

Front Street

New Castle, Delaware

Architecture and Building Practices

1687-1859

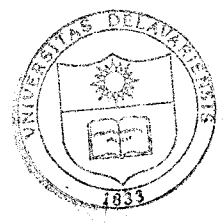
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of Arts.

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SUMMARY

This paper is as much a survey of the relation between social and economic factors and architecture as it is a survey of architecture itself. The few sentences which follow summarize the trends observed-- in tracing these several influences.

The economic purposes and the social backgrounds of the early colonizers in New Castle can be shown to have been the strongest influences on building practice on Front Street, New Castle, Delaware, in the seventeenth century. It will be shown that throughout the eighteenth century buildings along Front Street came under the influence of Philadelphia, the young neighbor of New Castle that had out-stripped the older town in size and importance and was quickly stripping it of what cultural independence it retained. The Pennsylvania capital established outlets of its own firms in New Castle, but held the reins of business itself. The Delaware town, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, passed from two masters--Holland and England--to one--Philadelphia.

The decline in the satellite town's fortunes, hastened by the founding of Wilmington in the 1730's and the removal of the state government to Dover in 1781, was finally checked in the 1790's and 1800's. The spate of enactments and surveys that were issued in this period, designed to plan for the expected growth of the town, are symptomatic of the renewed commercial activity experienced in the years before and after the War of 1812. The architecture of these years was of a

practical sort or else, where elegance was desired, showed few signs of modernity and much less originality.

A fire which swept along Front Street in 1824 forced property-owners to erect what amounted to emergency housing, which, because it is very urban in plan and appearance, can mislead us into supposing that New Castle was growing from a coastal town into a small city. But this was not the case. The conversion of Front Street into a residential area was marked by the adoption of a standard house plan--the town house--adapted to local considerations of climate and use. This can be called the New Castle way of building.

There was no New Castle style of architecture.

CHAPTER I

OBJECT OF THESIS AND SOURCE MATERIALS

The primary purpose of this thesis is to analyze the building types appearing on the street running parallel to the Delaware River in New Castle, Delaware--Front or Water Street, now known as The Strand*--from the founding of the settlement in the 1650's until the second quarter of the nineteenth century.

This objective has been reached in three stages. First, a reconstruction was made of the buildings standing along Front Street in the block between Delaware and Harmony Streets in the early nineteenth century. This period was studied before all others because the best source materials available date from the first three decades of that century. The buildings depicted or described during this period were then grouped according to style and age, although the latter had to be approximated in many cases. It was necessary to determine how up-to-date, bastardized, or retardataire the styles of buildings erected at different times were in order to render them useful indicators of the economic and cultural state of property-owners and of the town. Finally, this evidence was correlated with economic and social data on New Castle since the mid-seventeenth century. The result of this study is both a survey and an analysis of the town and the buildings along one street in it.

*In this paper the street will be designated Front Street since that was the name it most commonly went by in the records and descriptions.

The brief characterizations which follow of the principal sources used in the preparation of this paper will give a better idea of its limitations and goals.

The principal document used was the survey made of the street gradients of New Castle in 1804-1805.¹ In charge of this project was the London-trained architect, Benjamin Henry Latrobe, then residing in New Castle while overseeing the survey of the route for the proposed Chesapeake and Delaware Canal. The drawings on the New Castle survey were probably done by his two pupils, Robert Mills and William Strickland, soon to make their own names as architects. The detailed watercolor renderings of the elevations of most of the buildings along the streets of the town and the roughly blocked in ground plans of all structures in the town make the 1804-1805 survey an invaluable document in American architectural history.

For Front Street there exist elevations of the buildings along the land (northwestern) side only.* No more than ground plans of the buildings which stood along the southeastern side of the street and their riverside back structures are indicated on the survey (Plates 4 and 5).

This work was intended to supplement a preliminary survey of the streets of New Castle carried out in 1798. At that time the courses of the streets and the positions of intersections were ascertained (Plate 2).²

*For the sake of clarity in identifying building sites, I have numbered and demarcated the twelve original building sites, calling those on the land side simply "lots" and those on the river side, "bank lots." The lots are numbered from south to north, beginning at Lot 1 and Bank Lot 1, on the northern side of Delaware Street (See Plate 5).

Of enormous aid in the preparation of this paper were the typed notes on the history of properties in New Castle deposited in the Historical Society of Delaware, Wilmington, by Miss Jeannette Eckman.³ Her careful tracing of the ownership of lots along Front Street has enabled me, by noting the names of the property-owners, to check descriptions of buildings which are contained in legal deeds, wills, and conveyances. Although the descriptions found in such documents are quite meagre, they have become valuable in cases where any other evidence about a building was lacking.

A final major source of material describing buildings along Front Street was the "Journal of Insurance Effectuated in the New Castle Insurance Office of the Farmers' Bank of the State of Delaware," a ledger listing properties insured by the bank from April through December, 1810.⁴ Twelve of the policies are for buildings on Front Street, most of which were depicted on the survey of 1804-1805. The bounds of the insured properties are usually demarcated by mention of the owners and the nature of the properties surrounding them. Thus some information is obtained about almost twenty buildings on Front Street in addition to the ones insured with the Farmers' Bank.

On Monday, April 26, 1824, a fire which broke out in a stable on the river side of Front Street, in a few hours, spreading north and west, consumed twenty-three houses and warehouses. This fire, what one Wilmington newspaper termed "a calamity unparalleled in our state," considerably altered the appearance of almost one-half of the built-up lots along Front Street. Contemporary newspaper accounts and data later

compiled from available statistics provide descriptions of the buildings destroyed by the fire and indicate that it was considered a disaster of some magnitude. A survey of the rebuilding of these devastated lots, residential and commercial, comprises a further section of the thesis. The new structures will be compared with the buildings they replaced and with buildings being erected at the same time elsewhere in the Delaware Valley.

The effect of the economy, climate, and use on the design of the buildings on Front Street needs to be considered. This compact area formed a major part of the commercial district of New Castle. Many of its structures were only functional, built more for use than for their appearance. To understand why Front Street, at least until the fire of 1824, was largely a commercial district it has been necessary to delve into the economic life of New Castle and the near-by region. Travelers' descriptions, census reports, and tax lists have shed light on these matters.

The importance of such a study to an understanding of the economic, and social, as well as the cultural factors affecting a small, but politically important, town of the Middle States is manifest. The written descriptions, the illustrated surveys, and the high percentage of buildings standing when they were made and which survive today, are valuable materials to the historian of American society as well as to the student of American architectural history.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER I

¹Public Archives Commission, Hall of Records, Dover, Delaware. "Plan and Street Regulations of the Town of New Castle, Delaware 1804." My basis for dating the survey 1804-1805, contrary to what appears on the cover of the folder containing the drawings, is a sheet, enclosed in the same folder, entitled "Index to the Drawings." On this sheet, the listing of the map of New Castle made from the survey reads as follows: "No. 1 Plan of the Town of Newcastle with every description /sic/ of Buildings as they stood in the year 1805." I take this to mean, unless, of course, the person who prepared the index was in error, that the town map, at least, was prepared in 1805. The survey was provided for by the following act of the General Assembly of Delaware, passed at Dover, January 20, 1804: "A supplement to the act, entitled, 'An act for establishing the boundaries of the town of New-Castle, and for other purposes therein mentioned.'"

Laws of the State of Delaware From the Second day of January, One Thousand Seven Hundred and Ninety-Eight, to the Twenty-Fifth day of January, One Thousand Eight Hundred and Five. Vol. III (of the Laws). Wilmington: 1816, pp. 322-327. See footnote 2 for reference to the act to which this one was a supplement.

²Public Archives Commission, Hall of Records, Dover, Delaware. Deed Book R, Vol. 2, pp. 430-431. P. 430--certification of the completed survey by George Read, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of Delaware; Pp. 430-431--report by the Town Commissioners of New Castle. Both items were recorded November 8, 1798. Inserted into the same deed book, as pp. 428-429, is a map of the town and a description of the survey, entitled "Survey & Plan of Town of New Castle." This survey was provided for by the following act of the General Assembly of Delaware, passed at Dover, June 3, 1797: "An act for establishing the boundaries of the town of New-Castle, and for other purposes therein mention."

Laws of the State of Delaware From the Fourteenth day of October, One Thousand Seven Hundred, To the Eighteenth day of August, one Thousand Seven Hundred and Ninety-seven. Vol. II (of the Laws). New-Castle: 1797, pp. 1368-1376.

³Historical Society of Delaware, Old Town Hall, Wilmington, Delaware, "NEW CASTLE RESTORATION Typed notes on properties and city by Jeannette Eckman." These were compiled in connection with a survey of the historic area of New Castle, made by the Boston architectural firm of Perry, Shaw, and Hepburn, from 1947 until 1949, in preparation for the Dutch Tercentenary Celebration in 1951.

⁴Published in Dudley C. Lunt, "The Farmers Bank--An Assurance Company." Offprint from Delaware History, Vol. VIII, No. 1 (March, 1958), pp. 54-74. At the time Lunt was writing, the "Journal" and a "Register of Policies Issued for Insurance Effected in the New Castle Office of the Farmers' Bank of the State of Delaware" were deposited in the basement of the Wilmington branch of the Farmers' Bank. But a search bank officials made for me failed to disclose the present whereabouts of these essential documents.

CHAPTER II
EARLY COLONIAL PHASE

New Castle was founded in the 1650's as a leading outpost in North America of the Dutch West India Company. Called Fort Kasimir, its only counterpart among the Dutch North American possessions in terms of commercial importance was Nieuw Amsterdam, several hundred miles away by the water route then traveled.

Lots were laid out and granted to settlers and traders south of a stockade on the small knoll that extended a half mile inland from the bank of the Delaware River. Most of these men were soldiers for the Company as well and some were convicts, transported to the colony for minor felonies. In the 1630's the Swedish government had organized a colonizing company with Dutch management and capital. This venture was now virtually at an end. It is likely, however, that the few Swedes and Finns brought to the Delaware Valley by the nearly moribund company had been assimilated by the larger Dutch population by the time the latter established Fort Kasimir and New Amstel.

The English, far more numerous in North America than the Swedes or the Dutch, subdued Fort Kasimir and its village without bloodshed in 1664. Civil life in the town, New Amstel, now New Castle, was little disturbed. Dutch settlers held many of the important offices under English rule. Jasper Danckaerts, the Labadist missionary, visiting New Castle in 1679, termed it "...this little place, which is not of much moment, consisting of only forty or fifty houses."¹

Judging from the names of lot owners along the riverside, a large number of the inhabitants were still Dutch at the end of the seventeenth century. Some of the property owners had "plantations" or meadowlands further inland of very irregular shapes and sizes, usually located alongside creeks and rivers. But their lots along the street that now ran parallel with the shoreline of the Delaware River were quite regular, in width, at least, each being about sixty feet wide. Twelve of these lots were spaced along the street, with an additional lot and meadowland, the site of the Van Leuvenigh House, just to the south of the main group of buildings.

Tile House

By the last quarter of the century these frontages were being halved. From this period probably dates the tall, relatively narrow brick building with its gable end toward the street, known before and since its destruction in 1884 as the Tile House (Lot 11). The iron letters "1687" that were clamped onto the facade, if they date from the erection of the house, indicate that it was built when owned by John Boyer, a French Huguenot who had been in New Castle since the 1660's. The steep stepped gable and the narrow facade indicate that the Tile House belonged to a tradition of building established in the cities of the Netherlands since the late Middle Ages, and a common style in New York at this period. A visitor to New Castle in 1822 provides the best description of the house. After blandly noting that it was built "...after the manner of the houses in Sweden, of brick said to have been imported from thence..." John Fanning Watson remarked on the height

of the roof and the gable ends:

...the Roof is remarkably steep, making 2 stories in itself--the End walls are higher than the roof and have regular Steps on their upper surface above the roof the year 1687 is in Iron letters as clamps on the front wall...² (See Plates 6 and 7)

The loft door near the roof peak may indicate that the Tile House was the home or store of a merchant who stored his goods in the upper floor of his building. A number of the early proprietors of houses along Front Street were called, in legal deeds and wills, "boatman," "wharfowner," or simply "merchant." These were all activities that might call for large areas for storage of imported goods and of produce (largely tobacco from Maryland and furs) to be exported. Since at this period New Castle was still something of a mart for the Indian trade and tobacco export, several dwellings in New Castle may have been, like the Tile House, town houses with mercantile accommodations of this convenient sort.

On the other hand, small farmsteads, existing no doubt within the town, and shopkeepers' dwellings were probably the one or two room cottages of the type described by Danckaerts during his trip down the Delaware Valley.³ Today this type remains in the cottage on Third Street, New Castle, known as the Old Dutch House. On the survey of 1804-1805 appear elevations of several small houses which, because of their diminutiveness, may have been of this type. And, so far as legal records can tell us, they may have dated from the last decades of the seventeenth century or early in the next century.

#56 The Strand

The small cottage adjacent to the Thomas Hotel on the survey of 1804-1805, which was occupied as a glazier's shop at the time, seems to have been a farm cottage (Lot 12). Reached through a framed and brick archway leading from this dwelling to the south was a one room stuccoed brick house, possibly two stories high, which survives today as the rear portion of #56 The Strand (Lot 12). According to the researches of the present owners of #56, this older portion of the building was set back twenty-five feet from the present sidewalk,⁴ a practice followed elsewhere along Front Street when it was first built up.⁵ The rear wall of this portion of #56 is curved and a wooden mantel on the ground floor room is elongated and fluted, two features usually found only in late eighteenth century American dwellings. The former is puzzling, but the latter is simply a case of later decorating. (Plates 8, 9 and 10)

The archway probably led to the rear of the glazier's shop. On the street side, the room discussed above opened into a room that extended twenty-five feet to the sidewalk. A large chimney breast is built into the north wall of this room and, although it cannot be proved because #58 (the Glazier's shop) has been replaced by a mid-nineteenth century building,⁶ there is a possibility that this was a central chimney shared in common. In fact, the front portion of #56 and the glazier's shop may have been built as one house, entered separately from the street, but connected at the rear by means of the archway. Here, then, may have been an example of a large type of farmhouse, with the rooms arranged serially, as is seen in examples from the Hudson Valley.

(Plates 11, 12 and 13)

On July 31, 1810, #56 was insured by the owner, James McCallmont, with the Farmers' Bank as

...a three story dwelling House, situate on the N. West side of Front street in the Town of New Castle: being about 40 feet front by 50 feet deep: partly brick and partly frame...⁷

The dimensions given here correspond with the present ones. The south wall of the rear portion of #56, apparently never joined to the Tile House next door, was sheathed in frame until the present owners were forced to replace it with brick. The insurance policy, in referring to the house as "partly frame," probably had this wall in mind, because restoration work has revealed no other exterior framing. Inasmuch as the chimneys and fireplaces were on the north side, there was no reason for the reinforcement obtained from brick walling.

From this scant evidence it seems apparent that New Castle remained a small outpost throughout the seventeenth century. Such urban dwellings as have been described were no indication that it was becoming an urban center itself. Rather, the type used, the Netherlands merchants' house, was highly practical in a colonial setting. The farmers' or shopkeepers' cottages were probably the newest structures built, since New Castle remained a collection depot for the Dutch colonizing company until the English took over, with the settlement grouped around a stockade, and not a village, with its cottages and farmsteads. They were scattered irregularly on their lots. Thus there was little reason to think that New Castle would remain a town at all; it could continue to grow as a patchwork of small farmsteads lying behind a row of commercial houses built along the riverside.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER II

¹Bartlett Burleigh James and J. Franklin Jameson (eds.). Journal of Jasper Danckaerts 1679-1680, Original Narratives of Early American History, (New York: 1952), p. 110.

²Downs Memorial Library, The Henry Francis duPont Winterthur Museum, Folder No. 58x29.2. John Fanning Watson, "A Journal of a Trip to the Sea Shore 1822," contained in a notebook entitled "Journal of a Voyage from Orleans to Havannah & Charleston & land route from Charleston to Washington City & to New England 1805 also Trip to Cape May Shore in 1822."

³New Castle County Public Building, Wilmington, Delaware. Deed Book M, Vol. 5, p. 253.

⁴Interview with Mr. and Mrs. Andrew D. A. Maisano, #56 Strand, New Castle, Delaware. December 10, 1960.

⁵Historical Society of Delaware, Old Town Hall, Wilmington, Delaware. Jeannette Eckman, "New Castle Restoration. Typed notes on properties and city by Jeannette Eckman." Typescript No. 41, p. 5.

⁶"Journal of Insurance Effected in the New Castle Insurance Office of the Farmers' Bank of the State of Delaware." Published in Dudley C. Lunt, "The Farmers Bank--An Assurance Company." Offprint from Delaware History, Vol. VIII, No. 1 (March, 1958), pp. 54-74, p. 70.

CHAPTER III

PHILADELPHIA OUTPOST

The houses discussed up to now have illustrated survivals of traditional building practices brought to America by early colonists. But, beginning possibly as early as the 1690's, a time when brick houses were being built in New Castle,¹ a new influence on building styles is evident, although smaller houses and outbuildings probably continued to be designed in a traditional manner.²

The coming of settlers to the Delaware Valley under the authority of William Penn provided a major stimulus toward new building styles. Penn's utopian plan for Philadelphia, calling for super-blocks with each lot holder dwelling in separate houses on large lots, though not realized because of the rising cost of land, may have provided the inspiration at least in the Delaware Valley for the large brick or stone country houses we term "early Georgian." On Front Street, New Castle, this type was seen in the Old Read House (Lot 8) and possibly in the Van Leuvenigh House (Van Leuvenigh Lot), both probably built in the first quarter of the eighteenth century. Their symmetrical facades, regular fenestration, and classical door and cornice trim indicate a relation to the styles of building followed by the small English gentry and urban dwellers since the mid-seventeenth century. The logical impetus for this style of building would seem to be in the great wave of immigration into the Delaware Valley from the British Isles (Quakers,

Welsh, and Scotch-Irish) and from Europe generally, like Abraham van Leuvenigh, an Amsterdam merchant who came over in 1700.

Dominant among these new arrivals--culturally if not numerically--were the Quakers. Many of them had lived in London, and were apt to seek urban solutions to housing, as is evident from the early buildings erected in Philadelphia. As land became more dear in Philadelphia, means of saving space were sought. This eventually led to the building of row houses, a type which was found in form if not in function along Front Street. These dwellings, like the country house types, had regular facades and plans that were rather standardized in design. They were decorated in classical trim and with belt courses and water tables. Numerous precedents for this type of house had been built in London in the decades following the Great Fire of 1666. Several examples of these appear in the elevations of the houses along the west side of Front Street as depicted in the survey of 1804-1805. Old photographs and the survival intact or in part of several of those illustrated serve to substantiate this evidence.

For every lot in this block along Front Street there exists a record in the legal deeds pertaining to the buildings on them in the early eighteenth century. But we cannot begin to reconstruct the appearance of the houses mentioned, since they are described only in brief legalistic terms. The "messuage" on one lot or the "dwelling and appurtenances thereunto" listed on another hardly hint at an architectural style or even at a way of building. There is no indication from written records that there were regulations at this time which

required changes in building designs from traditional practice, comparable to those enacted for safety against fire by Parliament for London in 1707 and 1709.³ Thus the reasons given earlier for this change in style, quite obvious from the existing evidence, will have to suffice.

Old Read House

Although for the sake of clarity the lots on which the two Read houses were built have been termed Lots 8 and 9, originally this land comprised a single lot, 120 feet wide by 300 feet deep. This double lot was granted in part by Peter Stuyvesant, commandant of New Netherlands, to Isaac Tayne in 1655 and in part purchased by Tayne himself.⁴ The property extended inland to the market place, which corresponds with the bed of the present Second Street. In 1677, after Tayne's death, his son, Isaac Jr., divided the property, giving a northern plot and house, with a frontage of thirty feet on Front Street, to a Dr. John des Jardains and keeping the southern lot, 90 feet wide, "where he lived."⁵ Thus by the last quarter of the seventeenth century there is mention of buildings on this site. But, in the absence of any other evidence, it is foolish to speculate on the appearance of these structures. Most likely they were merchant houses or cottages, comparable to those structures described in the previous chapter.

The house on Lot 8 which appears on the survey of 1804-1805 could possibly have been one of the dwellings mentioned in these early deeds. Its roof is hipped, a feature of English country houses since the 1650's. The skirt roof, or pent-eave, as it is sometimes called, midway down the front and side walls, was a structural element extremely prevalent

in Philadelphia in the eighteenth century and in northern Delaware. The property was owned by Robert French from 1701, the year in which William Penn granted the owners of property along Front Street "water lots" extending 600 feet into the river, until his death in 1713. Miss Eckman, after having studied the records of the French family, suggested the possibility that the house shown on the survey was built in the 1720's by French's heir, David French, to replace an older structure,

...for the house on the 1804 survey is architecturally a unit, although the back building shown on the 1804 survey map may well have been a part of an older house.⁶

This statement is representative of the traditional notion that many of the earlier buildings along Front Street were erected at some distance from the shoreline and formed the backbuildings of later structures. But, in this case, there is no evidence to support this contention.

The house, by now known as the Old Read House, was described in an insurance policy taken out by George Read II with the Farmers' Bank on June 16, 1810, as

...his brick House and Kitchen (each 2 stories high) occupied by the Cashier of the Farmers Bank S. D. / (of the) State (of) Delaware / as a dwelling & banking House...⁷

Destroyed in the fire of 1824, the exterior and the grounds and the first floor were briefly described in 1870 by William Thompson Read in an appendix to his biography of his grandfather, George Read the Signer, who had occupied the dwelling for some years before his death in 1798:

This mansion was an old-fashioned brick structure, looking very comfortable, but with no pretensions to elegance. It contained a spacious hall, on one side of which was a large parlor or drawing-room, on the other Mr. Read's office, behind it the dining-room of sufficient size, and in its rear a large kitchen. The extensive garden ran back to the grounds, where were the stables and other outbuildings.⁸

From this description, somewhat unreliable because it is a distant reminiscence, it seems that the Old Read House was laid out according to a central hall plan, with a salon or drawing room running the depth of the house and two rooms, possibly equal in size, in the corresponding location on the other side of the hall. As in other mansions in New Castle, the kitchen seems to have been located in a rear wing on the ground floor and not in the basement, as was usual in the smaller row houses. It can be seen on the survey ground plan of 1804-1805 as an extension projecting from the southern part of the rear of the building.

The house once occupied by George Read, Sr., is depicted in two prints, neither of which is dated.

One of these is entitled "Res. of George Read Wilmington, Del."⁹ (Plate 14) But the close resemblance of the facade of the building depicted to that of the Old Read House as it appears on the elevations made for the survey of 1804-1805 and the correspondence of the position of the wing with the extension of the house proper outlined on the map accompanying the same survey, make it almost certain that it represents the New Castle home of the elder Read. This evidence of the accuracy and the straightforward manner in which the building is drawn lead me to believe that this print was made prior to the destruction of the house in 1824.

