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## THIRD STREET - #16

Part of the Original Ambrose Backer Property  
 (See Introduction to Summary of the  
 Kensey Johns House, #2 Third Street)  
Present Owner of #16. Judge Richard S. Rodney

Following the death of Bmbrose Backer in 1696, this plot, together with the rest of the plot between Silsbee's Alley and Delaware Street descended by will to Backer's daughter, Hermina, who married Edward Cole of New Castle, a cooper. Hermina and Edward released the property to Hermina's mother, Alchee Backer and Adam Hay or Hyke in 1701. In 1708, Adam Bay sold to Jonathan Savage (occupation undiscovered) a 25' lot extending from Third to Fourth Street (from the Green to Beaver Street) south of and adjoining Silsbee's alley. The price was 14 pounds 10 shillings. Nothing has been found concerning Jonathan Savage, except that he bought in 1718 from Edward Cole and his then wife Esther\*, for 20 pounds silver money, a 30' foot lot down the street (next to the Kensey Johns house) the site of #8.

No indentures have been found - neither wills nor deeds, to indicate when or to whom Jonathan Savage disposed of the 25' lot now the site of the main house of Judge Richard S. Rodney. Between this 25' lot sold by Adam Hay to Savage in 1708, and the 30' lot sold by Adam Hay to Samuel Silsbee in 1709, there was a 13' plot. No deed before 1751 has been found mentioning this plot,

\* Both Adam Hay, and Hermina, Cole's first wife, were dead, and Edward Cole (evidently married to a second wife Esther) was again in possession of the property on Third Street that had not been sold by Adam Hay between 1701 and 1710, when he died.

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but it was probably the lot or house and lot sold between 1701 and 1710 by Adam Hay to Mary Scott. Both the 25' lot and the 13' lot each with a "messuage" belonged to one owner before 1748, at which time the 13' lot was only  $84\frac{1}{2}$ ' deep from Third Street, while the 25' lot extended the full distance of 169' between Third and Fourth Streets.

In 1751, a deed of sale by John Finney Esq., administrator of Sarah Johnston, deceased, widow of Francis Johnston, a cooper of New Castle, to Daniel McLonen, yeoman, recites, that Francis Johnston owned these two messuages and lots of ground, and that after the death of Johnston the properties were sold\* to John Scott in 1748, who the same year sold them back to the widow, Sarah Johnston. Sarah Johnston died intestate and the court appointed Dr. Finney administrator. The deed of sale in 1751 by Dr. Finney to McLonen, was recorded in 1756; the purchase price was 45 pounds 1 shilling.

In 1782 Daniel McLonen conveyed the two messuages and lots of ground to his niece, Agnes McLonen, out of love and affection

\* In his will of 1748, Francis Johnston left to his wife, Sarah, his best feather bed, two spinning wheels and other furniture, and also his sorrel horse, together with  $\frac{1}{3}$  the whole estate, the other  $\frac{2}{3}$ 's to his sister and nephews. If his wife should be unwilling to sell the real estate, she was to have  $\frac{1}{3}$  of it for her lifetime - but was not to have in her hands more than  $\frac{1}{3}$ , the executors to keep  $\frac{2}{3}$  until the estate was settled.

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and as compensation for services she had done for him for 20 year6 past. At that time McLonen was owner and innkeeper of the **Gilpin house**, which he had bought in 1758, and which was sold as, "late of Daniel **McLonen**" in 1788. It was probably for services at the inn that the niece Agnes was rewarded with the Third Street property, Daniel McLonen before his death freed two negro slaves - Henry Campbell and his wife - who had served him many years, and gave them a large plot of lend on Third Street near Chestnut.

Agnes McLonen lived in **Wilmington** at the time she made her will in 1787. From her heirs, **Margaret Bail** and <sup>*Mrs. Bail's*</sup> ~~her~~ two daughters, the Third Street property was conveyed to John Enos in 1806. In 1816, to satisfy a judgment against John Enos, the property was sold to Nicholas Van Dyke, the younger, described as a brick messuage and lot of ground bounded by lot of George Read Esq., by Orange Street (**Third**), by Vine Street (**Fourth**), and by an alley leading between the two streets (**Silsbee's** alley).

Nicholas Van Dyke willed the property to his brother **Kensey Johns Van Dyke**, who in 1824 conveyed it to **Thomas McCallmont**. When **McCallmont** died intestate, the property went to his son Peter, a mlnor. In 1831, **Peter's** guardian sold the property at public auction to George B. Rodney for \$300. By indenture of 1844, Peter **McCallmont**, having come of age, gave to George B. Rodney a deed confirming the 1831 sale. In this deed the property is **described** as extending part of its breadth back to Vine Street.

George B. Rodney, Esq., built the present house in 1831. Judge Richard S. Rodney, his grandson, the present owner, believes this 1831 house was built partly on the foundations of the old one. He found in the middle of the basement of the main part of his house, a heavy masonry foundation wall of the previous house - *indicating* ~~showing~~ that the house of the early 1700's was set farther back than the present houses along this block.

**George B. Rodney** built what would be #12 as an office adjoining **his** dwelling house. The ground floor **was built** on the street level to facilitate its use as a law office.