Gerrit Otto, Jan Harmonson, all belonged to families settled on the river in the Dutch period.

The first English owner known after William Morris, was Joseph Wood, who had the property in 1701, when he acquired the bank lot opposite. Joseph Wood, gentleman, was appointed sheriff by William Penn that same year at the request of Wessel Alrichs who declined reappointment. Wood died in 1721, and his son, Joseph Jr., sold the bank lot to John Richardson\*, merchant, of Christiana who was buying other property in New Castle about this time. Richardson, by will, of 1755, left the bank lot with its appurtenances to his son Joseph. Joseph's daughter Sarah Richardson, who married Nicholas Waln, inherited.

\* He was John Richardson Jr., son of John Richardson Sr. of New Castle, who died in 1710, leaving two sons, John and Richard. The brother of John Sr. was Joseph of Glamford Bridge, England.

What use Joseph Wood, John Richardeon, his son Joseph and son-in-law Nicholas **Waln**, made of this water lot is not known, except that there was a wharf on it and perhaps warehouses, for Richardson Sr., did a large merchandising business, and is believed to have **owned** one or more sloops, plying the Delaware River and the Christina to his plantation and warehouse at **Christiana**.

In 1797, Nicholas and Sarah **Waln** sold to William Aull their water lot 63' on Front Street by 600' deep into the river. (For the Aull family, see Second Street summary.) Soon after his purchase, **William** Aull divided the 63' plot into two unequal parts on the Strand and on the larger north part, 40' wide built the **two-story** frame dwelling house, **#49\***, that was later changed into two dwelling houses and more recently returned to its original form, He then built a three-story brick house on the smaller part, setting the **house** on the line of the Read lot to the south and leaving an alley between the brick house and his frame **messuage**, the **smaller** plot, including the house, being 23' on the Strand.

**#47**

The brick house of William Aull, **#47**, he and his **wife Rachel** sold in **1800** to James and **Samuel** Caldwell as **tenants in common** for \$4,000, on the plot 23' x 600'. In 1801 **James** Caldwell and **Sarah his** wife sold this same property to James M. Broom, "now of **Wilmington**".

*\* In 1800 this is called a frame messuage and is transferred as such until after 1826 and the property is not sold in two parts until 1852. Judge Rodney says it was*

On April 24, 1806, James M. Broom advertised this house for sale, in the Mirror of the Times (Wilmington), as his "house and lot in Front Street, opposite the lately erected house of George Read Esq., 28 feet on **Front** Street and 600 feet deep into the river. The house is three stories, nearly new, and neatly finished, well suited to any person in trade or private life, for the situation is not only central but handsome and **pleasant.**"

As part of **Broom's** estate in 1829, #47 was sold by the sheriff to Edward Tatnall for \$1,450. The next sale was by **Tatnall** to James Blount for \$900 in 1844.

In 1855, **William** Couper, who then owned the Read house bank lot, made a conveyance to James Blount, for one cent annual payment, the right **"to** use the window now opened in the lower story of the south west end of his brick house on the southeast side of Front Street, adjoining and bounding on the vacant lot lately of Mary **G.** Read, now of **said William** Couper for and during any number of years the said William Couper may find **it** convenient or agreeable. **"**

From James Blount and Lydia his wife, the property came into **possession** of their children, John and Sally Ann Blount. In 1925, John Blount sold to John **Elkington**, **"all** that **messuage** known as #47 the **Strand.**" Elkington sold to Lydia **C.** Laird in 1926. **Mr.** and **Mrs.** Philip Laird, later removed **this** house.

#49

William Aull died in 1803, leaving an older brother James in Ireland, and a younger brother, John Aull, a carpenter, in New Castle, and sisters, Mrs. Jane Aull Blair, a widow in New Castle, Mary Aull, spinster, in Philadelphia, and Mrs. John McDonald (Martha) in Ireland. William's brother, John Aull, sold #49 in 1826 to Elijah Start, who divided the house into two properties, #49 and #51, each about 19' front by 600' deep, the sale of the separate parts beginning in 1852. After numerous changes of ownership of the separate parts, they came into possession of one owner, Lydia C. Laird, who still owns #49.

No indication of use other than as dwelling houses has been found in wills and indentures connected with #47 and #49. Neither is there any indication in any deeds, wills or other sources that these houses were damaged by the fire of 1824. The sale price of \$4,000 in 1800 compared with \$1,450 at sheriff sale in 1829, may <sup>may</sup> or/not indicate damage as well as deterioration and change in property values. The fire on the west side of the Strand was stopped at the present Read house. Even the old frame house next to Read's alley, was saved by the firemen and citizens. That John Steele, one of the heirs of William Aull with ownership interest in both #53 and #55, to the north of #47 and #49, is listed as losing two buildings in 1824, John Aull, with interest in #53 as losing one building and James McCallmont at the corner of the Strand and Harmony, as losing one, indicates that these were the warehouses behind

the houses, nearer the wharves, all of which were destroyed. The open Read bank lot, 120' along the Strand and the river, with no buildings and only a small landing wharf at the shore, obviously broke the sweep of the fire up the east side of the Strand except for the back buildings and any partial damage that may have been done to the houses fronting the street. All of these houses, #47 to #55, were in use as dwelling houses in 1826, described as they were before the fire. The buildings lost by the owners of these houses in the fire, were "destroyed by the fire", so far as Wilmington newspapers are reliable record.

William Aull, who built #49 first, then #47, and soon afterward, #53 and #55, appears in the 1804 indenture of power of attorney to John Aull following the death of William, as formerly of Newtown, Lunmarvady (?) in Ireland, "dealer and chapman<sup>n</sup> (merchant) who sailed from Londonderry to Philadelphia about 1784, and then settled in New Castle. He is referred to in the minutes of the town commissioners for 1797, as Captain William Aull.