Supposing the scene to be New Castle, the shoreline in the foreground of this print is probably that of New Castle harbor. In his reminiscences of his grandfather William Thompson Read describes the perils of building a house on the banks of an estuary:

So near was his house to the Delaware that when the tide was high one wheel of a carriage passing the street in front of it was in the water, and in violent storms its waves were dashed against the building.¹⁰

The other print, an engraving entitled "Mansion of the Honourable George Read New Castle, Delaware," is a more fanciful rendition, but seems to represent the same building.¹¹ (Plate 15) The back buildings are in the right location, but are shown as separated from the main house. The skirt roof has been reduced to a belt course, possibly the result of having seen a sketch of the facade similar to that on the elevations made for the survey of 1804-1805, from which it is difficult to tell whether the dark band spanning horizontally the mid-section of the facade is a pent-eave or merely decorative stone or brickwork. The window and door trim appearing in this engraving--on the first floor, arched fanlights flaring at the base, and, on the second floor, shell-like pediments--are not features found on houses built before the time of the destruction of the Old Read House. They are probably no more than embellishments by the artist; but they indicate that this engraving was made several decades after the house had disappeared.* And yet we

*An illustration of the Old Read House, very similar to this one and likely photo-engraved from it, appears in J. Thomas Scharf, History of Delaware 1609-1688, Vol. I (Philadelphia: 1888), p. 189.

can be quite certain that the house represented here is the Old Read House. The roof is hipped with a pitch very similar to that of the house depicted on the elevations. The position of the chimneys is the same. And, most conclusive of all, on the facade the number and position of the dormer windows, door, and windows are the same as appear in the drawing for the survey of 1804-1805.

Van Leuvenigh House

On the southwest corner of Delaware Street and The Strand stands the Van Leuvenigh House, so-called from its inhabitants 1765-1799, the family of Zachariah van Leuvenigh, a local magistrate and tanner.¹² Except for minor changes to the roof line and the placement of a triangular door pediment with a lighter and flat one, the facade appears to be the same one as is drawn in the survey of 1804-1805.* The window arrangement and the position of the two segmented dormers remain the same today. (Plates 16 and 17) The prominent hip roof, the dormers, and the massive stuccoed walls have led some to discern a French influence on the exterior of this house.¹³ But hipped roofs and dormers are typical of American architectural taste, 1725-1750. And, in a drawing of the house made in 1846, the house is not stuccoed. Instead it is faced with square blocks of some material, probably bricks, but possibly shingles or even stone. (Plate 18)

*The flat door pediment first appears on a drawing of the house made to accompany a transfer of the property in 1846. Now located in the Van Leuvenigh House, corner of Delaware Street and The Strand, New Castle, Delaware.

Aside from the drawing of the ground plan in the survey of 1804-1805 the plan of the Van Leuvenigh House is not recognizable from descriptions until the advertisement of its sale in 1815 by John Mundall, a merchant who had purchased the property from the van Leuvenigh family in 1799.¹⁴ It was described as follows in a portion of the newspaper notice of the sale of Mundall's properties:

Lot No. 1, situate at the corner of Delaware and Front streets, has on it a handsome two story brick Messuage, 60 feet by 24, three rooms on each floor, and three finished in the garret, with a good stone cellar, and a large two story brick kitchen adjoining, with three rooms above and a pump of good water at the door, together with a large garden and back yard, on which are sundry buildings, &c. The situation is high and healthy, affording an extensive view of the river Delaware, and is an excellent situation for public business, &c.¹⁵

Judging from the elevation of the property on the survey, the house did stand on a considerable rise above the riverbank and the marshes to the south. Included in the sale was the lot to the south of the house, on which a slaughterhouse and livestock pens were situated. The description given in the Mundall sale corresponds closely with the present appearance of the property.

A house was mentioned as being on the site of the Van Leuvenigh House as early as 1675,¹⁶ and, judging from the deeds which Miss Eckman has described, several outbuildings were erected on the property in the early eighteenth century. The "large two story brick kitchen adjoining, with three rooms above and a pump of good water at the door" may be one of these, possibly serving as a dwelling until the larger building was erected.

Thus we know that the Van Leuvenigh House had assumed its present arrangement by 1815--a two-story mansion plus "finished" garret, with three rooms to a floor and a central hall and staircase, and with a utility wing adjoined to the southwest. And, judging from the several indicators of building style already discussed, we can venture to say that it was built about the middle of the eighteenth century.

Row House Types

A house was standing on Lot 2, 62½ feet wide by 108 feet deep, by 1680.¹⁷ The first mention of two houses being on this lot is in 1729, when John van Gezell, a saddler then living on the southern half of this lot, the site of the present #6 The Strand, the Gunning Bedford House, mortgaged a house on the northern half of Lot 2 (the site of the present #8 The Strand, the McIntire-McWilliams House) to Richard Grafton, a merchant.¹⁸ Miss Eckman notes that a correlation of the several deeds recorded for the period 1723-1730

...suggests that Van Gezell first lived in the house on the site of #8, and that between 1723 and 1730 he built and enlarged #6 and moved into it.¹⁹

Further investigation by this writer has not revealed any more enlightening data.

The elevations on the survey of 1804-1805 reveal that #6 occupied slightly over one-half the width of Lot 2. It appears to have been rather plain on the outside except for a doorway with columns to either side and a triangular pediment. Today the facade appears higher due to the lowering of the street level; but the water table at its base was

plainly visible at the time the survey of 1804-1805 was made (Plate 19). The interior ornamentation has been extensively altered in many places. One cannot rely on mantels and cornices for purposes of dating the house on stylistic grounds. But the internal arrangement of the rooms in the front block (the house proper) is unchanged: a side stair hall and entrance, with two rooms of equal size on each floor, to the north of the entrance-way.

The exterior of #8 as seen in the elevations for the survey of 1804-1805 is somewhat smaller than that of #6. But the addition of a belt course gives the smaller building greater elegance. At any rate, the McIntire-McWilliams House, as it is also known, is unmistakably an urban type (Plate 20). The front door opens on the north side to the side opposite the chimney into the front room. There are two rooms on each floor. Corner fireplaces abut one another along the partition wall separating the two rooms on each floor. The fireplace in the front room on the second floor, the only one whose original form survives, is trimmed by a large bolection molding and faced with raised panels. These features, the only marked stylistic features in the interior of the house, date it possibly as early as the late seventeenth century, but more than likely around the period of van Gezell's ownership in the 1720's.

The present #22 The Strand, on the southern part of Lot 5, is largely a nineteenth century structure, erected to replace the small building on this site destroyed in the fire of 1824. But within it are elements from a much earlier building. These are two corner fireplaces,

abutting against the north wall--one, in the basement, in what doubtless served as a kitchen, and the other in a first floor living-room. Both have large openings of equal size--70 inches wide by four feet high by 20 inches deep--and are trimmed by carved bolection moldings. They are examples of a fireplace form common in the late seventeenth century and early eighteenth century. The property was owned 1709-1719 by Richard Halliwell, a merchant and member of the governor's council of Pennsylvania and the Lower Counties up on Delaware.²⁰ The property had been conveyed to him in 1709 by John Brewster, "baker" and "innholder."²¹ The small story and a half gambrel-roofed structure shown on the elevations of 1804-1805 (Plate 5) indicate that it probably was built as an office or shop, for use by businessmen like Halliwell and Brewster. On April 14, 1810, when the house of John Janvier, adjacent to it on the south, was insured with the Farmers' Bank, the building on Lot 5 was identified as "...a small House occupied as a Barbers Shop..." behind which were the "...Stables & Grenary [sic] of George Hand Jr..."²²

On the left side of the photograph made of the Tile House before its destruction in 1884 appears a portion of a brick building (Plate 7). This is identifiable as the house shown to the left of the Tile House on the elevations made from the survey of 1804-1805; it stood on the southern part of Lot 11, the Tile House lot (Plate 5). Stylistic features are almost absent in this building. The brick step cornice visible in these illustrations is not a feature of eighteenth century buildings alone; it was commonly used as decorative trim on brick

factory buildings of the nineteenth century. Although the proportions of this house are roughly the same as those of innumerable dwellings built in English and American cities in the first half of the eighteenth century, they are a highly unreliable means of dating buildings in New Castle, as will be pointed out in later chapters. No mention of a house on this small part (25 feet wide by 39 feet deep) of Lot 11 occurred until 1806, when Daniel McArthur sold the property as "house and lot" for \$1,000 to Atkinson and Thomas Rose.²³

On the elevations for the survey of 1804-1805 the house discussed above is shown joined to a jerkin-headed structure on Lot 10, which is joined on the south, in turn, to a lean-to. These structures again defy dating on stylistic grounds. The belt course sketched across them on the elevations of 1804-1805 is evidence of eighteenth century building, but no more. It is known, from numerous legal deeds, that the small lean-to was frame and the larger, northern portion was a brick structure. A vestige of what was probably a brick arched support in the foundation of the latter is incorporated into a garden wall now surrounding the site (Plate 21). We can have a good idea of the layout of this motley structure, from the insurance policy with the Farmers' Bank taken out by Samuel Barr, a Director of the Bank, on June 13, 1810:

Samuel Barr for Insurance of One thousand Dollars on his brick dwelling House, Office, Kitchen & Kitchen store house, situate in the Town of New Castle, being 33 feet front on Front street and extending in depth 80 feet on a 9 feet alley which divides this from the dwelling house of Geo: Read:--and also on his outhouses consisting of a store House 2 stories high, 28 feet by 20: and a frame building 42 feet by 13, one and an half-stories high, occupied by the assured as a Poultry House, Carriage House and Stable.²⁴

The "Office" mentioned here was possibly the frame structure on the south part of the lot. The "Kitchen & Kitchen store house" were probably in the wing shown extending from the rear of the main building in the ground plan on the map made for the survey of 1804-1805 (Plate 4). This was the usual arrangement of the kitchen in larger houses on Front Street. Smaller houses, such as the predecessor of the present #22 The Strand, previously discussed in this chapter, consigned the kitchen and utility rooms to the basement to save space. The "outhouses" mentioned in the insurance policy can be seen from the map of 1804-1805 to have been placed at the rear of the property.

The building types we have been discussing evidence the emergence of New Castle as the urban center of the Lower Counties of Pennsylvania in the first half of the eighteenth century. The Dutch had regarded the town as a commercial outpost; but the English, whose colonies usually became something more than commercial ventures, established New Castle as a self-sufficient village. The town houses erected along Front Street during these decades are witnesses of the fact that New Castle had become the political center of its colony. And they witness too to what an extent New Castle was already overshadowed by the commercial importance of Philadelphia.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER III

¹Historical Society of Delaware, Old Town Hall, Wilmington, Delaware. Jeannette Eckman, "NEW CASTLE RESTORATION Typed notes on properties and city by Jeannette Eckman." Typescript #35, p. 5. Hereafter cited as RESTORATION.

²See Henry Chandlee Forman, The Architecture of the Old South. The Medieval Style. 1585-1850. (Cambridge (Massachusetts): 1948).

³John Summerson, Georgian London, (New York: 1955), p. 152. The first of these Acts required that roof cornices be made of stone. The second required that window-frames not front flush with the outer wall, but be set back four inches into the wall.

⁴RESTORATION, Typescript #41, p. 1.

⁵Quoted in RESTORATION, Typescript #41, pp. 1-2.

⁶RESTORATION, Typescript #41, p. 5.

⁷"Journal of Insurance Effected in the New Castle Insurance Office of the Farmers' Bank of the State of Delaware." June 16, 1810. Published in Dudley C. Lunt, "The Farmers Bank--An Assurance Company." Offprint from Delaware History, Vol. VIII, No. 1 (March, 1958), pp. 54-74. Hereafter cited as INSURANCE JOURNAL.

⁸William Thompson Read, Life and Correspondence of George Read a Signer of the Declaration of Independence with Notice of Some of His Contemporaries, (Philadelphia: 1870), p. 575. Hereafter cited as LIFE.

⁹Photostatic reproduction courtesy of Albert Kruse, Pope and Kruse Associated Architects, Wilmington, Delaware.

¹⁰LIFE, p. 575.

¹¹Historical Society of Delaware, Old Town Hall, Wilmington, Delaware.

¹²Jeannette Eckman, New Castle on the Delaware. Dutch Tercentenary Edition. 1651-1951. (Wilmington: 1950), p. 88.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴RESTORATION, Typescript #33, p. 6.

¹⁵Delaware Gazette and Peninsula Advertiser, Vol. II, No. 55 (Tuesday Evening, October 24, 1815), p. 3, column 5.

16RESTORATION, Typescript #33, p. 1.

17RESTORATION, Typescript #35, p. 1.

18Public Archives Commission, Hall of Records, Dover, Delaware.
Deed Book I, Vol. 1, p. 192.

19RESTORATION, Typescript #35, pp. 2-3.

20New Castle County Public Building, Wilmington, Delaware.
Will Book C, Vol. 1, p. 162.

21Public Archives Commission, Hall of Records, Dover, Delaware.
Deed Book C, Vol. 1, p. 154.

22INSURANCE JOURNAL, April 14, 1810.

23New Castle County Public Building, Wilmington, Delaware.
Deed Book H, Vol. 3, p. 309.

24INSURANCE JOURNAL, June 13, 1810.

CHAPTER IV

DECLINE

During the American Revolution shipping along the Delaware River was harassed by British warships. The commercial life of New Castle, by then dependent largely on the coasting trade and its role as a provisioner of packets bound for Europe or the West Indies, declined greatly when these sources of revenue were cut off. The legislative and executive branches of the state government had been moved to Dover in 1781, for reasons of safety as well as convenience, thus considerably reducing New Castle's political status. She was still the site of the state judiciary and the seat of New Castle County, as the Duc de la Rochefoucauld-Liancourt indicated about 1795, when he spoke of it as "the county town," comprised of "seventy houses."¹ But her hold on these two remaining political plums was loosening. By the end of the next century she was shorn of both the state courts and the county government.

Steps had been taken recently, however, as La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt mentions, to stay its commercial decline, at least:

A fund having been raised by way of lottery, sanctioned by the state, for the purpose of building quays at Newcastle, that place now affords shelter to vessels in the winter, and begins to rise from the state of decay into which it had sunk.²

In 1807, Joseph Scott, in his Geographical Description of the States of Maryland and Delaware, remarked that whereas "very little business

was done in it for many years,"³ there had been a change for the better in recent years. The reason for this change is described by Scott in the following passage from his travel guide:

Its trade began to revive about 15 years ago, since which it has increased considerably. Almost all the vessels bound from Philadelphia to foreign ports, stop here and supply themselves with livestock. A great line of packets and stages passes through it from Philadelphia to Baltimore, by way of Frenchtown. Vast quantities of merchandise are sent by this route, from Philadelphia to the western country. It is at present, one of the greatest thoroughfares for travelling in the United States.⁴

Scott also mentions that "Four public piers are erected in the Delaware....,"⁵ doubtless those erected by means of the lottery of 1794 and seen on the plan of New Castle accompanying the survey of 1804-1805.

According to Scott, New Castle contained "about 160 houses and 1200 inhabitants,"⁶ an indication that the town had grown considerably since La Rochfoucauld-Liancourt's visit in the 1790's. What is of more significance to this paper is Scott's additional remark: "A great many of the houses have been built within these few years, and some of them in handsome style."⁷ A number of houses were erected on Delaware and Third (then Orange) Streets about this time. Since it was almost solidly built-up already, the block on Front Street that we are considering, did not see extensive building of new structures.

But one house he certainly had in mind when speaking of a "handsome style" was on Front Street: The large mansion, completed a few years before the Geographical Description was published, by George Read II, the heir of George Read the Signer.

It is uncertain how long the elder Read had been living in the old Read House (Lot 8) prior to his death in September, 1798. The heirs of Robert French conveyed the property to him on May 9, 1798, at which time it was described as "...all that messuage and lots of land now and long since in the tenure of the said George Read."⁸ The year before Read had purchased from William Armstrong, whose dwelling and tavern were in the gambrel-roofed structure on the southern half of Lot 10, a strip seventeen feet wide and the rights to an alley nine feet wide (known by 1805 as "Read's Alley"--See Plate 5) both lying to the north of the property then owned by the French heirs.⁹ Miss Eckman believes that Read "...may have bought it [the house and land] at the end of his life in order to leave it to his son."¹⁰ But the younger Read began construction of his mansion on the property possibly purchased later for him by his father, Lot 9, in 1797. He contracted with Peter Crowding of Philadelphia for its erection and completion. Since this was before his father's purchase of the two lots, there must have been something of a gentlemen's agreement with the heirs of Robert French. As can be seen from the elevations for the survey of 1804-1805, the older mansion and the new one were only a gate's width apart. This may possibly account for the fact that the south side of the otherwise highly ornamented Read House is undecorated except for a dentilled cornice.

The year traditionally given for the completion of the Read House is 1802. There is a possibility, however, that a law-suit may have prolonged the building of it another year or two. In a letter to

Mrs. Ann Booth of New Castle, dated "Liverpool, March 25, 1804," her sister, Mrs. William Lees of Liverpool, wife of a merchant who had lived in New Castle in the 1790's, asks "...whether G. R. has got into his elevated house, as the last I heard respecting him he and his carpenters were at law together..."¹¹ It seems likely that "G. R." is George Read II, and that the house in question is his, because no one else was building a dwelling in New Castle that could properly be called an "elevated house," which I take to be one of more than the usual height.

In style and plan the Read House is more akin to country mansions erected in the Philadelphia area in the decade prior to the American Revolution, rather than in what we loosely term the "Federal" style. With its palladian windows, arched fanlight, and central stair hall with pilasters and arches the Read House is certainly no later in style than Late Georgian. True, the motifs on the mantels in the first floor parlors and dining room are copied from a book of mantel designs, the paper of which is watermarked "1794."¹² But these "modern" decorations are relatively minor details in a house that is otherwise considerably retardataire (Plates 22 and 23).

Peter Crowding was building at this same period for Dr. James McCallmont, for his son-in-law, George Thomas, the four-story hotel on the northwest corner of Front Street and Harmony Street, now the Episcopal Parish House. It, too, is an example of conservative building practices. The plan is essentially the same as that used in corner houses in Philadelphia since the first half of the eighteenth century.

And the ornamental trim is completely palladian: Columns to either side of the doorways, which are surmounted by heavy, carved triangular pediments, white window trim, and palladian windows at the stair landings (Plate 24).

Read was not connected with local or Philadelphia commercial enterprises. And Dr. McCallmont was connected with them only peripherally, as concessionaire of the Harmony Street ferry.¹³ Thus the building of these comparatively elegant, but retardataire buildings was no more than coincidental with New Castle's era of renewed commercial activity. They are symbolic of the degree to which her fortunes and vigor had declined. Outwardly, there was considerable show of prosperity in New Castle. But it lacked a solid economic life and any consequent spirit of dynamic enterprise. By the end of the century, New Castle was no more than a waystation on the route to Wilmington and Philadelphia, a place that drew on without contributing to the burgeoning cultural and economic life of the Delaware Valley. These latest buildings demonstrate this well.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER IV

¹(Francois) Duke de la Rochefoucauld-Liancourt. Travels through the United States of North America, the Country of the Iroquois, and Upper Canada, in the Years 1795, 1796, and 1797; by the Duke de la Rochefoucauld-Liancourt. With an Authentic Account of Lower Canada. Vol. III (of 4 vols.), Second Edition, (London: 1800), p. 537.

²La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt. Travels through the United States of North America, the Country of the Iroquois, and Upper Canada, in the Years 1795, 1796, and 1797; by the Duke de la Rochefoucauld-Liancourt. With an Authentic Account of Lower Canada, p. 538. The lottery mentioned here is one authorized by an act of the General Assembly of Delaware in 1794. (See Appendix D, A)

³Joseph Scott. A Geographical Description of the States of Maryland and Delaware; also the counties, towns, rivers, bays and islands with a List of the Hundreds in Each County. (Philadelphia: 1807), p. 177. Hereafter cited as GEOGRAPHICAL DESCRIPTION.

⁴GEOGRAPHICAL DESCRIPTION, p. 177.

⁵GEOGRAPHICAL DESCRIPTION, p. 177.

⁶GEOGRAPHICAL DESCRIPTION, p. 176.

⁷GEOGRAPHICAL DESCRIPTION, p. 176.

⁸Public Archives Commission, Hall of Records, Dover, Delaware. Deed Book Q, Vol. 2, p. 352.

⁹Public Archives Commission, Hall of Records, Dover, Delaware. Deed Book R, Vol. 2, p. 157.

¹⁰Historical Society of Delaware, Old Town Hall, Wilmington, Delaware. Jeannette Eckman, "New Castle Restoration Typed notes on properties and city by Jeannette Eckman" Typescript No. 41, p. 6

¹¹Quoted in Elizabeth Booth, Reminiscences by Elizabeth Booth of New Castle, Delaware. Author of Songs of the Christian Pilgrim, (New Castle: 1884), p. 91.

¹²Design Book Room, Winterthur Museum Library, The Henry Francis duPont Winterthur Museum. The same motifs--a goddess being pulled in a chariot by lions and a shepherds' scene--appear on decorative mantel-pieces in houses built up and down the Atlantic seaboard in the late eighteenth century. The design book is English, but its exact place of origin is unknown.

¹³ McCallmont's concession was provided for by the following act of the General Assembly: "An ACT for establishing and regulating a ferry over the river Delaware, at the town of New-Castle." Passed at Dover, January 21, 1803. Published in Laws of the State of Delaware From the Second Day of January, One Thousand Seven Hundred and Ninety-Eight, to the Twenty-Fifth Day of January, One Thousand Eight Hundred and Five. Vol. III (of the Laws). Wilmington: 1816, pp. 310-315.

CHAPTER V

FIRE OF 1824 AND BUILDINGS ERECTED AFTER IT

At three on Monday afternoon, April 26, 1824, a fire broke out in the stable or store-room (the Accounts vary) belonging to James Riddle, a merchant in New Castle since 1798.¹ It quickly spread from Bank Lot 1, on which the mercantile buildings were located, to his adjoining house, on Bank Lot 2. According to one newspaper account, "...the wind was blowing fresh from the south..."² which sent the flames northward to Jeremiah Bowman's lumberyard and from there continued north, consuming the remaining houses, stores, and the Union Line Hotel before being stopped by the 120 feet wide vacant lot opposite the mansion of George Read. Thus all the buildings on the water or bank side of Front Street were destroyed or badly damaged.

The fire crossed the street midway on its northward course along the east side of Front Street and worked its way north on the west side, beginning at the house and store of Samuel Cooper (Couper), built in 1824 by his father, Dr. James Couper (the present #14 The Strand--Plates 25 and 26). The rest of the progress of the fire can be traced from the detailed account which appeared soon afterward in a Wilmington newspaper.

...thence to two houses adjoining, one of which was occupied as a bakery Lot 4; from thence it communicated to Mr. T. Thomas Janvier's large dwelling Lot 5, thence to a small house belonging to the Steam Boat Company Lot 5; thence to Mr. Saxton's Richard Sexton brick dwelling and stables Lot 6, thence to a brick

dwelling, and the stores and dwelling of Mr. Raynow
 /Lot 6/, thence to Mr. McCullough's /James McCullough/
 dwellinghouse /Lot 7/, thence to a brick house
 occupied as a dwelling and dry goods store /Lot 7;
 also owned by McCullough/...³

At this point the account becomes confusing, because the names of two
 property owners, one deceased, are confused:

...thence to the large dwelling house of Geo.
 Reed /sic/, Jr Esq. with back building &c. and
 here happily the progress of the flames were
 arrested, between 6 and 7 o'clock in the evening,
 by Mr. Geo Reed /sic/, senior's large house,
 the roof of which being kept extremely wet by
 a hose which was constantly playing, prevented
 the fire from going farther...⁴

The reporter confuses, for us at least, the home bought by George
 Read, Sr., in 1798 (Lot 8) with the mansion built by his son, George
 Read, Jr., on Lot 9. Both were then owned by George Read, Jr., and
 hence both could have been known properly as his dwellings. Since the
 fire was going north, and is not described as leaping over a building
 before it was stopped by a wet roof, and since the account states that
 one Read house was reached by the flames before the other halted the
 fire, we can conclude that the house of George Read, Sr., the Old Read
 House, now owned by his son, was burned and that the fire was stopped
 by George Read, Jr.'s house, the present Read House. This explanation
 seems to be confirmed by a letter of thanks to the Wilmington fire
 companies published in a Wilmington newspaper by Read. (See Appendix B)

By this fire over one-half the buildings along Front Street
 between Delaware and Harmony Streets were burned or had to be rebuilt.
 On the east side, all the buildings from Bank Lot 1 to Bank Lot 7 were
 destroyed or badly damaged. On the west side portions of an older

building remained in one case (Lot 5--the present #22 The Strand), but on the east side little could be used except foundation materials (Plate 27).

The effect, obvious immediately to contemporaries, was the terrific property loss. Twenty-three families, or about one-sixth of New Castle's total population, were homeless. The financial loss was estimated at upwards of \$100,000, a considerable sum at that or any time. A committee of relief was organized by fellow townsmen the Wednesday following the fire, which arranged means of obtaining relief for the victims. Several Pennsylvania towns, members of Congress, and the city of Boston sent money to aid in the recovery of the losses. (See Appendix B: D; 2, 3, and 4)

Further realization of the proportions of the loss and a gauge to New Castle's relative importance comes from a sincere editorial appearing in a Wilmington newspaper shortly after the fire.⁵ Entitled "New Castle and Wilmington," it chides the citizens of the latter for being jealous of New Castle in the past. The writer notes with regret that it had taken a calamity to bring out a "...display of kindness and gratitude between the citizens of the two places;" he believes that such should be the normal attitude of the two towns toward one another henceforth. This slight mention of town rivalries, useful more as an indication than as evidence, gives meaning, nevertheless, to what was made obvious by the census returns of 1800, 1810, and 1820--New Castle was stagnating. (See Appendix B)

Buildings Erected to Replace those Destroyed by the Fire of 1824

We shall follow, for the most part, the path of the fire itself-- just outlined--in tracing the rebuilding of the devastated area. It is worth noting that the Town Commissioners of New Castle did not propose, as far as is known to me, a set of building regulations such as were enacted in London after the Great Fire and in seventeenth century Boston. The General Assembly of Delaware, in 1825, in an "Additional Supplement" to the Act of 1797, which had set in motion the surveys of 1797-1798 and 1804-1805, did empower the Commissioners to tax the townspeople for the purchase and repair of new fire apparatus.⁶ This no doubt was meant to end New Castle's dependence on Wilmington for adequate fire protection.

After the fire, which had begun on his property, James Riddle soon rebuilt, on Bank Lots 1 and 2. In 1841, his two sons, John and Gunning Bedford Riddle, sold the lot described as "...105' on Front Street, 600' deep with a new three-story brick dwelling house and store thereon erected," to Elihu Jefferson for \$4,510.⁷ According to Miss Eckman, Jefferson "...lived in the house and continued the store, as a merchant, until his death."⁸ The property was sold in a sheriff's sale in 1871 to William Herbert for \$6,750, a substantial price;⁹ from the frequency with which his name appears in the deed books as a buyer or mortgagee, he seems to have been investing in Wilmington and New Castle properties. This is one case of the passing of New Castle properties into the hands of outsiders. In the eighteenth century Philadelphians had owned several businesses on Front Street, but usually in partnership

The door, window, and cornice trim applied to these red brick buildings was determined, of course, by considerations rather different from the above. More than likely, they represented simply a desire to keep up with fashion. And yet, when compared with earlier building in New Castle, it is seen that the ornamentation on these newer structures is often similar to that of the new Read House (completed by 1804) and the Thomas Hotel (completed in 1801), built a quarter of a century before, and themselves out-of-fashion when built. Windows, including, in some cases, those of the half-basements, are trimmed with white marble or limestone, dressed into a keystone shape, as is found in the Read House and the Thomas Hotel, and, of course, in virtually all classical buildings trimmed with stonework built in the United States in the eighteenth century. The doorway of the present #24 The Strand is surmounted by a triangular pediment, a feature usually found on early eighteenth century American buildings (Plates 35 and 36). The doorways of the other post-fire houses are decorated in what was then modern taste--a flat pediment supported by floriate scroll brackets. Such are the type found on contemporary town houses along Spruce and Locust Streets in Philadelphia and in the Monument Circle area of Baltimore. But these doorways are the exception. The remaining ornamental features--carved wooden dentiled cornices and segmented or gable dormers--are further evidence of the dominance of out-moded preferences in New Castle.

This situation may not reflect entirely the taste of the builders and the property owners along Front Street, for these houses may be said to have come under the category of "emergency housing." If the accounts in the Wilmington newspapers are correct, and, as concerned neighbors,

there is little reason to suppose they would have been exaggerated, twenty-three families were left homeless, in a town which, though hardly bursting at the seams, does seem to have had its crowded districts. If a traditional New Castle style of building could be found, it would be in these houses, built to satisfy urgent local needs. (Plates 30, 31, 32, 34, 35, 36, and 37)

Thus it can be seen that the appearance of Front Street changed greatly in the decades following the fire of 1824--from the commercial district described by travelers in the early nineteenth century¹⁰ to a much more placid and somewhat elegant residential area. But this elegance was such as accompanies a final resurgence in the face of an apprehended decline. By 1832 the New Castle and Frenchtown Railroad was in operation, shuttling passengers and freight across the peninsula. It operated largely with capital from the old Union Line Transportation and Steamboat Company, a firm controlled by the Janviers of New Castle. As a result of this stimulus, the decade 1830-1840 saw the population of the town more than double, from 1,010 in 1830¹¹ to 2,737 in 1840,¹² doubtless due to the stimulus provided by the founding of the New Castle and Frenchtown Railroad in 1832. But, by 1850 the population had subsided to 1,217.¹³

Later Buildings

The major period of building was almost over by the time the last new structures were erected on Front Street.

Indistinguishable in plan and decoration from the houses just discussed are the present #57 and #59 The Strand, built in 1859 by

Samuel Truss, a Wilmington dry goods merchant, to replace several derelict houses and a storehouse owned by a ferry company. A house of even simpler decoration is the present #58 The Strand, built sometime after 1859 on Lot 12 by the heirs of Dr. James McCallmont, who had obtained the concession for the ferry in 1803 and lived in what was then known as the "ferryman's house," the present #56 The Strand.¹⁴ (Plates 28 and 29)

In 1851 the New Castle branch of the Farmers' Bank in the State of Delaware completed a structure almost as grandiose as the Read House. Built on the property familiarly known as the "burnt lot," (Lot 1), empty since the first half of the eighteenth century, it was designed by one "J. McCarthur" (possibly the same who designed City Hall, Philadelphia) and cost \$5,000. It is in the Italian villa style, of brick with brownstone trim, and follows a central hall plan, a usage much older in the New Castle area. A cylindrical stair tower abuts the main building at the rear, built to house a winding stair which has been replaced by a run and landing type. Being a bank building, the vaults are in the basement; thus the kitchen and utility rooms must extend from the rear of the main building, which also served as the dwelling of the cashier of the local branch. For larger houses in New Castle, however, this was the usual arrangement (Plates 38 and 39).

The building of town houses and a sophisticated bank building on Front Street indicated further urbanization in New Castle, but of a particular sort.

By the time of the fire of 1824 the economic life of the town no longer was directed exclusively toward the Delaware River. New Castle had ceased to be the provisioner for ships bound for the high seas from Philadelphia. The days when steamboats and turnpike traffic came and went from her wharves were also passing. The goods, loaded and landed at the New Castle and Frenchtown Railroad's Delaware Street pier, took up some of the slack. But the long distances freight trains, and even steamboats, could travel in a short time meant that mercantile houses could be concentrated in a few large cities rather than have factors and warehouses in a number of small coastal towns.

The plain fact was that New Castle was no longer in a strategic position commercially. It was not even a waystation, as it once had been, on the route between Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore, for both the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal and the major railroad by-passed it by some miles. All it could latch on to was the trade carried over the short New Castle and Frenchtown Railroad, the volume of which was limited both because its line ran parallel to the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal, with its lower rates, and because the Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore Railroad, passing through Newport and Newark, ran within a few miles of it.

The commercial difficulties just cited, coupled with the financial setbacks leading merchants suffered in the fire of 1824 and the departure of the state judiciary for Dover in 1841, caused New Castle to lower its sights considerably. It became no more than a supplier of local needs. Business firms clustered along Delaware Street, leaving Front

Street largely a residential area. In examining, as we have just done, the changed economic and political conditions, we can understand that the urbanization of housing on Front Street did not mean that New Castle was growing from a town into a city. Normally, the commercial district of a town expands into its residential area. But, in New Castle, the reverse was true. The local mercantile class--Jeremiah Bowman, the Janviers, the Riddles, and the McCulloughs--was not expanding its activities. Instead, it was content to make safe investments. On Front Street it invested in property that was comparatively inexpensive by now and erected on it a simple, stereotyped sort of building--the town house. These are the peculiar circumstances behind the erection of sophisticated buildings in a small and backward town.

If nothing else is to be learned from this last period in New Castle's building history prior to the industrialization of the post-Civil War era and the colonializing of recent decades, it is that this was a town that had ceased to grow of its own accord. The accident of 1824 marked the beginning of an ingrown period, with the only stimuli coming finally from investments by outsiders in the last half of the century. But there was nothing really new in these developments. Architecture on Front Street, like the commercial and cultural life of the town, was only continuing in that state of dependency on outside sources, though of a different sort, that had characterized it since the place was first settled.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER V

¹Recorder of Deeds Office, New Castle County Public Building, Wilmington, Delaware. Deed Book M, Vol. 3, pp. 312-313. The sale by William Lees, formerly of New Castle, then of Liverpool, to John Bird and James Riddle. This partnership was broken by the death of Bird, the father of the playwright, Robert Montgomery Bird, in 1804.

²Wilmingtonian, Vol. L, No. 33 (April 29, 1824), p. 3, column 2.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Delaware Gazette, Vol. X, No. 1047, NEW SERIES: Vol. IV, No. 437 (April 30, 1824), p. 3, column 2.

⁶"An Additional Supplement to an act entitled, 'An act for establishing the boundaries of the town of Newcastle, and for other purposes therein mentioned.'" Laws of the State of Delaware From the Nineteenth Day of January, One Thousand Eight Hundred and Twenty, to the Ninth Day of February, One Thousand Eight Hundred and Twenty-Six. Vol. VI (of the Laws) (Dover: n. d.), p. 522.

⁷Recorder of Deeds Office, New Castle County Public Building, Wilmington, Delaware. Deed Book G, Vol. 5, p. 464.

⁸Historical Society of Delaware, Old Town Hall, Wilmington, Delaware. "NEW CASTLE RESTORATION Typed notes on city and properties by Jeannette Eckman." Typescript #46, p. 5.

⁹Recorder of Deeds Office, New Castle County Public Building, Wilmington, Delaware. Deed Book O, Vol. 9, p. 161.

¹⁰See Appendix D.

¹¹Public Archives Commission, Hall of Records, Dover, Delaware. Film Microscopy No. 19, Roll 1. "Schedule of the whole number of Persons within the Division allotted to Henry Vining by the Marshal of the New Castle Hundred District (or Territory) of Delaware," pp. 121-137. On p. 135 appears "Aggregate of the Town of New Castle."

¹²Compendium of the Enumeration of the Inhabitants and Statistics of the United States, as Obtained at the Department of State, From the Returns of the Sixth Census, by the Counties and Principal towns, Exhibiting the Population, Wealth, and Resources of the Country. To Which is Added an Abstract of Each Preceding Census. (Washington: 1841), pp. 28-31.

¹³ J. D. B. DeBow, (Superintendent of the United States Census). The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850, (Washington: 1853).

¹⁴ "An ACT for establishing and regulating a ferry over the river Delaware, at the town of New-Castle." Passed at Dover, January 21, 1803. Laws of the State of Delaware From the Second Day of January, One Thousand Seven Hundred and Ninety-Eight, to the Twenty-Fifth Day of January, One Thousand Eight Hundred and Five. Vol. III (of the Laws) (Wilmington: 1816), pp. 310-315. By this act, (Dr.) James McCallmont was given the right to operate a ferry from the "...brick house and wharf in the town of New-Castle aforesaid, commonly called 'The old ferry'..." on Bank Lot 12 (Harmony Street Ferry--See Plate 3) on the condition that, within the next two years, he "...extend and carry out the said wharf at least one hundred and fifteen feet further into the river Delaware from the present end thereof..."

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

MAPS AND SURVEYS OF NEW CASTLE

Map, 1734

The first mention I have found of a plan of the town of New Castle is in the letter book of James Steel in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia. Two letters from Steel, who was secretary to the Proprietors of Pennsylvania and the Lower Counties upon Delaware, to John Hore, Surveyor of New Castle County, comprise the evidence. One is dated "Philada. 20th: 3 mo. 1734," but the other is undated. It is probably later, since, in it Steel tells Hore to correct mistakes in an earlier "Draught," likely the one mentioned by him in his first letter.

Portions of the two letters are given below in their entirety because they are short and contain little irrelevant material.

My Frd. John Hore Philada. 20th:3 mo. 1734

Second paragraph of the letter

The Prope. Proprietor would have an Exact Copy taken from the Draught of NCastle Town which was laid before the Considn. of the Proprietor? when not there, with a Certificate & Affidavit made on y^e Same before Robt. Gordon by thy Self certifying that the original is in thy Custody as Surveyor of the County and the other a true Copy--He would have noted on the Draught in what parts of the Town the Court house, the Building called the Church, and the Presbiterean sic Meeting house Stand, and the Exact Distance between the Courthouse & the River Thy own, Dr. ffinneys Dr. John Finney, of New Castle & James Hamiltons Business Shall be done as Soon as Possibly if can

get time for it, but the last Journey into Kent,
and round by Nottingham has So far put me in
arrear respecting the business of the office that
it will require Some weeks to bring me on a level
in the Same I am &c.

James Steel¹

My Friend John Hore

Upon looking over thy Draught of NCastle
Town, a Mistake was discovered in y^e figures which
denote the distances between the Several places
marked on the Draught, being in two places difrent
/sic/ from the Certificate thereunto annexed, and
because it is by thy Self certified on Oath the
Prope. /Proprietor/ has ordered me to Send it
down that the mistake may be rectified by thy
own hand and he would have thee add a handsome
Compass on that part of y^e Paper where only there
is room left.

I have put the Draught into a Tincase to
prevent its being injured, and now Send it by
the Post by whom it must be returned the next
week, for it is intended to be Sent to England
by Capt. Richmond who proposes to Sail within
the week, and therefore it must not be by any
means neglected or delayed.

I am &c. JS²

If it survives, this map of New Castle would most likely be found among
the papers of the Penn family. This writer has not been able to locate
it among those in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Steel's asking
Hore to embellish the map with drawings of buildings and a compass suggest
that it was as much a presentation copy as a useful map.

Survey and Map, 1797-1798

On June 3, 1797, the General Assembly of the State of Delaware
passed at Dover "An ACT for establishing the boundaries of the town of
New-Castle, and for other purposes therein mentioned."³ By this Act

James Booth, George Read "the younger," Nicholas Vandyke, Archibald Alexander, and John Crow were appointed commissioners to see that a qualified surveyor make an accurate survey of the town. This marked the first time since the English regained control of New Castle from the Dutch in 1674 that the state courts had relinquished their privilege of governing the town. The surveyor was to

...ascertain and fix the boundaries and limits of the same...lay out, open, and regulate, the streets, lanes, and alleys within the said town...

and file a "...careful plot or map of the survey..." in the office of the Recorder of New Castle County.⁴

In "ascertaining and fixing the boundaries" of New Castle, the Commissioners were to take care to confine their survey to the "present reputed boundaries" of the town. Ostensibly, the surveyor was to "lay out, open, or regulate" only public alleys and roads, but a further provision required only the assent of persons whose property bordered on a street to have this service performed.⁵ Thus private lanes and alleys might be surveyed as well as public thoroughfares. At the intersections of streets, posts or stone markers were to be set up, these acting as indisputable reference points for any surveying that might be done in the future in New Castle.⁶ The theft of one of these markers could result in a forty dollar fine upon conviction.

Although the surface of the streets was not surveyed and graded until the survey of 1804-1805 had been completed, the Commissioners were

to lay out "...proper pavements and gutters for carrying off the water."⁷ These facilities were to be built at the property-owners' expense.

The location and sizes of building lots along Front Street were recorded at the behest of William Penn in 1701. Subsequent divisions of lots were accurately described in deeds and conveyances. Working from these records, we must suppose, the Commissioners were to determine the proper location for partition walls and to "regulate" them, that is, to fix the "breadth or thickness thereof" and to lay the foundations exactly on the dividing line between lots.⁸ The "first builder" of a partition wall was to be reimbursed for one-half of his expenses, or

...for so much thereof as the next builder may have occasion to make use of, before such next builder shall any wise use or break into the said wall...⁹

But a further provision, declaring the inviolability of earlier contracts, can be taken to mean that the Commissioners need "regulate" only partition walls of buildings erected after the Act went into effect.

The Commissioners, or any three of them, were also to "regulate" the construction and maintenance of partition fences. As with partition walls, they had to ascertain property lines and estimate the cost of a fence "...made in the manner generally used." They were to be paid one dollar by the property-owners each time they performed this service.¹⁰ From the Ives Le Blanc view of New Castle, drawn in 1797, picket and board fences appear to separate back yards along the river side of Front Street. On the right side of this view a post and rail fence encircles

a spacious front lawn just to the north of the block along Front Street studied in this paper.

From the town map filed with the survey of 1804-1805 it can be seen that houses and business buildings were not erected at a uniform distance from the street.¹¹ Some evidently projected into the areas set aside for sidewalks by the Act of 1797. The framers of that bill realized that buildings projecting on to the streets, "...but which cannot be removed without greatly injuring the same..." should be left standing until they fall into decay or "otherwise be destroyed." When this occurred, the owners were required to have the Commissioners inspect the extant and proposed foundations. Failure to comply with their directives would make both the property-owner and the master builder liable to a twenty dollar fine and costs. If a property-owner built toward the street beyond the limits to be specified by the Commissioners and did not remove such "obstructions and encroachments" when ordered to do so, he could be forced to do so and fined a sum not to exceed fifty dollars.¹² Either a town ordinance passed August 16, 1805, or one passed October 12, 1825--it is uncertain which, because these records are unavailable and, in the source in which they are mentioned, provisions possibly from both are lumped together--specified the distance stoops and cellar doors must be from the sides of streets.* It would be interesting to know whether these regulations resulted from the suggestions made in the Act of 1797.

*"Plan of the Town of New-Castle 1804." Hall of Records. Public Archives Commission, Dover, Delaware. Sheet entitled "Regulations." These provisions will be discussed more fully in connection with the Act of 1804 and the survey of 1804-1805.

Whether or not they did, they and the Act itself indicate a strong interest in regularizing the appearance of the town. Similar tendencies may have been partly responsible, though not a major reason, for the homogeneity of the facades of buildings erected in New Castle in the early nineteenth century.

The expenses of making the survey and the purchase of landmarks and other items were to be met by an assessment on persons residing in New Castle and on local properties of non-residents, the rate to be determined by the Commissioners. Payment was to a treasurer nominated and appointed by the Commissioners. He was to settle accounts with them once a year.¹³

Two or more Commissioners were to be elected each year on the second Tuesday in May. The number of Commissioners is not stipulated in the Act of 1797. But judging from the original number--five--it seems that the two or more men elected annually were to serve two-year terms. The five Commissioners could have been elected at one time, however. The General Assembly is not specific on these points, doubtless leaving matters of personnel to the judgment of the townspeople.

As the Act of 1797 directed, the report of the survey and the map of New Castle were submitted to the Recorder of Deeds of New Castle County on May 1, 1798, and recorded on November 8, 1798.¹⁴ Previous to this, they had been examined by George Read, in his capacity as Chief Justice of Delaware. The report is a brief summary of the procedure followed in the survey. It is interesting to us because previous names of streets are noted parenthetically after the current name has been given.

The map drawn by the surveyor, Daniel Blaney, denotes only the larger properties and the most important buildings in New Castle. Following the stipulations of the Act, the position of the streets and their intersections are carefully located. No extensions of streets are suggested on this map, such as were sketched in on the map which accompanied the survey drawings of 1804-1805. (Plate 2)

Survey, 1804-1805

By an Act of the General Assembly of Delaware, passed at Dover January 20, 1804, entitled

A supplement to the act, entitled, 'An act for establishing the boundaries of the town of New-Castle, and for other purposes therein mentioned,'

the Town Commissioners created by the Act of 1797 were to have made a ground plan of the town.¹⁵ The purpose of this survey was to determine the contours of existing street beds and to recommend correct gradients. With this knowledge at hand, the beds of streets, lanes, and alleys could then be shaped, filled, or graded to conform with these suggestions.

Directly responsible for the drawings of elevations of buildings, which were of great importance to this study, was a provision of the Act which states that the determination of the proper gradients of street beds

...may be necessary for the regulation of buildings to be erected in future, so as to determine the elevation of the ground floor (first floor) above the surface of the streets.¹⁶

It seems evident from the elevations that, to secure even drainage along Front Street, the middle stretch, from about Lot 2 to Lot 9 (in front of

the Read House) would have to be graded down. That this was done is indicated by two features of the exterior of the Gunning Bedford House (#6 The Strand): A second water table revealed along the street side and the side entrance to the basement is approximately one yard above the present street level.

The framers of the bill seemed concerned primarily with the problem of proper drainage and possibly even with flood prevention. The latter could have been one reason why the survey was felt "...necessary for the regulation of buildings to be erected in future." It would be important for the ground (first) floor to be high and dry; this could be assured only after proper drainage gradients had been determined by the survey. In order to carry out these improvements, the Act provided for "...carrying off the water by gutters and common sewers."¹⁷ The Commissioners were also to direct the construction of the following:

...lay out the proper pavements and gutters in front of dwelling houses, and continue the same with a footway on the inside of those gutters, not less than three feet in breadth in front of unimproved lots and parts of lots within the said town...¹⁸

Property owners were expected to pay for gutters, pavements, or footways in front of their buildings or lots. If they failed to do this, they could be forced by the Town Commissioners to pay the costs of the improvements or face confiscation of their property to that amount.¹⁹

On a manuscript sheet entitled "Regulations," which accompanies those of the survey of 1804-1805, is a prefatory remark that mentions two ordinances of the Town Commissioners of New Castle, passed August 16,

1805, and October 12, 1825. This is followed by a list of streets, presumably those covered by provisions of these enactments. This list is closely followed in turn by specifications for gutters, footways, and pavements. These regulations are now given in their entirety, as they are directives which seem to have been carried out along the streets of New Castle.

the Pavements Gutters and footways are laid out and prescribed as follows

The depth of Gutters shall be Eight inches from the top of curb to bottom of Gutter, & 12 inches in depth from Center of Street

The pavements in front of houses shall be not less than 12 feet in breadth from the inside of Curb Stone to the true line of building /as laid down in a Ground Plan of the Town/ excepting the S. W. Side of Delaware from Pearl to Market 14 feet.

The footways in front of unimproved Lots shall ascend from the Curb to the true line of Building in the ratio of half an inch to each foot and no more.

No Stoop or steps of entrance into any building now erected or that may hereafter be erected on any Street in said Town, nor any doors or inlets into cellars, now erected or that may hereafter be erected on any of the Streets in Said Town Shall be permitted to extend more than four feet from the line of Building.²⁰

Since town records are not available, it is impossible to learn which portions of the above stem from the ordinance of 1805 and which from its amendment or extension in 1825. It is probable that the bulk of the regulations were contained in the earlier ordinance, the one more likely to reflect the results of the survey of 1804-1805, inasmuch as they specify items that were provided for by the Act of 1804.

Further confusion arises from the uncertainty of the date on which these regulations were recorded on the sheet entitled "Regulations." It would seem that dating the regulations is possible from mention of one property owner by name in a short description of the portions of Front Street that were surveyed, included in the list of streets which immediately preceded the regulations:

Front Street on both sides from Delaware to
Harmony Street; and on the S W side from Del^r
Delaware Street to the S. W. Side of John
Mundall/s lot.²¹

Mundall bought the old van Leuvenigh property in 1799. He tried to sell it in 1815, as was noted elsewhere; but it apparently was not until 1824, when Sheriff David Wilson sold the lot of Deborah M. Mundall Marsh of Philadelphia, the widow of John Mundall, to Thomas Janvier, that it was finally disposed of.²² But any attempt to date the regulations from this mention of John Mundall as a property-owner becomes foolish, since we know that one of the ordinances is dated 1825. Reference to the property as John Mundall's can only indicate ignorance or an oversight on the part of the clerk who inserted these items among the papers of the survey of 1804-1805. Therefore, no portions of the regulations given earlier can be dated with any certainty, although they most probably do emanate from the two ordinances. Other specifications, written on the same sheet, but in other hands, are signed by Town Commissioners and date as late as 1867. It might be possible to analyze the handwriting and establish a relative chronology thereby. But such a rough approximation would not be too useful.

The importance of knowing even roughly how soon the surveys of 1798 and 1804-1805 stimulated the Town Commissioners into taking specific action is obvious. With this knowledge, the earnestness of purpose behind the surveys, maps, and regulations could have been gauged more meaningfully than was possible in this paper.

The rationale behind all this civic planning, on the other hand, can be grasped rather securely. A lengthy essay, entitled "References to the Plan and Sections of the Town of Newcastle," probably written by Benjamin Henry Latrobe, the director of the survey of 1804-1805, begins by explaining what it is intended should be seen on the sheets of drawings prepared from the survey. The remainder of this report consists of advice to American builders to build with reference to climatic conditions. The recommendations that streets be laid out to diverge from wharves reminds one of the radial plan for Washington, D. C., prepared by L'Enfant a few years before this survey was made. The essay is given here in its entirety because it is a considerable document in the history of American urban planning.

References to the Plan and Sections of the Town
of Newcastle.

1. Plan of the Town.

In this Plan is laid down every description of Houses which stood at the time the survey of the Town was made for the regulations of the streets, with the divisions of the lots.--NB. as these divisions of the lots were not laid down from actual measurement no reference must be had to them for the purpose of ascertaining limits.

The names written upon the plan are not in all cases those of the proprietors but in many, of the tenants.

The dotted lines represent the proposed extension of certain Streets, and the introduction of others for the enlargement of the Town. Though these streets are drawn parallel with the others, I would not recommend them to be so laid out, if in process of time the Commissioners should find it necessary to extend the boundary of the town, for the following reasons: During the unhealthy months of the year--that is from July to October the prevailing winds are from the South West--It is a general and true observation that the Eastern shores of our Rivers are less healthy than the Western. most probable, because the SW wind blows from the Water upon the former, & from the Land upon the latter. It is therefore best to place a town upon the shore of a river which is to windward of the River when the South West wind blows.

The North-west winds in the United States in the Winter and the North East at all seasons are the most unpleasant, and the later the most unwholesome of our winds. Every house and every town ought therefore to be so constructed & placed as to be as well as possible, protected against them.

Next to the Winds, the Sun in our Climate most influences the health and the pleasantness of our Towns & houses--A house built with its fronts to the East and West is therefore both in Summer & Winter a disagreeable habitation. Exposed to the NW & NE winds, it is also heated to its center by the ascending & by the declining Sun.

From these simple facts it is evident that we have in America only one good aspect--the South--Next to the South is the North aspect, for though equally exposed to the North West & North East winds with the East & West faces, it escapes in a great degree the effects of the Sun looking into and heating the deep recesses of our chambers.

From the preceding facts which are too simple and too well known to be doubted, it results that to place a house to face the SW & NE. or the SE & NW. is to court every possible inconvenience which can result from the effect of the Sun & wind in our climate. The NW & NE winds blow directly upon two of the sides & the South West which is

by far the pleasantest breeze is confined to one single front. In Summer the Sun rising on the North East front looks into the SE & SW at a low angle in its ascent & descent, and sets on the NW front, driving,--as we see in many instances, the inhabitants from one part of the building to the other for shelter in the course of every day

With these facts before us, it would seem surprising that the majority perhaps of our American towns & houses are actually built so as to face the SW or NE. The influence this circumstance has upon our manner & our health is much more extensive & powerful than we are aware of, and may be guessed at even from the enquiry into what will be the difference of attention to business of a man who in summer inhabits a cool dwelling, every apartment in which has its appropriate & permanent distinction, & of one who is driven from his front into his back & from his East into his West rooms in the course of every day, without finding himself perfectly at ease in any of them.

What in regard to aspect is true of houses, is also so of towns--A town, the streets of which run in parallel lines pointing to the SW or NW cannot possibly have a single well placed house in it. The reason why so engregious /sic/ an error has been committed in the plan of most of our towns and of our many cities destined to be very populous, is, on this side of the Alleghenny, & South of New York, the general course of the rivers on which they are situated & which is almost universally SW or SB--It has not been considered that streets diverging from the Water render every part of the town quite as, if not more, accessible from the wharves than streets at right angles with them. The only inconvenience that can arise from such an arrangement of the streets is, that a few houses will not have rectangular corners. The houses on the street next to the river will have a bad aspect, because convenience will require that they should run parallel with the river. But all others may be placed parallel to, or at right angles with the meridian, and it is surely better to sacrifice the form of half a dozen houses in a part of the town in which form is of little or no consequence, than to ruin the aspect of all the houses in the town.

As next to SW or SE position the E & W fronts is /sic/ the worst,--it ought to be considered in planning a town in what manner it may be so arranged as to increase the S & N fronts as much as possible in proportion to the number of houses that look to the East & West. This can only be done by laying down the streets that run E & West and the Houses in which front N & S. at such distances from each other that there shall be only sufficient depth for roomy accommodations backwards & for a spacious alley between them & to remove those Streets that run N & South as far from each other as convenience will permit, that is, not more than 500 Ft. It is evident that by this means there will be much less room for houses looking East & West than for those that front N & South--²³

It is interesting to note, as the writer of the essay has done, the dotted lines representing proposed extensions of streets on the map that was made from the survey of 1804-1805. This is evidence either that the city fathers felt the town would expand or that Latrobe and his pupils were extremely thorough city planners.

The usefulness of the surveys as indicators of the relative importance of New Castle has been made apparent in the text of this paper. The valuable information they reveal about architectural styles and usages has been made obvious by the dependence of this writer on them for much of his material.

FOOTNOTES TO APPENDIX A

¹Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Manuscript Department. Letter Book of James Steel, 1730-1741, p. 69.

²Ibid., p. 73.

³Published twice in 1797, in the following: (1) An Act for Establishing the Boundaries of the Town of New-Castle, and for other Purposes therein mentioned.--Also, an Additional Supplement to the Act, entitled, "An Act for the better regulation of the roads in the county of Kent." New-Castle: 1797. (2) Laws of the State of Delaware, from the Fourteenth Day of October, One Thousand Seven Hundred, to the Eighteenth Day of August, One Thousand Seven Hundred and Ninety-Seven. Vol. II, (New-Castle: 1797), pp. 1368-1376. Hereafter cited as ACT.

⁴ACT, Section 1. Map is located in Deed Book R, Vol. 2, p. 429, Public Archives Commission, Hall of Records, Dover, Delaware. Archives Commission cited hereafter as DOVER.

⁵ACT, Section 1.

⁶ACT, Section 2.

⁷ACT, Section 5.

⁸ACT, Section 5.

⁹ACT, Section 5.

¹⁰ACT, Section 8.

¹¹"Plan and Street Regulations of the Town of New-Castle. 1804," DOVER. Hereafter cited as PLAN. Sheet entitled "Plan of the Town of New Castle."

¹²ACT, Section 9.

¹³ACT, Sections 10, 11, and 12.

¹⁴Deed Book R, Vol. 2, pp. 430-431. DOVER. Map is inserted on page 429.

¹⁵Laws of the State of Delaware From the Second day of January, One Thousand Seven Hundred and Ninety-Eight, to the Twenty-Fifth day of January, One Thousand Eight Hundred and Five. Vol. III, (Wilmington: 1816), pp. 322-327. Hereafter cited as SUPPLEMENT.

16 SUPPLEMENT, Section 1.

17 SUPPLEMENT, Section 1.

18 SUPPLEMENT, Section 1.

19 SUPPLEMENT, Sections 2, 3, and 4.

20 PLAN. DOVER. Sheet entitled "Regulations."

21 PLAN. DOVER. Sheet entitled "Regulations."

22 Deed Book I, Vol. 4, pp. 468-470. Recorder of Deeds Office, New Castle County Public Building, Wilmington, Delaware.

23 PLAN. DOVER. Written on three ruled sheets following the drawings made for the survey of 1804-1805 and the sheet entitled "Regulations."

APPENDIX B

THE FIRE OF 1824

A. Accounts of the fire appearing in contemporary Wilmington newspapers.

1. American Watchman, Vol. III, No. 239, (Tuesday, 27 April, 1824), p. 3, column 3.

Terrible Conflagration.--Yesterday we were alarmed with the unwelcome cry of fire. Intelligence was brought by the Sheriff of this county, D. David C. Wilson, Esq. that a dreadful fire was raging at Newcastle. The cry was resounded through our streets, and hundreds of our citizens, with the fire companies and engines, repaired with all possible speed to the scene of desolation. The sequel is set forth in the following letter from a friend of the editor, dated

NEWCASTLE, April 27, 1824.

Dear Sir,--I take up my pen in the midst of bustle, confusion and distress for the purpose of endeavoring to give you some feint sic idea of the most dreadful conflagration ever witnessed in Delaware. About 2 o'clock yesterday afternoon a fire broke out in this place in a stable belonging to James Riddle, Esq. with a large quantity of hay and other combustible matter in it, which was in a few moments in an entire flame, which almost instantaneously communicated to a lumber yard adjoining, which was in the immediate vicinity of several frame buildings. The wind was blowing directly up Water Street, almost a gale, and in less than two hours there were 15 or 20 houses enveloped by the destroying element. The large and commodious tavern house belonging to the Union Line, the tavern house, store house and dwelling house of the Messrs. M'Culloughs with nearly all their store goods, with 15 or 20 other houses were entirely destroyed. The loss sustained by the citizens of this place I think must at the lowest estimation be two hundred thousand dollars; and had it not have been for the timely and vigilant sic aid we received from the utmost exertions

of your fire and hose companies from Wilmington, the loss would have been at least one hundred thousand dollars more. The sufferers in real property are James Riddle, Esq., Jeremiah Bowman, the Messrs. Janviers, Sexton, George Read, Jr., Barnaby Cooper, Dr. M^cCalmont, and John Steel, of Philadelphia. The sufferers in personal property I cannot enumerate at present. So rapid was the progress of the fire that large quantities of store goods and household furniture were destroyed after they were moved into the street. Yours in haste,

ers.

2. Delaware Gazette, Vol. X, No. 1046, NEW SERIES: Vol. IV, No. 436, (Tuesday, April 27, 1824), p. 3, column 1.

Awful Calamity

The citizens of New-Castle, have just experienced a most distressing visitation. A fire broke out, about 3 o'clock yesterday afternoon, in an old stable belonging to James Riddle, Esq. in the rear of his house and store in Water-street, which soon communicated with an adjoining board yard. It was soon discovered, and every effort made to arrest its progress, but as the wind was blowing fresh at the time, and as there was no hose within their reach, their efforts were ineffectual. It was but a short time before it spread to the house, and store, when the Sheriff left there to inform the citizens of this place, that their assistance was needed. No time was lost by the members of the different fire companies, and many other of our citizens in repairing to the scene of distress, but when they reached it, what did they behold? The whole of the houses on the lower side of Water-street, and a number of those opposite, were completely wrapped in flames! and serious apprehensions were entertained that their devouring ravages would be soon extended to many more!

The following are as near as we could ascertain, the names of the owners, and the numbers of the houses which were burnt, viz. James Riddle, Esq., 2, J. Bowman, 3, Thomas Janvier, Esq., 1,

store; thence to the large dwelling house of Geo. Reed, Jr Esq. with back building &c. and here happily the progress of the flames were arrested, between 6 and 7 o'clock in the evening, by Mr. Geo Reed, senior's large house, the roof of which being kept extremely wet by a hose which was constantly playing, prevented the fire from going farther; but had it extended beyond this many other houses must have shared the fate of those enumerated.

As soon as the fire had made such progress as to present an ungovernable appearance, the Sheriff, Mr. David C. Wilson, rode with the utmost haste to Wilmington for assistance, and before the alarm had circulated through the town, our Engines, four in number, well manned, were in full speed for the seat of conflagration, which, altho° at a distance of near six miles, did not dampen the ardour with which our citizens were inspired to give their assistance to the distressed. The warmth of the day and the desire to get forward, must have produced serious consequences, had they not been relieved by horses, which were harnessed and despatched with the utmost expedition to their assistance; these with other horses sent to meet the Engines, were immediately hitched to, and in less than an hour after leaving here, they all arrived in New Castle, and were in effective operation; and we feel happy in saying were the means of saving much property, which, had it not been for them, must have perished with the general mass. We have been creditably informed that there was not one building destroyed which took fire after the Engines arrived and got into operation. The number of houses consumed is said to be 26, and their value with their contents, is estimated at about 150,000 dollars. Never have we seen a spectacle more distressing, than this once beautiful town, now presents.--From the north to the south end on Water Street, little is to be seen but tottering walls and solitary chimneys, and this section of the place, which was the theatre of business, is now abandoned, and left a solitary heap of ruin and desolation.

Too much praise cannot be bestowed upon our citizens, and particularly those who compose the Fire Companies, for their uncommon exertion and perseverance [sic]. After a run of near six miles, which was sufficient to have overcome the

H. W. Ritchie, Esq., 1, Steam-Boat Concern Union Line Transportation and Steam-Boat Company, 2, J. & E. M^cCullough, 3, Mr. Steele, 2, Dr. M^cCalmont, 1, George Read. jr. Esq., 1, A Barneyby, 1, Joseph Raynow, 1, Richard Sexton, 2, John Janvier, 1, besides a number of back buildings attached perhaps to most, if not all of them. It would, perhaps, be impossible, at this moment, to form any estimate, which would approach any thing like precision, of the value of the property destroyed, but among the buildings were several stores, and others of them among the most valuable houses in the town.

3. Wilmingtonian, Vol. L, No. 33, (April 29, 1824), p. 3, column 2.

The citizens of New Castle have been visited by a calamity unparalleled in our state. On Monday last, about 3 o'clock, P. M. a fire broke out in the stable of Mr. James Riddle, at the south end of Water Street, where the citizens hastened without delay, and used every exertion to suppress the flames, but with little or no effect, and they were soon communicated to the store and dwelling of Mr. R. Riddle which was contiguous to the stable. At this time the wind was blowing fresh from the south, and the fire was carried with astonishing rapidity to Mr. Bowman's Lumber Yard, and two or three buildings adjoining, which were soon consumed; the fire next communicated to Mr. J. Janvier's dwelling; thence to the house and store occupied by Mr. Ritchie, Post Master; thence to the Union Line Hotel, Mrs. Murch's tavern, and Messrs. M^cCullough's stores: It now crossed two buildings and communicated to two others, one of which was occupied by the Rev. E. Latta; these were also destroyed, together with two others adjoining, and being the last in the row. The fire then crossed the street to the house and store of Mr. S. Cooper; thence to two houses adjoining, one of which was occupied as a bakery; from thence it communicated to Mr. T. Janvier's large dwelling, thence to a small house belonging to the Steam Boat Company; thence to Mr. Saxton's Richard Sexton brick dwelling and stables, thence to a brick dwelling, and the stores and dwelling of Mr. Raynow, thence to Mr. M^cCullough's dwellinghouse, thence to a brick house occupied as a dwelling and dry goods

most hardy, they entered upon their duty with an activity and zeal, which shewed the strongest sympathy for the misfortunes of their fellow citizens. It will be a source of proud satisfaction for them to reflect that they have done their duty.

Much credit is also due to Captain Reed, of the steam boat Superior, for his kindness in proceeding immediately on landing his passengers from Philadelphia, at this place, to New Castle to bring over our weary townsmen and their apparatus.

We cannot conclude without expressing our warmest thanks to Captain Joseph Sawyer and his lady, for their generous hospitality towards our citizens, in furnishing refreshments. We were 'an hungered and ye fed' us.

B. Expressions of gratitude by George Read II, Dr. James Couper, and the Wilmington fire companies.

1. Delaware Gazette, Vol. X, No. 1047, NEW SERIES: Vol. IV, No. 437, (Friday, April 30, 1824), p. 3, columns 3 and 4.

American Watchman, Vol. III, No. 240, (Friday, 30 April, 1824), p. 3, column 3.

TO the respectable and worthy citizens of the Borough of Wilmington, members of the Friendship, Delaware, and Reliance Fire and Hose Companies of that Borough, who repaired with so much promptitude and alacrity on the afternoon of Monday last, at the request of David C. Wilson, Esquire, to New-Castle, the scene, then, of the most tremendous and destructive fire, that ever occurred in Delaware. G. Read, begs to render his most grateful acknowledgments, for their unremitted and manly exertions in arresting the progress of the raging element, and rescuing his mansion, under Providence, from its destructive effects, otherwise inevitable--so rapid indeed was the progress of the flames, under the influence of a fresh southerly gale, that in less than three hours, upwards of twenty of the most valuable

houses in the compacted and business part of Front-street, were reduced to heaps of ruins, and a great portion of the effects and merchandize of the owners and inhabitants utterly destroyed. To have been thus signally preserved, when the last hope of relief had expired and that too by those generous and benevolent men, who had sped their way from a distance of six miles, in little more than half an hour after notice given, with their engines and fire apparatus, afforded an example of so noble and disinterested an achievement, as to have impressed on the mind of the individual whose property was thus saved the most deep and indelible sense of gratitude and admiration.

Most respectfully, G. READ
New-Castle, April 28, 1824.

2. Delaware Gazette, Vol. X, No. 1048, NEW SERIES: Vol. LV, No. 438, (Tuesday, May 4, 1824), p. 3, column 5.

The Subscriber tenders his grateful acknowledgements to his fellow citizens generally, and also to those inhabitants of Wilmington, who so generously and promptly came to the relief of their suffering neighbours, for their active and efficient exertions during the late fire. To the members of the Penn Fire company of New Castle, he is under great obligations, for their unwearied care and labor during the whole night, by which, under the smiles of a kind Providence, the further progress of the devouring flames towards his dwelling was arrested, and it, together with the adjoining house, saved from destruction.

James Couper.

New Castle, April 30

3. American Watchman, Vol. III, No. 240, (Friday, 30 April, 1824), p. 3, column 4.

At a meeting of the Fire Companies of Wilmington, held at G. J. Wolf's Inn, April 28, 1824, Carson Wilson, was called to the Chair, and W. H. Naff, appointed Secretary.

The following resolutions were proposed and adopted, and ordered to be printed in the several papers of this Borough.

Resolved, That the thanks of the meeting be presented to Jacob Robinson, Thomas and James Morrison, and James Murdock, for the promptitude wit which they conveyed our Engines and apparatus to the fire at Newcastle, on the 25th inst.

Resolved, That the thanks of this meeting be presented to the owners of the Steam Boat Superior, and Captain Reed, for their liberality and promptitude in repairing to Newcastle, for the purpose of bringing back our citizens and fire apparatus, which was accomplished on the night after the above melancholy catastrophe.

CARSON WILSON, Chairman

Attest.--W. H. Naff, Secretary.

C. Summary of Losses.

1. American Watchman, Vol. III, No. 242, (Friday, 7 May, 1824), p. 3, column 2.

SUMMARY--'Multum in parvo.'

The loss sustained by the recent fire at New-castle, Del. is estimated at one hundred thousand dollars. By this calamity twenty-one families have been deprived of their homes, most of whom were on Monday morning in comfortable circumstances. The individuals who compose these families, amount in all to about two hundred persons, or one sixth of the population of New-castle.

D. Relief.

1. Committee of relief in New Castle.

Delaware Gazette, Vol. X, No. 1047, NEW SERIES: Vol. LV, No. 437, (Friday, April 30, 1824), p. 3, column 4.

American Watchman, Vol. III, No. 240, (Friday, 30 April, 1824),

p. 3, column 4.

At a general meeting of the inhabitants of the Town of New Castle, convened for the purpose of concerting and adopting such measures and proceedings as may be deemed expedient to afford relief to the sufferers by the late dreadful conflagration, Kenzey Johns, Esq. was unanimously appointed chairman of the meeting, and Evan Thomas, Secretary.

On motion seconded, it was resolved that a committee of five persons be appointed to report to the meeting forthwith, a statement of the number and value of the houses, and other property consumed by the late fire, and to propose measures to be adopted for the relief of the sufferers.

The following gentlemen were named by the Chairman as members of the committee, viz. James R. Black, David C. Wilson, John Moody, Kenzey J. Van Dyke and Dr. Henry Colesberry, who after retiring for a short time, returned and reported the following address and resolutions.

A destructive and very distressing fire which occurred in the Town of New Castle, Delaware, on Monday, the 26th inst. furnished an appeal to the liberal feelings of every individual, which cannot fail to excite the deepest sympathy. By this deplorable visitation, twenty three families have been deprived of every thing that was essential to domestic comfort; a large majority of that number are rendered entirely destitute, not only turned out of house and home, but some without even a change of wearing apparel. The sufferers by the late fire are worthy objects of the sympathies of a humane public. It is therefore most earnestly and respectfully solicited, that every one who is disposed to contribute to the relief of the distress, that at present pervades the inhabitants of the town of New-Castle, will do it promptly. The actual loss sustained is estimated at one hundred thousand dollars, and the subjects of that loss are all truly deserving of every assistance that can be afforded. Of the sufferers by the fire, there are eight store keepers, who have lost nearly their entire stock

of goods. There are the same number of mechanics whose furniture and implements of trade are principally consumed or destroyed, and three Innkeepers, who have lost a great portion of their furniture! A few of the sufferers, having other means, have declined receiving any assistance from the liberality of their fellow citizens, but to the rest the aid of the benevolent is essential to their relief from present want, and to enable them to obtain a future support.

Resolved, that five persons be appointed a committee of correspondence, to forward the objects of this meeting. The chairman named for that committee, the following persons, viz; James R. Black, Kenzey Johns, jr. Charles Thomas, Richard E. Smith and Kenzey J. Van Dyke.

Resolved, that a like number of persons be appointed a committee to receive such contributions as may be tendered for the relief of the sufferers by the late fire. The committee appointed are Thomas W. Rogers, David C. Wilson, John Moody, Henry Colesberry & Nicholas Van Dyke.

Resolved, That the respective captains of the Steam boats in the Union Line, be requested, as special agents, to receive any donations that may be offered for the relief of the sufferers.

Resolved, that James Couper, cashier of the Farmers Bank at New Castle, be appointed Treasurer of this meeting, by whom all monies collected for the above purpose shall be paid.

Resolved, That the thanks of this meeting, through the Chairman thereof, be given to the respective Fire Companies of the Borough of Wilmington, for their prompt and efficient assistance rendered in extinguishing the late dreadful conflagration. By Order of the meeting

KENZIEY JOHNS, Chair'n
Attest Evan Thomas, Sec'y.
New Castle, April 28, 1824.

2. Notice of contributions to relief fund from Philadelphia.

Wilmingtonian, Vol. L, No. 34, (Thursday, May 6, 1824), p. 3,

WE are pleased to see that the sympathy of the citizens of Philadelphia, has been excited by the distressing Fire which lately occurred at New Castle, and that they are now actively engaged in raising funds for the assistance of those who have suffered by this calamity. A numerous and respectable meeting was held on this occasion on Friday last at the Merchant's Hall, at which the Mayor of the City presided, and committees appointed in the different Wards of the City and Liberties, to solicit donations of the humane and charitable, for the relief of these unfortunate sufferers.

3. Notice of contributions to relief fund from Boston, Lancaster (Pennsylvania), and Philadelphia.

American Watchman, Vol. III, No. 244, (Friday, 14 May, 1824), p. 3, column 2.

Sufferers at Newcastle--The Boston Patriot recommends that measures be taken in that city to aid those who suffered by the late destructive fire at Newcastle, Del.

A public meeting has been held in Lancaster, and committees appointed to solicit contributions for the relief of the sufferers by the late fire at Newcastle.

P. Canfield, Philadelphia, has announced his intention to appropriate one half of the profits on all sales of tickets made at his office for one week ending the 13th inst. to the Newcastle sufferers.

4. Amount of money collected for relief fund.

Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Manuscript Department, Read Manuscripts. Volume entitled "George Read, George Read, Jr., Wm. T. Read 1716-1872." Letter, dated June 24, 1864, M. M. Cleaver, Teller, New Castle Branch of the Farmers' Bank in the State of Delaware, to William Thompson Read, p. 121.

Farmers Bank
New Castle June 24th 1864

Wm. T. Read Esqr.

Dear Sir

I find James R. Black Treasurer of the New Castle Fire fund, credited October 20th 1824 in the Books of this Bank with the sums

Check on the Bank of Pennsylvania	\$ 68605
" " United States	1.18073
Philadelphia Bank	10325
Franklin Bank of Baltimore	10250
Bank of Delaware	100.00
Bank Notes " "	3489.00
Check on the Bank of Pennsylvania	130.56
" " Farmers Bank at New Castle	10.00
" " Farmers Bank " New Castle	100.00
Bank Notes " " "	26.00
	<u>5.92709</u>

Very Respectfully Yours

M. M. Cleaver

Teller

Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Manuscript Department,
William T. Read Collection. Folder entitled "Report on the Great Fire
in Newcastle, Del. in 1824."

The following List Specifies, as far as the Records furnish information the places from which contributions for the sufferers by the fire in N. Castle, Delr, April 26th 1824, were received /sic/

Philadela	\$3061.05
Boston	1150.73
Washington from the corporation, Members of Congress & others	1020.00
Wilmington	572.00
Lancaster, Pennsylvania,	290.06
New York	213.25
Baltimore	122.50.
Smyrna, Delr,	100.00
Cantwell's Bridge and vicinity	88.00
Georgetown Delr	65.00
Dover	20.00
Frenchtown Maryland	80.00
Chesnut Level, Pennsyla,	27.50
Chippensburg	10.00
New Castle and Vicinity	810.00
	<u>\$7,630.09</u>

E. Rivalry between New Castle and Wilmington.

1. Delaware Gazette, Vol. X, No. 1047, NEW SERIES: Vol. IV, No. 437, (April 30, 1824), p. 3, column 2.

New Castle and Wilmington.--For several years past there has been a spirit of jealousy subsisting between some of the citizens of this place, and some of those of New Castle, which has never, and can never, be of any advantage to either, but has led, and if continued to be indulged in, may again lead to consequences of an extremely unpleasant nature; and we hope that the time has arrived when reflections against each other, and an opposition to the views and wishes of each other, which exists in a spirit of opposition, will be discontinued forever. The recent awful visitation which has been experienced by our New-Castle friends, has afforded to the citizens of this place an opportunity of sympathising with them in their suffering, and to evince their zeal in endeavouring to preserve their property from destruction, and the alacrity with which they moved to their relief, has impressed the latter with a due sense of the obligation they are under to the former, for the disinterested zeal which was exercised on the occasion, and they have not failed to manifest their gratitude for it. We regret extremely that the occasion which offered an opportunity for the display of kindness

and gratitude between the citizens of the two places, should have been attended with such distressing consequences to our neighbours, but since it has occurred, it is to be hoped that it will be properly improved, and be productive of some favourable results.

F. Fire Prevention Act.

1. Laws of the State of Delaware From the Nineteenth Day of January, One Thousand Eight Hundred and Twenty, to the Ninth Day of February, One Thousand Eight Hundred and Twenty-Six. Vol. VI (of the Laws series). Dover: N. D. p. 522.

AN ADDITIONAL SUPPLEMENT to an act entitled,
'An act for establishing the boundaries of the town of Newcastle, and for purposes therein mentioned.'

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and House of Representatives of the State of Delaware in General Assembly met, That it shall be lawful for the commissioners of the town of Newcastle, or a majority of them, to levy and assess, on the persons and estate within the town of Newcastle, such sum or sums of money, as may be deemed necessary,--to procure for the fire companies within the said town such apparatus as may be useful in preventing destruction by fire,--and for keeping the same in repair: which sums, assessed by the commissioners of the said town, shall be collected by the treasurer of the said town, in the same manner as county rates and levies are collected by the laws of this State.

Passed at Dover
February 7, 1825

G. Report of William Thompson Read on the fire of 1824 (c. 1864).

1. Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Manuscript Department, William T. Read Collection. Folder entitled "Report on the Great Fire in Newcastle, Del. in 1824." The following notes are excerpted from the body of notes made by William Thompson Read in inquiring further into

the circumstances of the fire of 1824, after having heard the report given on this subject by Major John Jones to the Historical Society of Delaware on May 31, 1864. The latter, as well as Read's own report, could not be seen by this writer. These notes are undated. They were made in preparation for a report to be made by Read to the Historical Society of Delaware. Elisions in the following indicate specific references by Read to portions of his report; because the report itself is not available, it is useless to include references to it. Only portions of Read's notes considered relevant to this paper are given here.

To the Historical Society of the State of Delaware

The undersigned, to whom was referred the paper relating to the conflagration in New Castle, Delaware in the year 1824 laid before the Historical Society of Delaware, May 31st 1864, by Major John Jones, respectfully reports the following summary of the information he has collected on the subject...

1st That twenty three houses on Front or Water-Street, New Castle, Delaware, the most compact and business-part of this town, were, in less than 3 hours, destroyed by fire on the afternoon of April 26th, 1824: by which calamity 8 store-keepers lost nearly their entire stock of goods, and 8 mechanics almost all their tools, and 23 families including 3 innkeepers were left houseless, their furniture and clothes principally consumed or destroyed, and a large majority of them entirely destitute; and that the actual loss by this fire was estimated by a committee of the citizens of New Castle at one hundred thousand dollars...

4th That the Boston City Council recommended that collections be taken up in the churches of that city, for the relief of the sufferers by this fire...

5th That public Meetings were held in Philadela. and Lancaster Pennsylvania and Committees appointed to solicit donations for the sufferers by the fire at New Castle...

That the Honorable Louis McLane collected from members of Congress and others and remitted 565 dollars, for the relief of these sufferers...

8 That Canfield (See D. 3.) announced his intention to appropriate one half of the sales of lottery tickets, at his office, in Philadelphia for one week to the relief of the sufferers by the fire, at New Castle...and Conines of Baltimore pledge themselves, May 21st 1824, to omitted appropriate for the relief of these sufferers, one dollar, for each ticket they should sell in the lottery, till its completion...and remitted, afterwards, 102 dollars, and 50 cents, the result...

That the undersigned has been favored by the Exr. Executor of James Couper M D and the Hon James R. Black deceased who were Treasurers of the New Castle Fire Fund, in 1824, with an Abstract of their Accounts by which it appears that the whole amount received and distributed was \$7,630.09 received...(See D. 4.)

10. That the citizens of New Castle County Delaware, in the year 1774, contributed, and by their Committee, George Read and Nicholas Van Dyke remitted in 1775 one thousand dollars estimating the dollar at 7 shillings and 6 pence sic Pennsylvania. currency for the relief of the sufferers from the Boston-Port-Bill--Biography of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence, Vol: 3, pp. 360-1-2--For the Correspondence on that occasion see the Delaware Gazette, Vol. 5, No 446, June 1st, 1824...

11. That the City of Boston was not destroyed by fire when it was evacuated by the British army March 27th 1776--Hildreth's History of the United States, Vol. 3, 2d Series pp. 121, 122, 3d vol Marshall's Life of Washington, pp 397.299--nor at anytime during the revolutionary war, and therefore there could have been no sufferers from such calamity, nor money ever raised in New Castle County, for their relief.

(The undersigned regrets to state the failure of his attempts to obtain an account of the collections (except one, before mentioned,) in Boston, for the relief of the sufferers, by the fire in New Castle, in 1824 and his fear that the alleged /sic/ return to these afflicted citizens, with forty nine years' interest by that city of the New Castle County contributions for the sufferers therein in 1774, so honorable, if authentic, to that metropolis, and our common humanity, is a myth. It is remembered, he believes, by none of the inhabitants of New Castle in 1824, now living, and is not mentioned in the Wilmington papers of that year, and it is improbable that if true it should be thus forgotten and unnoticed./ Thanks are due to Major Jones for his paper. By the inquiry it has occasioned and the information elicited through the instrumentality of the 'Delaware-Historical-Society,' in regard to a past event, is manifested, almost at its birth, its utility, and value...

The undersigned begs leave to thank the Reverend Charles Breck and Messrs Ayland R. Pennington, W. D. Dow, David C. Wilson, and Mark M. Clever for the aid and information they have kindly afforded him while seeking materials for this report.

APPENDIX C

EXTENSIVE DESCRIPTIONS OF HOUSES

These descriptions are valuable, not only because they are comparatively rare, but because the characteristics of the buildings are set down in them in sufficient detail to enable us to recognize them from the mass of houses in New Castle. Doubtless others exist of the type represented by the first example given below. But none were met with while research was being done for this paper.

A. Van Leuvenigh House--Advertisement of Sale in 1815.

1. Delaware Gazette and Peninsula Advertiser, Vol. II, No. 55, (Tuesday Evening, October 24, 1815), p. 3, column 5. Also appeared in the same newspaper on October 26, 1815.

For Private Sale,
Houses and Lots, in the town of New Castle, state
of Delaware, viz.

Lot No. 1, situate at the corner of Delaware and Front streets, has on it a handsome two story brick Messuage, 60 feet by 24, three rooms on each floor, and three finished in the garret, with a good stone cellar, and a large two story brick kitchen adjoining, with three rooms above and a pump of good water at the door, together with a large garden and back yard, on which are sundry buildings, &c. The situation is high and healthy, affording an extensive view of the river Delaware, and is an excellent situation for public business, &c.

Lot No. 2 adjoining No. 1, on Front street, on which is erected a large two story frame Slaughter House, built expressly for that purpose, and has been employed as such to good advantage

for twelve years past. Also, on the same lot, there is a good two story frame dwelling house and stable, together with a garden and lot of ground, suitable for building and keeping live stock for shipping. This is considered as furnishing one of the best establishments for a Butcher in the state of Delaware, as there is a regular demand both by land and shipping for fresh and salt provisions, and live stock. Either of the above lots will be sold on the most reasonable terms, by applying to the subscriber, residing on the premises.

John Mundall

B. Tile House--Description in 1822.

1. Downs Memorial Library, The Henry Francis duPont Winterthur Museum, Folder 58x29.2. John Fanning Watson. "A Trip to the Sea Shore 1822." Contained in a notebook entitled "Journal of a Voyage from Orleans to Havannah & Charleston & land route from Charleston to Washington City & to New England 1805 also Trip to Cape May Shore in 1822."

John Fanning Watson's description of the Tile House is interesting as an example of an early nineteenth century traveller's reaction to a building considered to be of great antiquity. His mistaking it for a house with Swedish antecedents reflects the belief then current that the Swedish colonists left a strong mark on life in the Delaware Valley in the seventeenth century, a belief still cherished by many. The number of Swedish immigrants to the Delaware Valley was negligible; many of their group were Finns, some of whom were convicts or indentured servants transported to the American colony, as were some of the Swedes themselves. The money and organization behind the Swedish colony was Dutch, and it seems that, aside from the Swedish crown officials, the upper class, the

men who would have built homes on the scale of the Tile House, was composed of Hollanders. By the time the Tile House was erected (circa 1687), Swedish political influence, and affluence, had long since passed. The officials and merchants of English New Castle in the late seventeenth century were largely of Dutch stock. Such men could be expected to have built the combination home and storehouse known as the Tile House.

Came too [sic] at New Castle--a number of Sea vessels at anchor here--The Spire to one of the Churches, altho plain is very conspicuous at a great distance on the Water--Could not forbear to think one [?] many of the Scenes I passed there when a Boy in the yellow Fever of 1793--The town has many improvements since then--Went ashore, into the main front Street to see the house built in 1687--after the manner of the houses in Sweden, of brick said to have been then imported from thence--The bricks are very small--yellowish & now [?] rough cast with plaster--It presents its gableend to the Front Street--the Roof is remarkably steep, making 2 stories in itself--the End Walls are higher than the roof & have regular Steps on their upper surface above the roof [.] the year 1687 is in Iron letters as clamps on the front wall--One feels a sentiment of veneration at seeing such a vestige of antiquity--The generation to which it belonged & those who successively inhabited it have alle [sic] gone to join 'the nations beyond the Flood'!

C. Old Read House--Recollection in 1870.

1. William Thompson Read. Life and Correspondence of George Read a Signer of the Declaration of Independence with Notice of Some of his Contemporaries. (Philadelphia: 1870), p. 575; section entitled "Appendix to Chapter VII."

William Thompson Read's description of his grandfather's home is noteworthy, because, in it, he attempts to account for the Signer's

ability to maintain an extensive household on a slender income. Since it is a reminiscence, we must be cautious in our use of it. But, as a rudimentary essay in sociological explanation, it demands consideration.

THE mansion of Mr. Read commanded an extensive view of the river Delaware (of the width of two and a half miles or more), since obstructed by the houses erected along the river front of New Castle. So near was his house to the Delaware that when the tide was high one wheel of a carriage passing the street in front of it was in the water, and in violent storms its waves were dashed against the building. This mansion was an old-fashioned brick structure, looking very comfortable, but with no pretensions to elegance. It contained a spacious wall, on one side of which was a large parlor or drawing-room of sufficient size, and in its rear a large kitchen. The extensive garden ran back to the grounds, where were the stables and other out-buildings. The garden was kept with great care, for Mrs. Read had both fondness and taste for horticulture, and was proud of her profusion of flowers, especially her tulips, of great variety and beauty. This mansion burned in the fire which, in 1824, laid in ashes almost half of New Castle. Its ruins were subsequently removed, and there is not now a trace of it visible. Here Mr. Read resided for many years in the style of the colonial gentry, who, even when having the moderate income of Mr. Read, maintained a state and etiquette which have long disappeared. The furniture, though plain, was in the style of its day, and there was the necessary plate--both dinner and tea services--and the hospitality becoming Mr. Read's station maintained. How could this be, Mr. Read not being affluent? His income would buy far more than now, and he had a small farm, which furnished fuel and other necessary items for housekeeping, and there were two lots near New Castle, which afforded pasture for horses and cows, and some hay; besides, he generally owned his servants. The out-door affairs were managed by a brother of Mr. Read, an old bachelor, rough in his manner (for he had followed the sea), but of a very kind heart.

APPENDIX D

DESCRIPTIONS OF NEW CASTLE

A. New Castle in the 1790's

1. Duke de la Rochefoucault - Liancourt. Travels through the United States of North America, the Country of the Iroquois, and Upper Canada, in the Years 1795, 1796, and 1797; by the Duke--With an Authentic Account of Lower Canada. Second edition. Vol. III (of 4 Vols.). London: 1800, pp. 536-539.

The Duke de la Rochefoucault - Liancourt's account is valuable as a commentary on the agricultural and economic situation of the New Castle area in the late eighteenth century. He pays particular attention to the countryside around the town and explains the reasons behind the town's economic problems. He also is aware of New Castle's strategic location in the coasting trade and for overland commerce.

This description is also an example of early interest in the history of New Castle.

The lottery to provide money for building piers, mentioned by la Rochefoucault - Liancourt, was established by an act of the General Assembly of Delaware, passed at Dover, February 27, 1794. Laws of the State of Delaware..., Vol. II, (New Castle: 1797), pp. 1189-1191. A supplement to this law, passed February 1, 1802, by the state legislature, ordered that the surplus income derived from the lottery be used to keep the piers in repair and to pay the several men who had repaired the "upper," or Harmony Street, pier See Plate 3 at their own expense.

By this act, the Town Commissioners were authorized to establish regulations over shipping while it lay in the harbor of New Castle. They were also to appoint a harbor master, who would serve from one annual town election to the next. Laws of the State of Delaware..., Vol. III, (Wilmington: 1816), pp. 223-228. The General Assembly ceded the sites of the piers to the United States in 1827. Laws of the State of Delaware..., Vol. VII, (Dover: 1829), p. 52.

ROAD TO NEWCASTLE; AND NEWCASTLE.

Half a mile from Wilmington, you cross the Christiana in a very small ferry-boat, which, however, carries over several stages every day. The two fore-horses are taken off and placed behind, which fills the whole boat, the sides of which are not six inches high. Every thing in this country displays great want of foresight; stages and ferry-boats, as well as politics, are made for the moment. A prudent man foresees many dangers, which the inhabitants of this country are prevented by habit and carelessness from seeing. Whenever, therefore, an accident happens, nobody is prepared for it; every one is agitated and alarmed, but no remedy is applied.

The country on this side of Newcastle is a continued flat; it is, however, better cultivated than that on the other side of Wilmington. The soil appears to be light. The land is laid out in meadows, a few corn fields, and several fields of maize, which are all enclosed: there is very little wood land, and very few good trees. The houses are rather better than the land; some of them are very handsome. Newcastle is composed of seventy houses, some of which are of brick, and are built adjacent to each other: the wide streets and the grass plots give it the appearance of an English village. Being the county town, it contains the sessions-house and the prison. The town is built on the Delaware; it does not, however, carry on any direct foreign trade, but confines itself to the coasting trade with Philadelphia.

Newcastle, when in possession of the Swedes, was called New-Stockholm. When the Dutch conquered it, they called it New-Amsterdam; and when the Duke of York took possession of it he gave it the name which it has since retained. It is the oldest city of this state.

A fund having been raised by way of lottery, sanctioned by the state, for the purpose of building quays at Newcastle, that place now affords shelter to vessels in the winter, and begins to rise from the state of decay into which it had sunk.

Oak is sold at New Castle for five dollars a cord, and hickory for nearly seven dollars. The population of the county of Newcastle amounts to about eighteen thousand free people, and three thousand slaves. The frequent communication between Philadelphia and Baltimore, and the great traffic between the two cities, have occasioned the establishment of a more speedy means of conveyance of goods and passengers, than by the ordinary land and water carriage.

Four small sloops constantly sail to and from Newcastle and Philadelphia. Regular stages convey the passengers to French-Town, on the Elk-River, about twelve miles distant from Newcastle. Goods are carried there in carts. Other sloops sail down the Elk-River, which empties itself into the Chesapeak, eighteen miles from French-Town, from whence they proceed to Baltimore. The expense of the passage from Philadelphia to Newcastle is three quarters of a dollar, three quarters of a dollar by the stage to French-Town, and one dollar and a quarter from French-Town to Baltimore. This route is impassable during the three or four winter months, at which time the river Delaware is generally frozen.

Newcastle is the true point from which all the Philadelphian ships take their departure. When they are laden, they drop down thither with their pilot, and take in their poultry and vegetables, where the captains who remain at Philadelphia to settle their accounts at the custom-house join them by land, and from whence they sail with the first fair wind.

B. D.

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pp. 17

B. Description of New Castle in 1807.

1. Joseph Scott. A Geographical Description of the States of Maryland and Delaware; also the Counties, Towns, Rivers, Bays, and Islands With a List of the Hundreds in Each County. Philadelphia: 1807. pp. 176-178.

Newcastle, a post town, and the seat of justice for the county. It is pleasantly situated on the west side of the Delaware river, 40 miles below Philadelphia. It contains about 160 houses, and 1200 inhabitants. A great many of the houses have been built within these few years, and some of them in a handsome style. The public buildings are a court house, jail, three public offices, a market house, an academy, in which three schools are kept, a church for Presbyterians, one for Episcopalians, one for Quakers, and one for Roman Catholics. Four public piers are erected in the Delaware, in front of the town, for the protection of shipping in the winter season, and for the better securing the harbour.

Newcastle is the oldest town on the river Delaware. It was first settled by the Swedes about the year 1627. In 1651 they erected a fort and named it Casimer, afterwards was called by them Stockholm, in honour of the metropolis of their native country. Falling into the hands of the Dutch, they named it New Amsterdam. Some years after it fell into the hands of the English, from whom it received its present name. It was incorporated by the governor of New York, in 1672, and was governed by a baliff /sic/ and six assistants for many years. It was formerly the seat of government for the three lower counties. Very little business was done in it for a great many years. Its trade began to revive about 15 years ago, since which it has increased considerably. Almost all the vessels bound from Philadelphia to foreign ports, stop here and supply themselves with live stock. A great line of packets and stages passes through it from Philadelphia to Baltimore, by way of Frenchtown. Vast quantities of merchandise are sent by this route, from Philadelphia to the western country.

It is at present, one of the greatest thoroughfares for travelling in the United States. There are seven large and well accommodated packets, which sail constantly between this port and Philadelphia, and from 10 to 15 heavy wagons, for the transportation of goods and passengers across the peninsula to Frenchtown; besides four land stages.

The police of Newcastle is under the direction of five commissioners, who regulate the town and levy taxes. They also, with the health officer, constitute the board of health.

It is six miles below Wilmington, and 122 from Washington city. Lat. 39.38. N. lon. 0. 25. W. of Philadelphia, and 75.38. W. of Greenwich.

C. Description of New Castle and its Inhabitants in 1820.

1. Delaware Gazette, Vol. L, NEW SERIES: No. 68, (Tuesday, October 17, 1820), p. 3, columns 2 and 3.

For the Delaware Gazette
Extract from the Journal of a traveller passing
through the village of New-Castle, October, 1820.

The town of New-Castle, I have frequently spoken of as pleasantly situated and remarkably healthy; presenting to the invalid an interesting spot, where he can both be benefitted by the salubrity of the air, and gratified with a very select and intelligent society. I was induced by these flattering representations, to direct my course towards that enchanting village, with a view to enjoy the rural beauties of that fairy town, and dissipate the care and fatigue of a traveller, in the company of its enlightened inhabitants...

...I hastened to accomplish the end of my journey-- About 4 o'clock I entered the town of New Castle, after passing two beautiful country seats on the road, both of which I have since visited. One occupied by a very respectable and intelligent gentleman lately from Philadelphia, whose disposition and ability to improve have been equally manifested in the general appearance, of his land and the unexpected superiority of

his crops. There is an orchard attached to this farm containing a very extensive collection of the most valuable fruit trees--a very good example this to farmers throughout the state-- The other country seat is the property of an honourable gentleman whose talents as a statesman and a member of the bar, have procured for him the admiration and respect of all who know him.

2. Delaware Gazette, Vol. L, NEW SERIES: No. 70, (Tuesday, October 24, 1820), p. 2, columns 1 and 2.

For the Delaware Gazette
Extract from the Journal of a traveller passing
through the town of New-Castle.
(Continued from our paper of the 17th instant)

The town of New-Castle, is pleasantly situated on the west bank of the Delaware river, commanding a very extensive view of the water below. It is a place venerable for its antiquity, having been first settled by the Swedes, in the year 1627. It still contains, in its appearance, the features of superannuated /sic/ magnificence. An ancient building in the lower part of the town, erected about the period just mentioned, presents to the passenger the most impressive testimony of the antiquity of its origin.-- This building has long been occupied as the receptacle for poor emigrants. It is a dark, gloomy looking retreat, and excited at once in me a disposition to visit the interior of a building, which, at one time, may have been the residence of some Swedish nobleman, in the days of legendary tale. Of this, however, no account is now extant. An indifferent traveller would pass by in silence, a place so rusty in appearance, bending under the accumulated weight of age and consequent decay; threatening, every moment, destruction to the inhabitants of its caverns. I entered its consecrated walls with every feeling of reverential respect, and ascending by a dark winding staircase, scarcely sufficient to bear the weight of a human being; I fancied it the retreat of some fairy monsters, who, secure during the day amidst the darkness and profound silence of its walls, at night issued forth to haunt the wicked conscience of

unruly man. On opening a door which led into one of its apartments, I was struck with the meagre appearance of an old woman lying on a bed of straw, with a countenance marked by age, wan, dejected and sorrowful. On beholding me, she raised her eyes in astonishment, and surveyed me with a look of terrifying intrepidity. Beside her sat a boy clad in tattered garments, the only companion of her declining years.../This is possibly a description of the Tile House, See Appendix C./

...From this reverie, I was roused by a loud rap at the door--on opening it a gentleman saluted me with an air of great familiarity. It was my old travelling companion, Mr. C. who on his return from an excursion to the falls of Niagara, determined to tarry here a few days. After conversing some time, on the mighty wonders he had witnessed, and giving me a detail of the beauties of the western part of the state of New-York, he invited me to join him early the next morning, in a little stroll round the village; I assented, and according to appointment, met him about 9 o'clock. It was a fine clear day, a cold north wester dissipated the damps of the previous rains, and stimulated the activity of the muscular system. We sauntered about incognito, viewing the public buildings, consisting of a court house, three churches and an academy; all well located, but apparently in want of improvement. The court house, a large commodious building, has, I am told been long going to decay; and from the present probability /sic/ of its removal, which has long been contemplated, and by the information of my facetious friend & new acquaintance, the electioneering young gentleman, will be accomplished at the next session of the legislature, it must continue on the decline. As the traveller beholds this monument of departed grandeur, he learns wisdom, and feels the transience of every sublunary possession.

The plan of New-Castle is regular--you enter the town by a fine level road /Dyke Road/, commanding a fine prospect of groves and fields, enamelled with flowers, and decorated with the flourishing thorn hedge. A building somewhat resembling a triumphal arch first salutes the traveller's eye, vulgarly called a turnpike gate. Here we were presented with a wonderful combination of the utile avec le mauvais odeur. Cows, horses,

pigs and poultry, kept and pampered on the public highway!!! The eyes of a man may sustain the sight, but the effluvia of a pig pen, mixed with rising odours of a contiguous stable, who can tolerate? An evidence, this of the agricultural spirit which pervades the inhabitants of this FAIRY town. Here, at this interesting spot, love might revel upon gales, wafting at once both fragrance and harmony. Here, every breeze breathes wealth, and every sound of the well fed mud larks is but the echo of their tranquillity. Oh ye inhabitants of New-Castle! commissioners, superintendants, grand jurors, and all invested with authority or influence, why will ye countenance a nuisance so notorious as this!!! This was the ne plus ultra of our reconnoitering walk. Retracing our step down the main street, I had the pleasure of another interview with my dignified gentleman, to whom I took the liberty of introducing my companion. He had been engaged, from his account, in a learned and elaborate discussion on the propriety of appropriating the rooms of a literary institution, to charitable purposes, for the education of the poor by Sabbath schools, and religious associations...

Discusses Continental and American literary activity

The society of New-Castle, from the short opportunity I had of judging, is very refined and benevolent. With an extensive library, they can at all times gratify their literary taste; few villages of the same size in our country, possess the same advantages in this respect, and I may also add, few manifest the same degree of improvement from the advantages they enjoy. The patrons of the New-Castle library, merit the gratitude and approbation, not only of the good people of New-Castle, but of the literary world...

Complains of celibacy in New Castle

I regret the idea of leaving this delightful village, but the recollection of home, dissipates the gloom of departure. Here could I spend the remnant of my days, and connect my happiness and fortune with one of its dear female inhabitants; but now unsettled and alone, I return with delight to the fireside of my friends in P. Wheresoever we wander, or however we toil, our wishes still

recur to home for tranquility. We long to die in that spot which gave us birth, and in that pleasing expectation opiate every calamity.

3. Delaware Gazette, Vol. L, NEW SERIES: No. 73, (Friday, November 3, 1820), p. 2, column 1.

In the little town of New-Castle, the traveller meets with every variety of character and manners, from the senatorial gravity of a Presbyterian elder, to the ostentatious and presuming, but harmless impertinence of a conceited pettifogger. Thus it is in every society; some men are born to teach, others to receive instruction: some to work and others to enjoy in idleness the fruits of their industry. In this village, as in the generality of country towns, an idle, lounging spirit pervades the younger part of society. Young men who have received their education and ought to be pursuing their professional avocations, or preparing for future usefulness by a course of regular study, are here seen strolling about in all the dignity of conceited idleness, infesting others who may be better engaged, with their unseasonable and protracted visits...

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APPENDIX E

THE POPULATION OF NEW CASTLE HUNDRED AND NEW CASTLE, 1800-1850

Excerpts from the first census (1790) are not given here, because it consists only of the names of heads of families, and does not include figures on the population of New Castle or New Castle Hundred.

1800

Source: Return of the Whole Number of Persons within the Several Districts of the United States, According to "An act providing for the second Census or Enumeration of the Inhabitants of the UNITED STATES." Passed February the twenty eighth, one thousand eight hundred. Washington: 1801. Photographic facsimile by The Luther M. Cornwall Company, New York City.
New Castle Hundred (p. 26):

						<u>New Castle Hundred</u>		
	-10 yrs	10-16	16-26	26-45	45-	Free Persons	Slaves	Total
White								
Males--	292	183	164	216	91			
White						323	235	2438
Females--	280	189	168	201	96			

1810

Source: Aggregate Amount of Each Description of Persons Within the United States of America, And Territories Thereof, Agreeably to Actual Enumeration Made According to Law, in the Year 1810. Washington: 1811. /Officially listed as Book I of the Third Census/ Photographic facsimile by The Luther M. Cornwall Company, New York City.
New Castle Hundred (p. 52):

						<u>New Castle Hundred</u>		
	-10 yrs	10-16	16-26	26-45	45-	Free Persons	Slaves	Total
White								
Males--	315	109	172	207	115			
White						426	174	2340
Females--	274	125	136	193	94			

1820

Source: CENSUS for 1820. Published by authority of an Act of Congress, under the direction of the Secretary of State. Washington: 1821.
 Photographic facsimile by The Luther M. Cornwall Company, New York City.
 New Castle Hundred (p. 21):

<u>New Castle Hundred</u>						
	-10 yrs	10-16	16-18	18-26	26-45	45-
White						
Male--	314	163	48	188	264	147
White						
Females--	291	130	229	229	194	119
		-14 yrs	14-26	26-45	45-	
Slaves						
Male--		33	23	13	9	
Slaves						
Females--		34	25	9	15	
Free Colored						Total--2671
Male--		89	61	51	42	
Free Colored						
Females--		89	54	49	36	

1830

Source: FIFTH CENSUS or, Enumeration of the Inhabitants of the United States. 1830. To which is Prefixed, a SCHEDULE of the Whole Number of persons within the Several Districts of the United States, Taken According to the Acts of 1790, 1800, 1810, 1820. Washington: 1832. Photographic facsimile by The Luther M. Cornwall Company, New York City.
 New Castle Hundred (pp. 78-79):

<u>New Castle Hundred</u>							
	-5 yrs	5-10	10-15	15-20	20-30	30-40	
White							
Male--	101	105	121	88	178	95	
White							
Females--	121	100	121	123	179	112	
	40-50	50-60	60-70	70-80	80-90	90-100	100-
White							
Male--	77	47	23	6	3		
White							
Females--	63	42	28	13			

	-10	10-24	24-36	36-55	55-100	100-	
Slaves							
Male--	10	18	3	4	2		
Slaves							
Females--	6	13	5	1	4		
Free Colored							Total--2463
Male--	96	109	57	46	26		
Free Colored							
Females--	87	89	64	44	31	2	

Source: Public Archive Commission, Hall of Records, Dover, Delaware. Film Microscopy No. 19, Roll 1. "SCHEDULE of the whole number of Persons within the Division allotted to Henry Vining by the Marshal of the New Castle Hundred District (or Territory) of Delaware," pp. 121-137.

"Aggregate of the Town of New Castle" (p. 135):

	Males	Females	
White--	333	446	= 779
Colored--	93	114	= 207
Slaves--			= 24
			<u>1010</u>

1840

Source: Compendium of the Enumeration of the Inhabitants and Statistics of the United States, as Obtained at the Department of State, From the Returns of the Sixth Census, by Counties and Principal towns, Exhibiting The Population, Wealth, and Resources of the Country. To Which is Added an Abstract of Each Preceding Census. Washington: 1841.

New Castle (pp. 28-31):

	<u>New Castle (Town)</u>						
	-5 yrs	5-10	10-15	15-20	20-30	30-40	
White							
Male--	156	118	91	81	222	137	
White							
Females--	162	114	100	95	209	134	
	40-50	50-60	60-70	70-80	80-90	90-100	100-
White							
Male--	82	44	20	12	3	1	
White							
Females--	90	36	28	8	5		

	-10	10-24	24-36	36-55	55-100	100-
Free Colored Male--	96	101	79	61	14	1
Free Colored Females--	94	80	69	48	16	
Slaves Male--	24	38	8		5	
Slaves Females--	16	21	14	2	2	

Total: 2737

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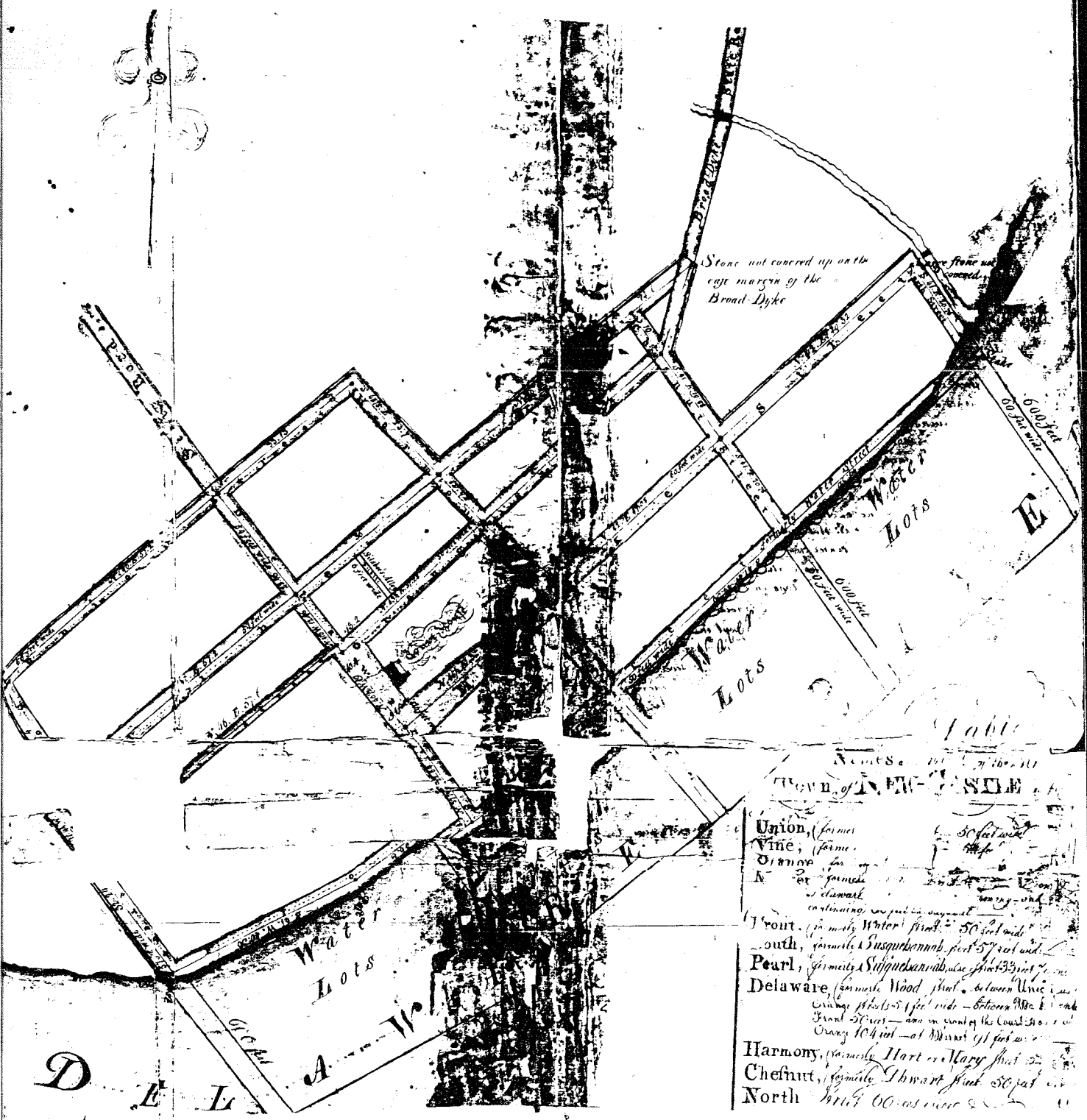
Plate 1

Aerial View of New Castle. North is at the top of the photograph. The Delaware River is on the right; the four white specks grouped together offshore are modern mooring piers, but are built approximately where the piers provided for by the lottery of 1794 stood.



Plate 2

"Survey and Plan of Town of New Castle." 1798. Watercolor. Public Archives Commission, Hall of Records, Dover, Delaware. Deed Book R, Vol. 2, p. 429.



Stone not covered up on the edge margin of the Broad Dyke

Table

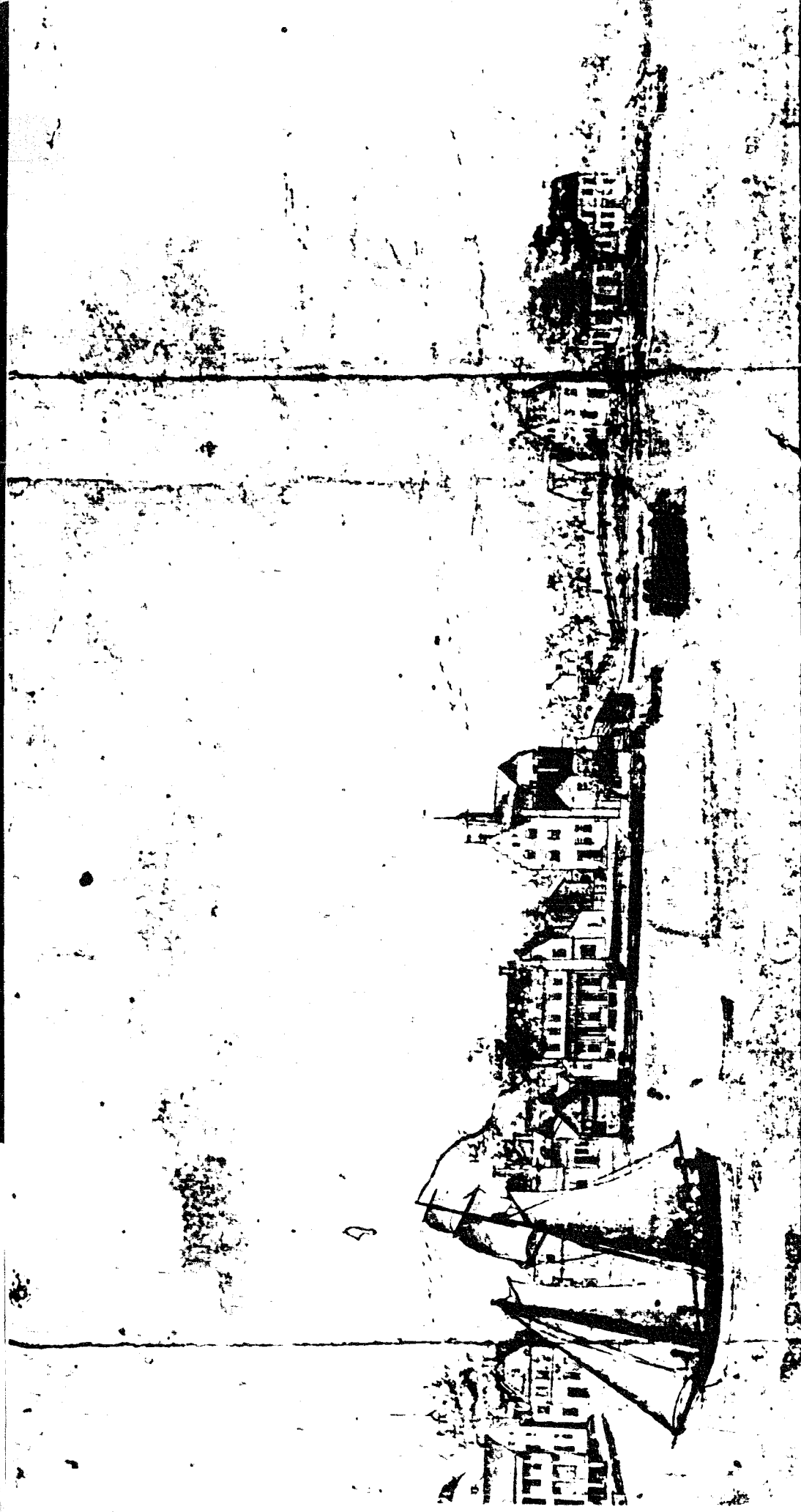
Notes

Town of N. H. Castle

Union	(formerly)	30 feet wide
Vine	(formerly)	30 feet wide
Orange	(formerly)	30 feet wide
North	(formerly)	30 feet wide
Delaware	(formerly)	30 feet wide
Front	(formerly)	30 feet wide
South	(formerly)	30 feet wide
Pearl	(formerly)	30 feet wide
Delaware	(formerly)	30 feet wide
Harmony	(formerly)	30 feet wide
Chestnut	(formerly)	30 feet wide
North	(formerly)	30 feet wide

Plate 3

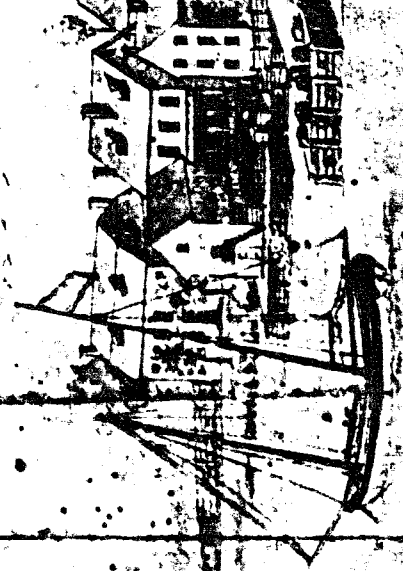
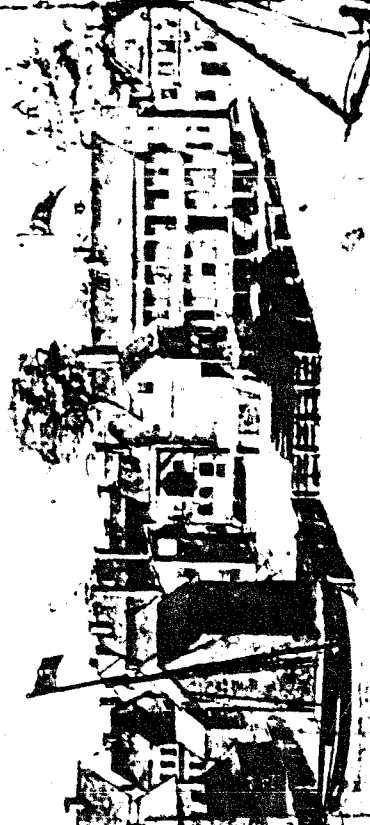
"A View of The Town of New Castle from The River Delaware, Taken The 4th July 1797.--By Ives Le Blanc." Watercolor. Owned by the late Miss Mary Bringham, Wilmington, Delaware.



THE RIVER DELAWARE, Taken The 4th July 1793. By James M. Blane.



4



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From front Street 600 feet into the River

5376

From South Street to angle

43320

Stanger's house

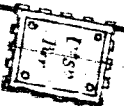
67th

From angle to DeLong street 9738

W 29 5 3 2

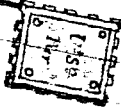
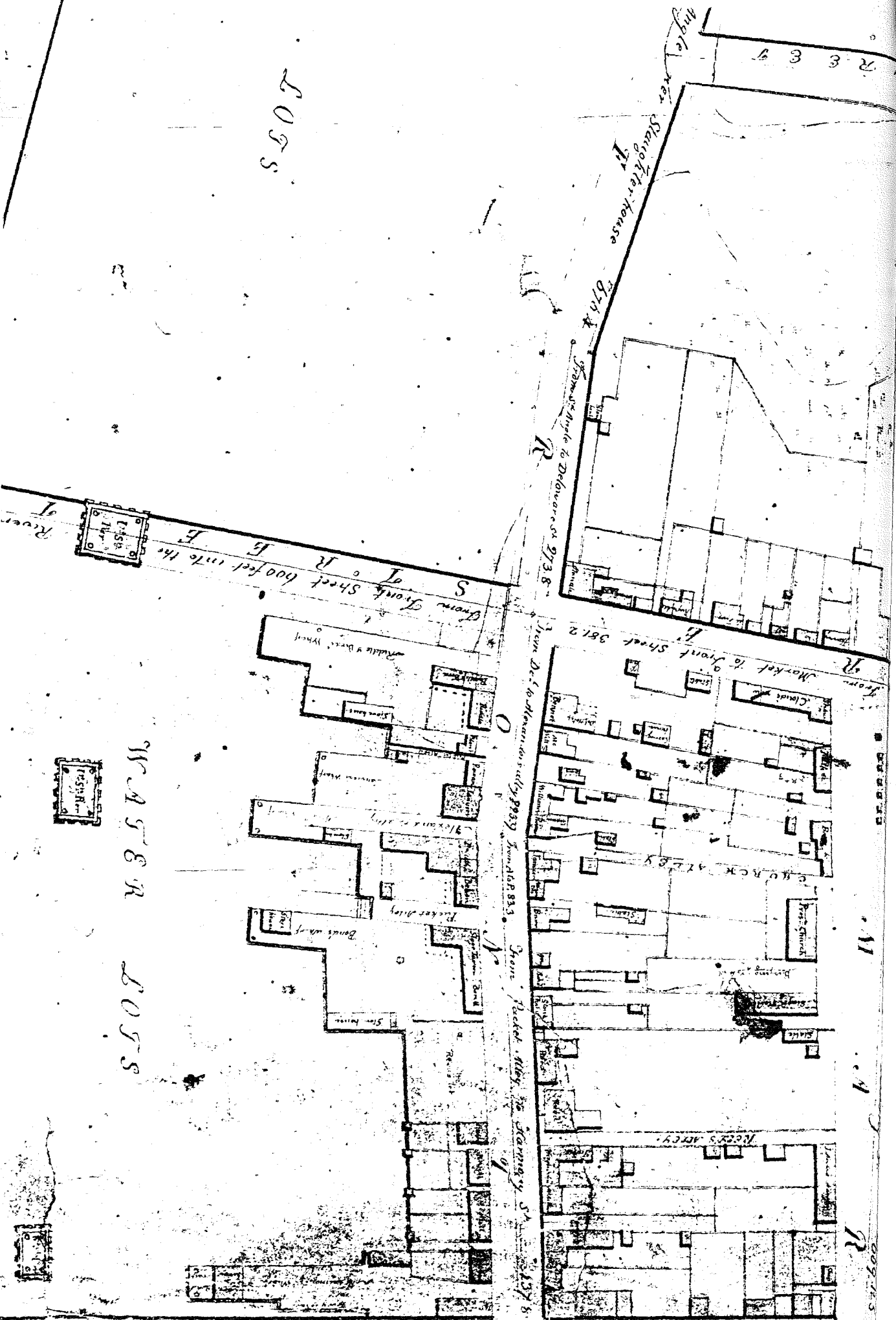
2053

From front Street 600 feet into the River



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Plate 4

"Plan of the Town of Newcastle State of Delaware." 1804-1805.
Watercolor. Public Archives Commission, Hall of Records, Dover,
Delaware. Enclosed in portfolio entitled "Plan and Street Regulations
of the Town of New Castle, Delaware 1804." A portion of the plan
showing the area from Market Street to the river between Harmony
and Delaware Streets and the lots and marsh lands to the south.

Plate 5

"Section of Front Street." 1804-1805. Watercolor. Public Archives Commission, Hall of Records, Dover, Delaware. Enclosed in portfolio entitled "Plan and Street Regulations of the Town of New Castle, Delaware 1804." The strips from this sheet included here illustrate only the portions of the west or land side of Front Street discussed in this paper.

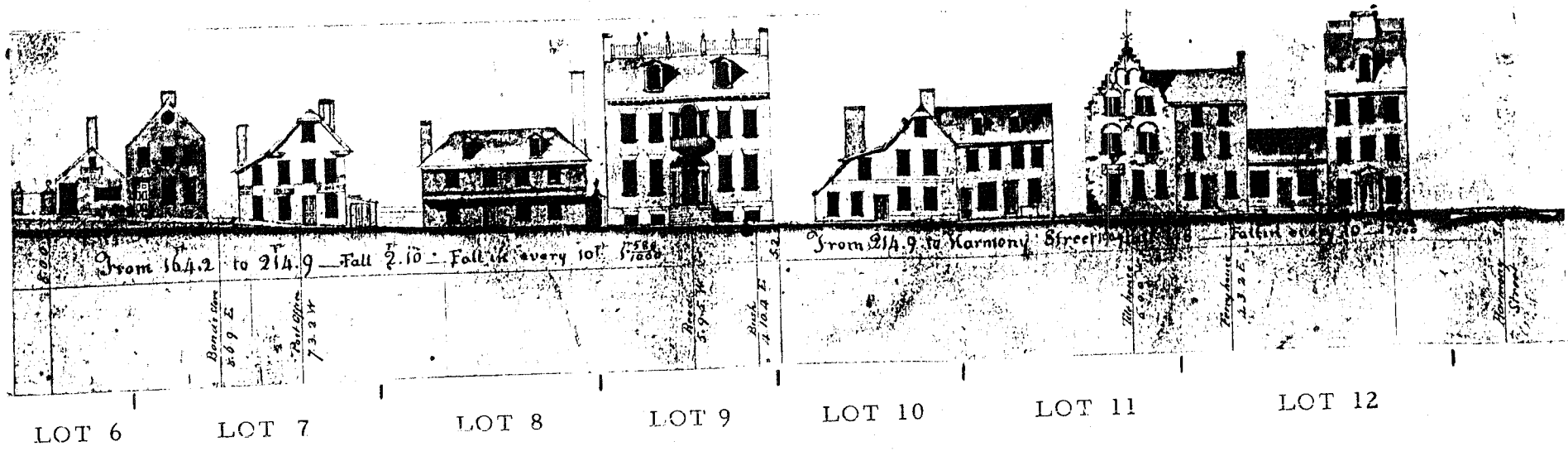
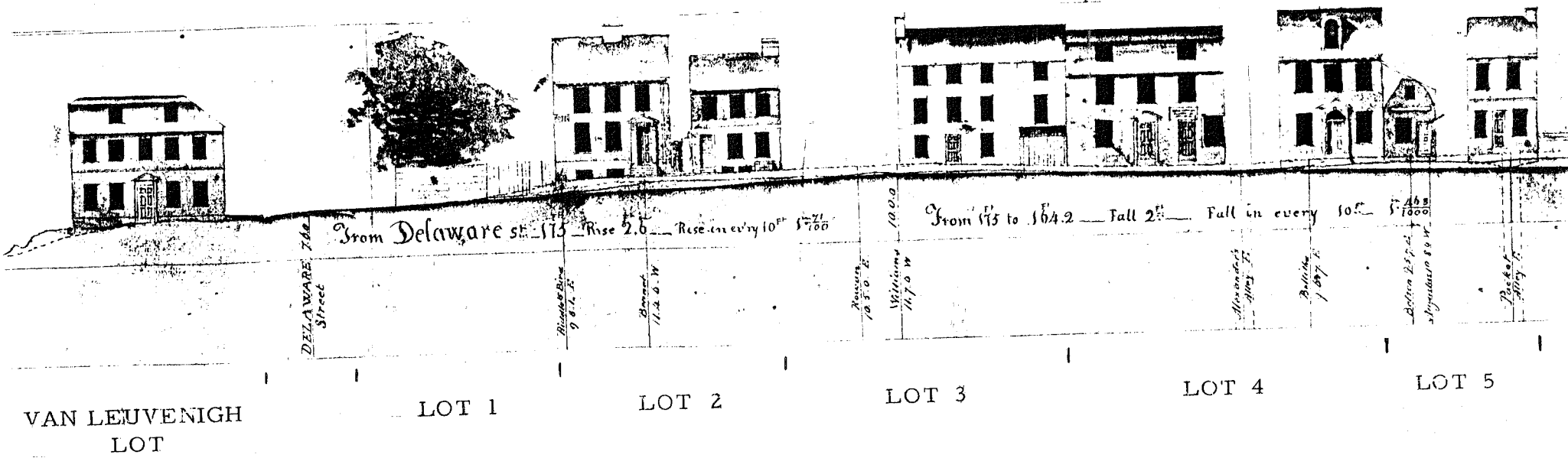


Plate 6

Watercolor. 1822. Owned by James B. White, New Castle, Delaware. This dated painting shows, from left to right, the brick dwelling on the southern part of Lot 11, discussed in Chapter III; the Tile House, destroyed in the 1880's and replaced by the present #54 The Strand; the present #56 The Strand; the Glazier's Shop, destroyed in the 1850's and replaced by the present #58 The Strand; and the south side of the Thomas Hotel, since 1879 the parish house of Immanuel Episcopal Church, New Castle. Photograph courtesy of Dr. Walter A. Dew, Wilmington, Delaware.

Plate 7

Photograph, taken sometime before the destruction of the Tile House in the 1880's. Courtesy of Albert Kruse, Pope and Kruse Associated Architects, Wilmington, Delaware. The brick dwelling on the left, on the southern part of Lot 11, is little changed from the way it appears on the elevations made from the survey of 1804-1805 (Plate 5) or in the watercolor of 1822 (Plate 6). But the facade of the Tile House had undergone considerable change. It is recognizable only from the chimneys, the two front doors, and the outer windows.



Plate 8

#56 The Strand (southern part of Lot 12). This view shows the curved rear wall of the rear and, probably, the earlier portion of the dwelling. Photograph courtesy of Dr. Walter A. Dew, Wilmington, Delaware.

Plate 9

#56 The Strand (southern part of Lot 12). Arched doorway set into the north wall of the rear room, which at one time led into the Glazier's Shop (on the site of the present #58 The Strand) and to a stairway leading to rooms on the upper floors of #56. Photograph courtesy of Dr. Walter A. Dew, Wilmington, Delaware.

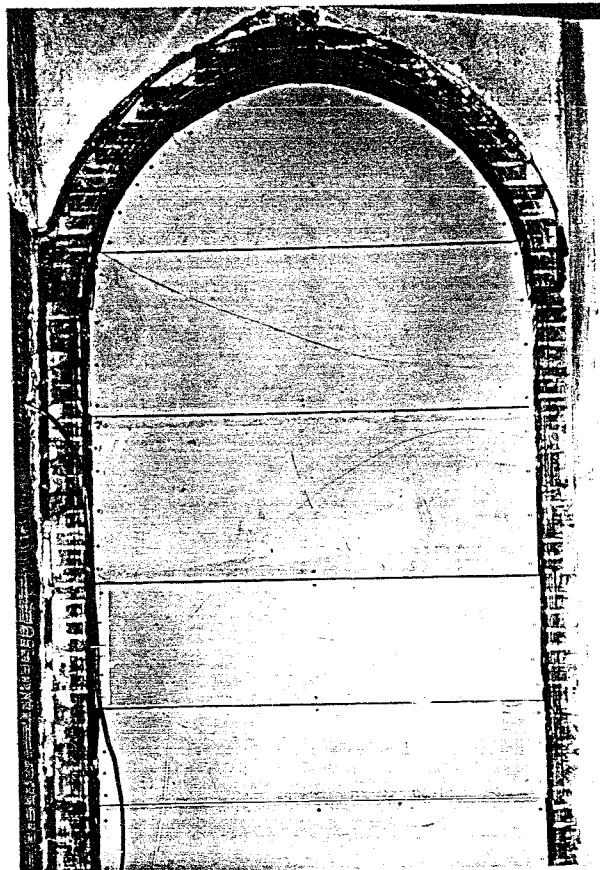
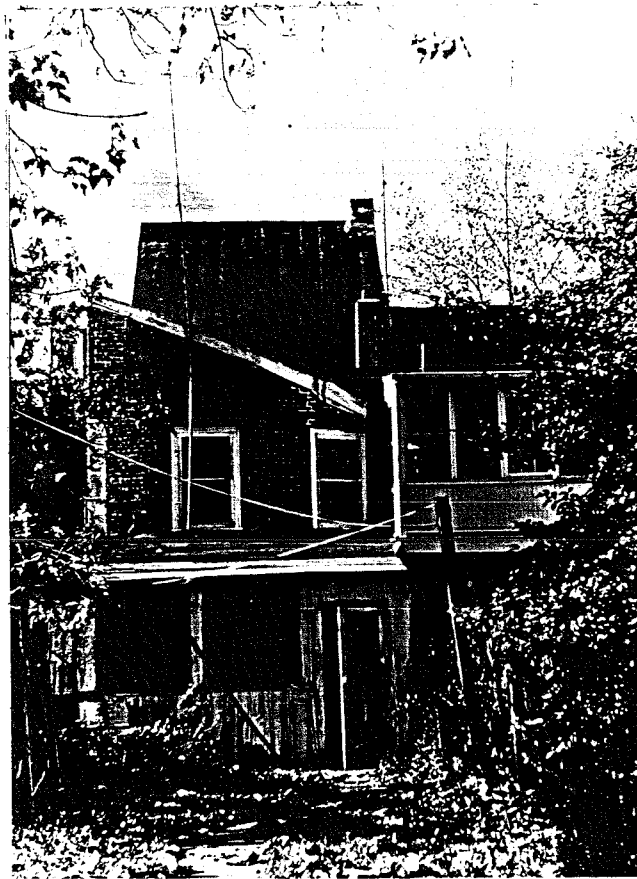


Plate 10

#56 The Strand (southern part of Lot 12). Carved wooden mantelpiece in the Adam style in the rear room. This probably represents a late eighteenth century or early nineteenth century installation. It closely resembles examples in the Thomas Hotel (completed 1802) and in the present #14 The Strand, built by Dr. James Couper in 1824. Photograph courtesy of Dr. Walter A. Dew, Wilmington, Delaware.

Plate 11

#56 The Strand. Facade restored to condition seen in Plate 6. Photograph courtesy of Dr. Walter A. Dew, Wilmington, Delaware.

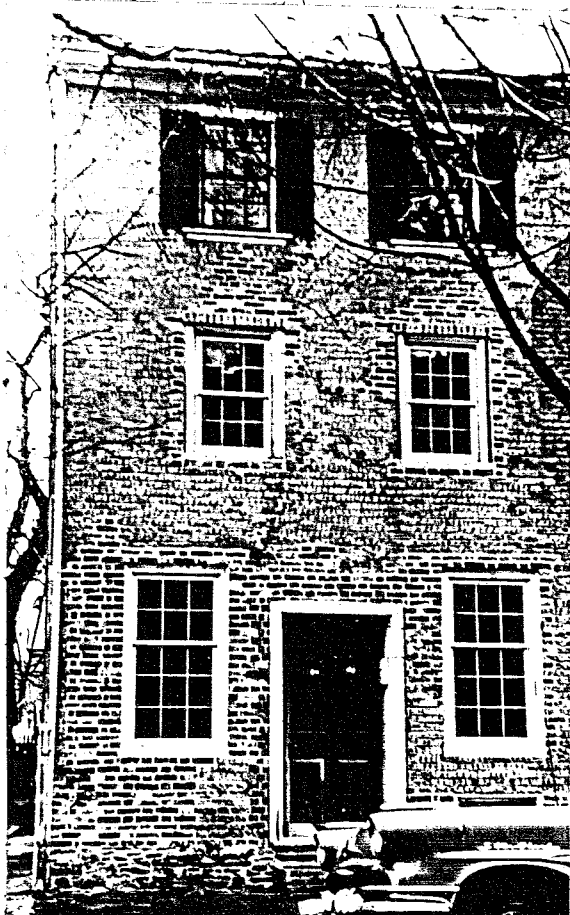
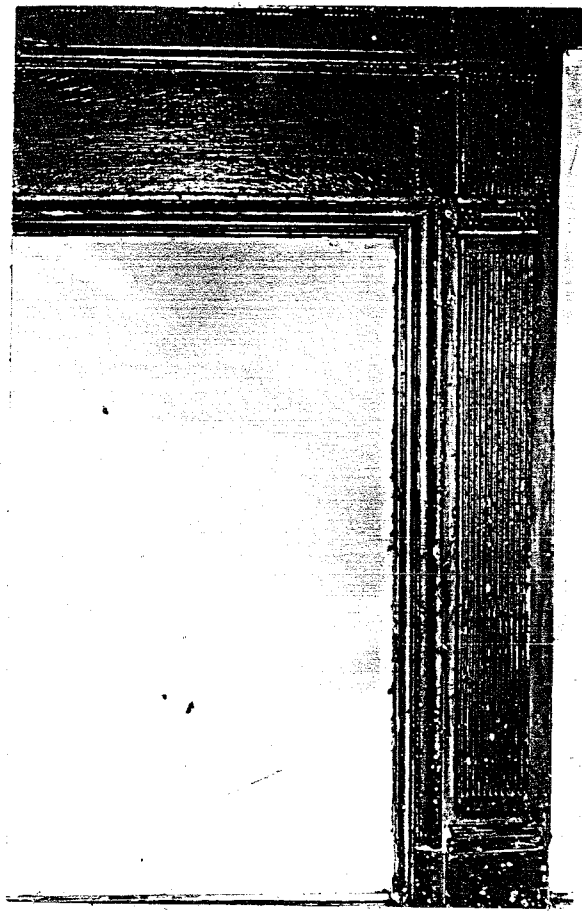


Plate 12

#56 The Strand (southern part of Lot 12). Front room, showing, on the left, a portion of the north wall, and, on the right, a portion of the large chimney-breast, with the seam in between them, indicating that the chimney-breast was not constructed of a piece with the wall, but was built separately. This has led me to believe that this was the south part of a central chimney serving both the front part of #56 The Strand and the Glazier's Shop, which abutted against it on the north. But, as nothing remains of an earlier chimney-breast within the present #58 The Strand, this can be only a surmise. Photograph courtesy of Dr. Walter A. Dew, Wilmington, Delaware.

Plate 13

#56 The Strand (southern part of Lot 12). East wall of basement, with remains of former entrance into basement from Front Street. The depth of the foundation--six feet--and the material used--mica schist and sandstone--are found in all buildings now standing on Front Street, regardless of date of erection. Photograph courtesy of Dr. Walter A. Dew, Wilmington, Delaware.

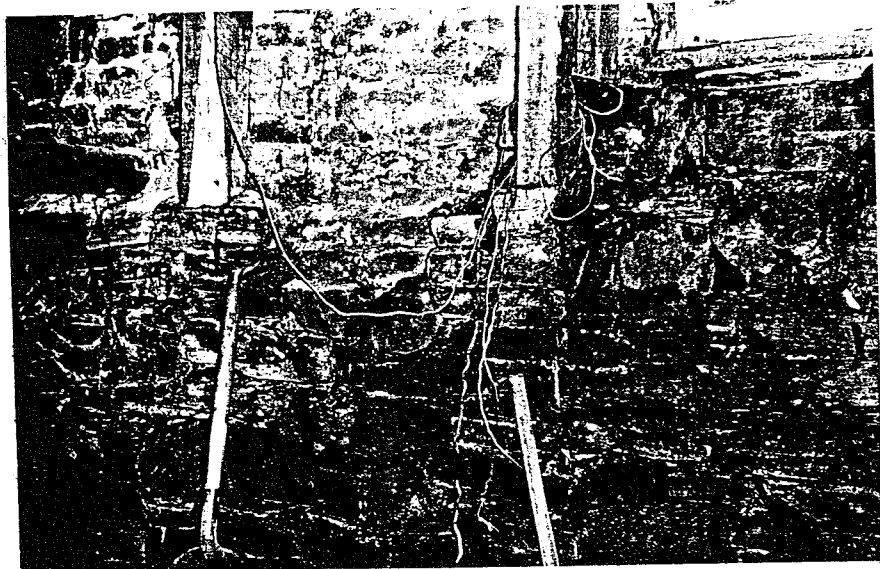
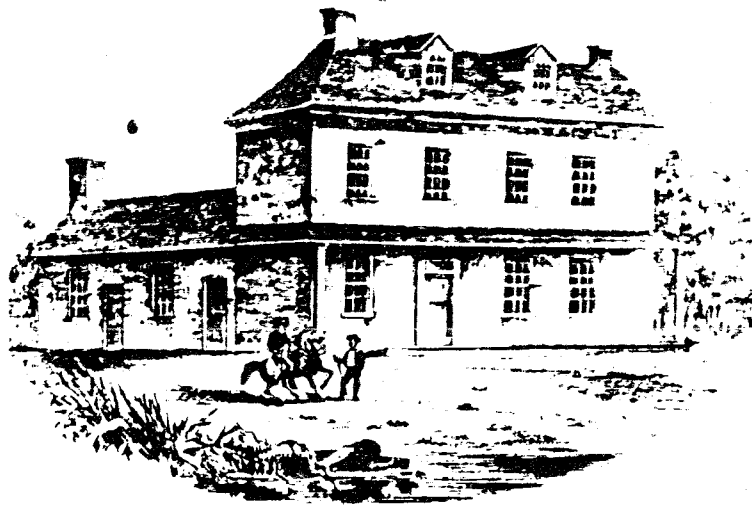


Plate 14

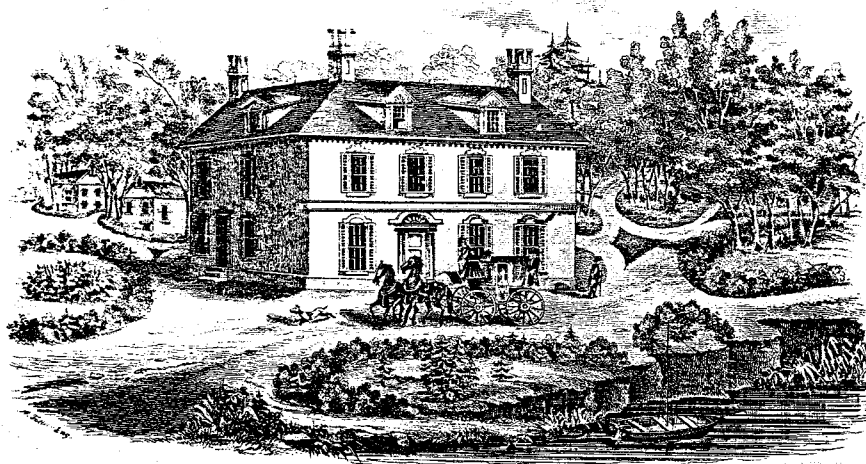
"Res. of George Read Wilmington, Del." A photograph made from photostatic reproduction, courtesy of Albert Kruse, Pope and Kruse Associated Architects, Wilmington, Delaware.

Plate 15

"Mansion of the Honourable George Read New Castle, Delaware." (Lot 8). Engraving. Courtesy of the Historical Society of Delaware, Old Town Hall, Wilmington, Delaware.



RES OF GEORGE READ
Wilmington, D.



MANSION OF THE HONOURABLE GEORGE READ.
New Castle, Delaware.

Plate 16

Van Leuvenigh House, from the south. This view shows, in the foreground, a portion of the meadowland, which always went with the property until it was acquired by the New Castle and Frenchtown Railroad in 1830, and, on the right, the smaller house built by the railroad in the mid-nineteenth century on the "bank lot" portion of the property.

Plate 17

Van Leuvenigh House, corner of Delaware and Front Streets.

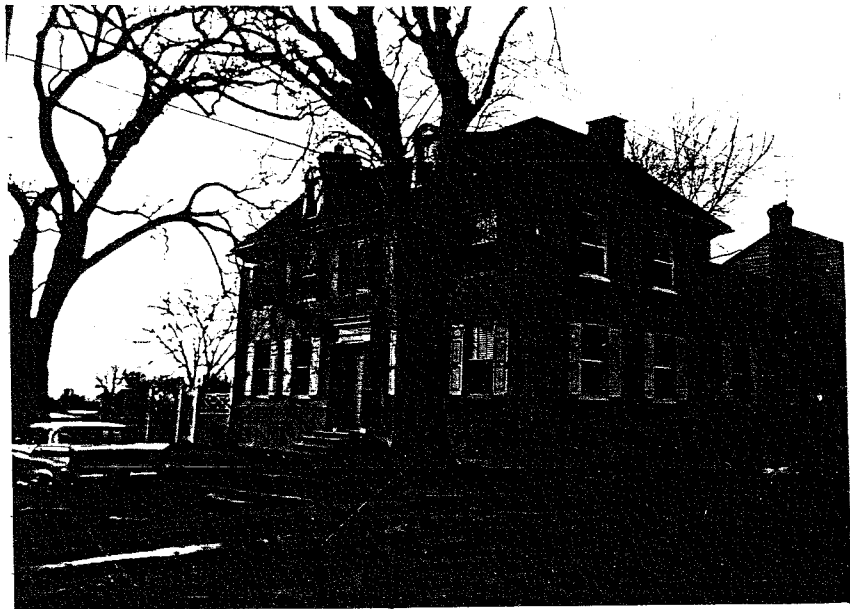


Plate 18

Van Leuvenigh House. Ink drawing made in 1846 in connection with a sale of portions of the property. Courtesy of Dr. and Mrs. Robert T. Beattie, Van Leuvenigh House, Delaware Street and The Strand, New Castle, Delaware.

Plate 19

#6 The Strand (southern part of Lot 2). Popularly known as the Gunning Bedford House.

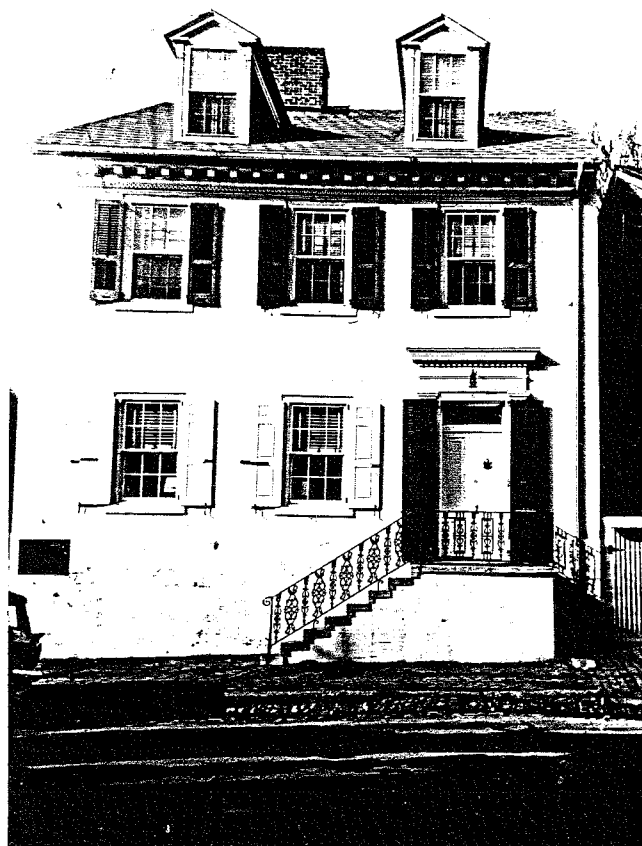
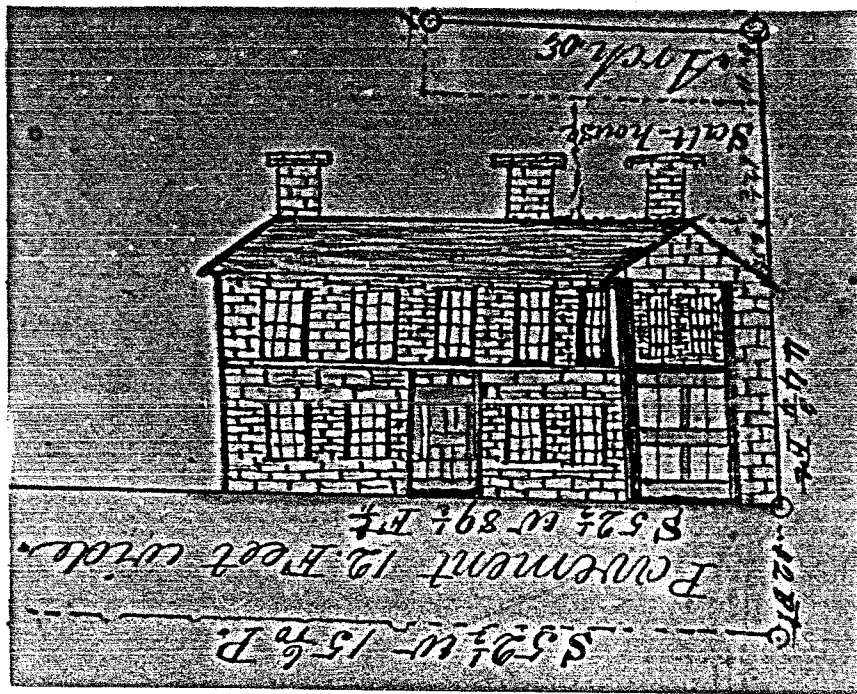


Plate 20

#8 The Strand (northern part of Lot 2).

Plate 21

Brick arched support, vestige of the brick jerkin-headed structure standing on the northern part of Lot 10 (See Plate 5). Now incorporated into a wall that surrounds the site. Photograph courtesy of Albert Kruse, Pope and Kruse Associated Architects, Wilmington, Delaware.

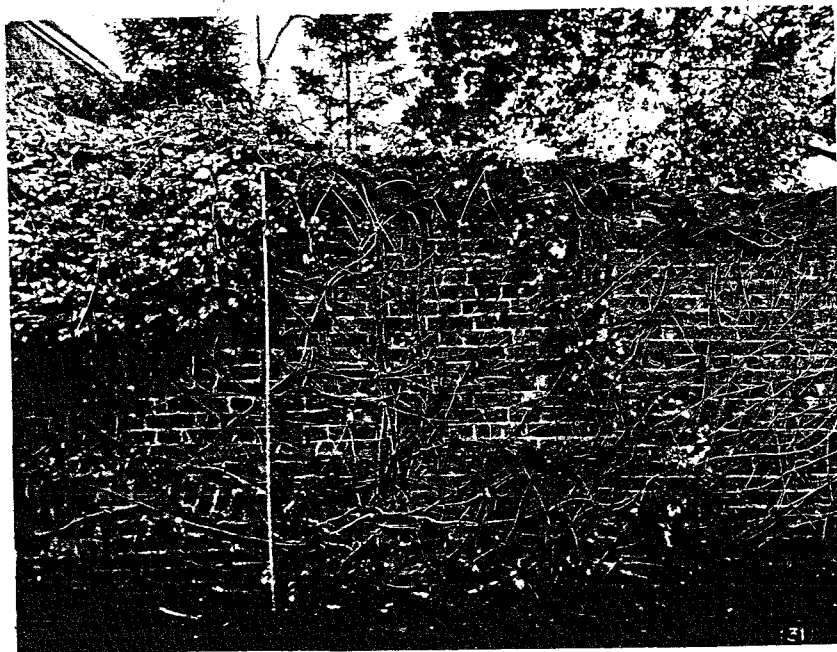
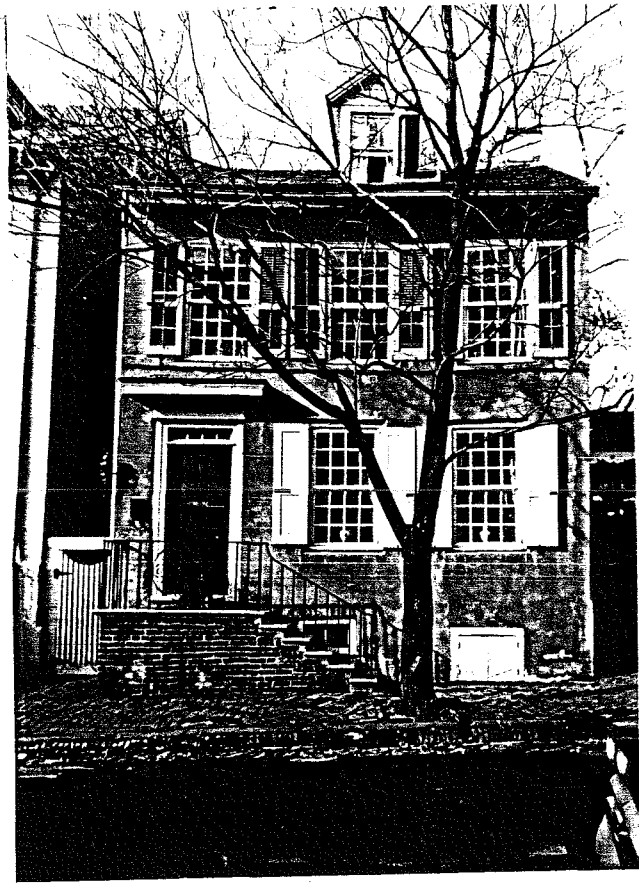


Plate 22

Read House facade (Lot 9).

Plate 23

Read House back buildings, looking from the south (Lot 9). The central portion is the kitchen. The rear building was servants' quarters and contained a large cistern for water supply.



Plate 24

Thomas Hotel (northern part of Lot 12). Now the parish house of Immanuel Episcopal Church, New Castle, Delaware.

Plate 25

#14 The Strand (northern part of Lot 3). Popularly known as the Ship Chandler's Shop, it was built in 1824 by Dr. James Cooper (Couper). It may not have been built until after the fire of April 26, 1824, had gutted the western side of Front Street, from this property (Lot 4) to the Old Read House. Photostatic reproduction after an old photograph courtesy of Albert Kruse, Pope and Kruse Associated Architects, Wilmington, Delaware.



Plate 26

#14 The Strand (northern part of Lot 3). Built in 1824 by Dr. James Cooper (Couper). This building contains twenty-two rooms, many of which are strung out behind the main structure in the extension that can be seen in this photograph.

Plate 27

Plan of the waterfront of New Castle as it is today. On the map I have outlined in blue those buildings erected to replace ones lost in the fire of 1824 and, in black, other buildings erected after the fire, but not as a result of it, and discussed in the text. Photograph courtesy of Albert Kruse, Pope and Kruse Associated Architects, Wilmington, Delaware.

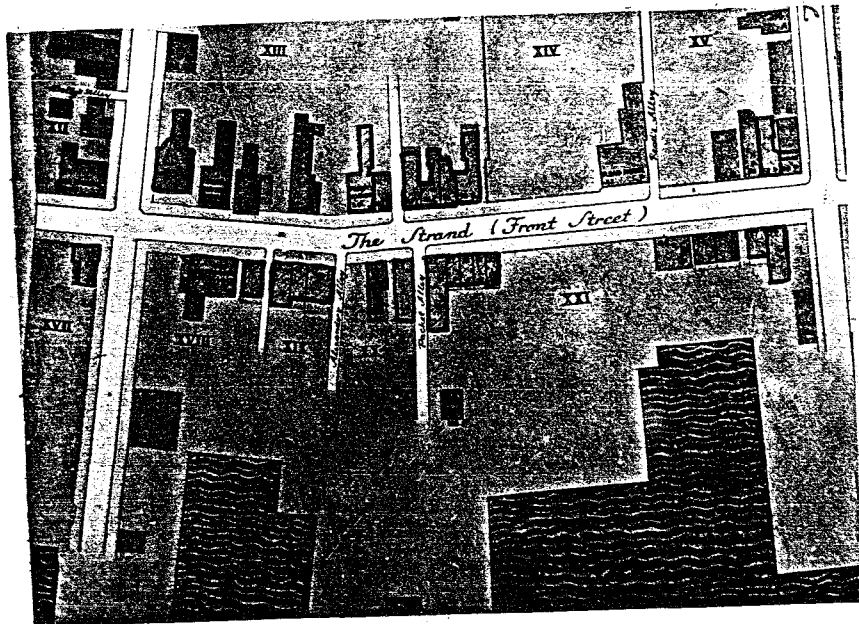
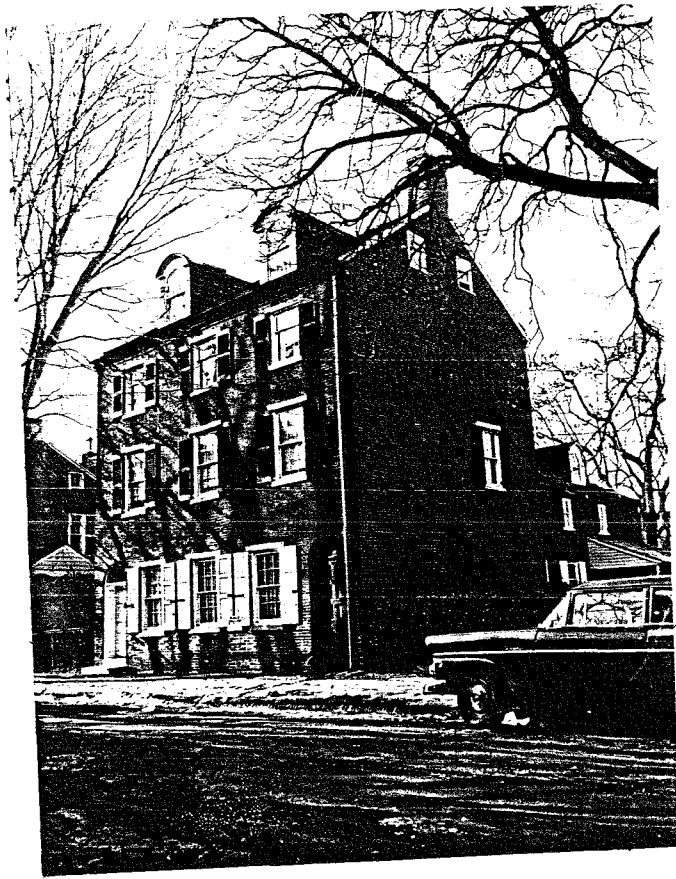


Plate 28

#59-#47 The Strand, looking south (Bank Lots 12-9). #47 (now demolished), and #49-#51 and #53-#55, both duplexes originally, are possibly late eighteenth century buildings. But they have been extensively remodeled, so that it is difficult to date them. #49-#51 may be the building with the back porch on the bank side of Front Street, seen to the left of the Tile House on the Ives Le Blanc drawing of 1797 (Plate 3). If this drawing is accurate, #47 and #53-#55 were not then erected. #57 and #59 were built on the former property of the ferry concessionaires, the McCallmonts, in 1859, by James and Samuel Truss. Photostatic reproduction of an old photograph courtesy of Albert Kruse, Pope and Kruse, Associated Architects, Wilmington, Delaware.

Plate 29

#49-#59 The Strand, looking north (Bank Lots 10-12).



Plate 30

#25-#33 The Strand (Bank Lots 6 and 7). A block of five buildings built by James McCullough, merchant, after the fire of 1824. This site, on the bank side of Front Street, had always been connected with important mercantile and importing firms. On the Ives Le Blanc drawing of 1797 (Plate 3) a large building with two floors of open galleries at the back can be seen on it. At that time the property was owned by James Bond and William Lees, merchants and importers. Lees went to Liverpool about 1798 and conducted the firm's English business from there. The "D. Boulden" on the store front stands for David Boulden, who purchased #25 from the McCullough heirs in 1866, and opened a grocery store. Photostatic reproduction of an old photograph courtesy of Albert Kruse, Pope and Kruse, Associated Architects, Wilmington, Delaware.

Plate 31

Packet Alley, looking toward the Delaware River (northern part of Bank Lot 5). This alley is designated by name on the elevations and map made from the survey of 1804-1805. On the left is the present #25 The Strand, built after the fire by James McCullough. On the right is #23 The Strand, erected early in this century.

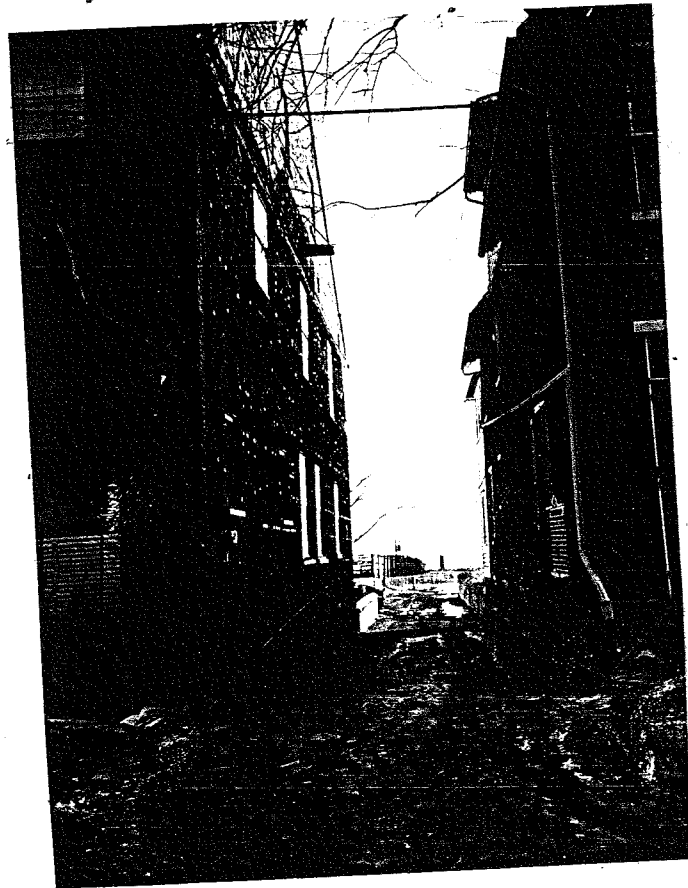


Plate 32

#21-#9 The Strand (Bank Lots 4 and 3) and, on the right, the northwest corner of the Jefferson House, looking north. The Jefferson House stands on the site of the house and storehouses of James Riddle, where the fire broke out on April 26, 1824. #9, standing next to the Jefferson House, and #13-#15, a block of two rowhouses, were built shortly after the fire by Jeremiah Bowman, whose lumberyard had stood on the site before the fire. #17 was built by the Janvier family after the fire. #19 was built at the same time by Hugh Ritchie, the local postmaster, who was co-owner of the property with the Janviers' Union Line Steamboat and Transportation Company. #21 is a recent building; the lot on which it stands was allowed to remain empty or occupied by makeshift structures after the fire.

Plate 33

The Jefferson House (Bank Lots 1 and 2). The pavilion appearing in the foreground in this old photograph has since been removed. Photostatic reproduction of an old photograph courtesy of Albert Kruse, Pope and Kruse, Associated Architects, Wilmington, Delaware.

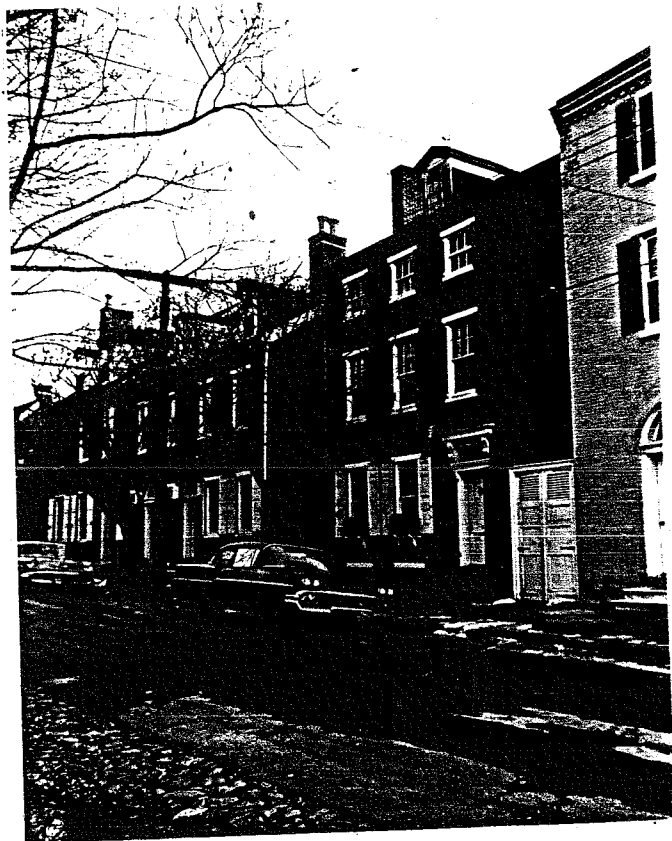


Plate 34

View of the bank lots, looking west from the Delaware Street wharf. On the left can be seen the rear of the Jefferson House. Compare the porches attached to the rear of these nineteenth century buildings with those on several buildings in the Ives Le Blane view of 1797 (Plate 3). Photograph courtesy of Albert Kruse, Pope and Kruse, Associated Architects, Wilmington, Delaware.

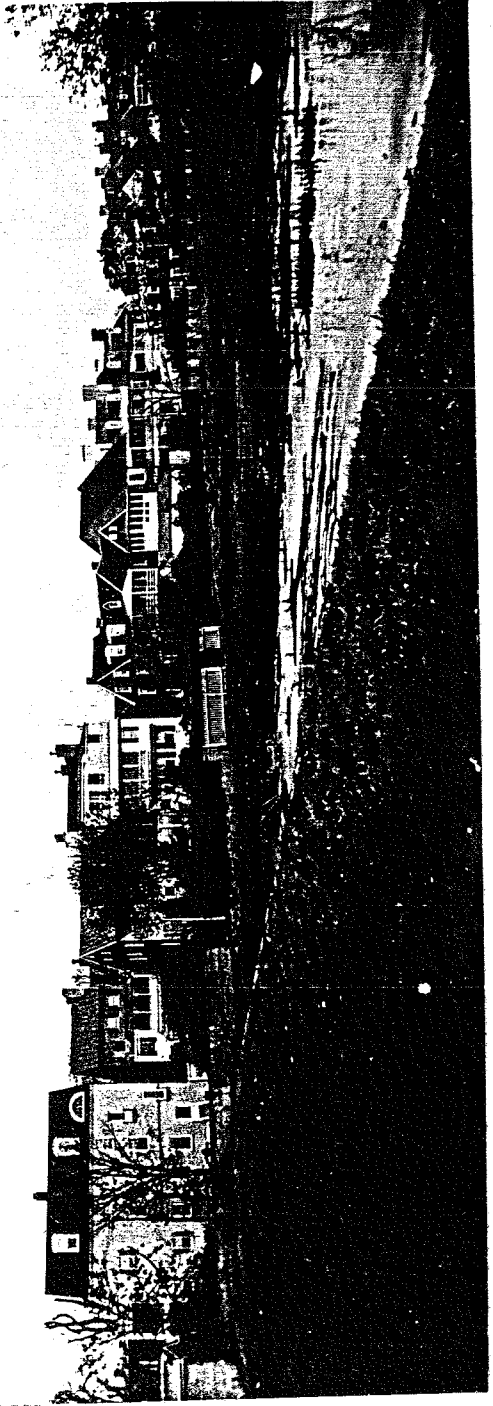


Plate 35

#24-#30 The Strand (Lots 5-7). All these houses replace ones lost in the fire of 1824. #24 and #26 were built sometime after the fire; the builders are unknown. #28 was rebuilt by Richard Sexton, a local merchant, who had purchased the property in 1821 from James McCullough. McCullough himself built #30.

Plate 36

#24-#30, rear view. Although most of these dwellings had basement kitchens, other utility rooms in these smaller buildings were by now being placed in rear wings, a practice formerly restricted to larger dwellings in New Castle. Many of these extensions, however, are late nineteenth and twentieth century additions.



Plate 37

#22 and #20 The Strand, rear view (southern part of Lot 5 and northern part of Lot 4). #20, on the northern part of Lot 4, was built by 1827 by the Janvier family to replace a building which had stood on this property, owned by them since 1695. The interior trim--grooved and molded doorways and window jambs and plain marble fireplaces on the first floor--is identical with that in #17 The Strand, across the street, built by the Janviers at the same time. The kitchen in this house is in the wing seen in this photograph. Within #22 are the remains of a much earlier building--two large fireplaces trimmed with carved wooden bolection moldings. But the remainder of the house is a bewildering composite of nineteenth and twentieth century additions.

Plate 38

New Castle Branch of the Farmers' Bank of the State of Delaware (Lot 1--the "burnt lot."). 1845-1851. "J. McArthur," builder. Cost of building: \$5,000.

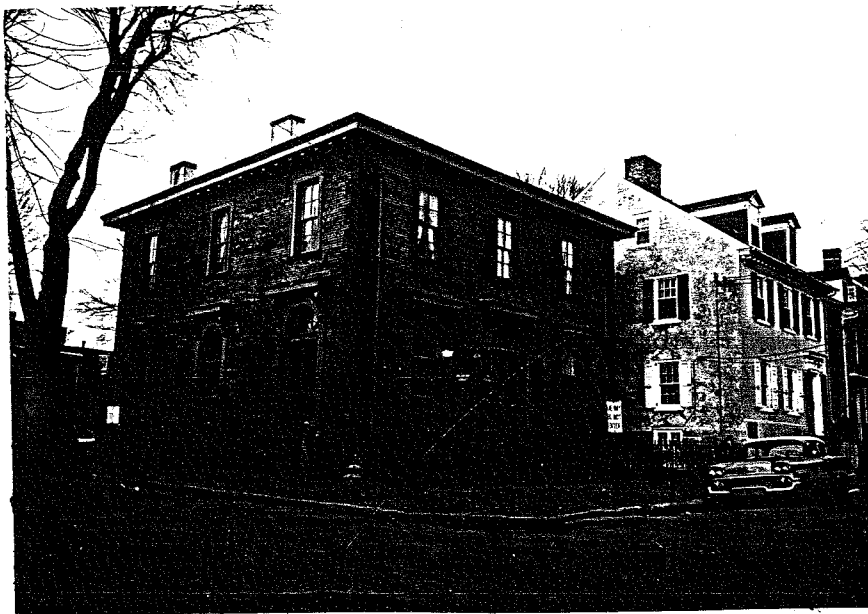


Plate 39

New Castle Branch of the Farmers' Bank of the State of Delaware
(Lot 1). Back buildings.

