

J.F.

River Side of Strand Between Delaware  
and Harmony Streets

B-6, the Bank Lot opposite the  
Dutch Church and Burying Ground;  
#25 the Strand. present owner. Mrs. Philip Laird

In 1657, when **Andries** Hudde sold his dwelling house to the Dutch director of New **Amstel** for the use of the **community** as a Dutch Reformed church, no width on the Strand is given for the church plot - in the available surviving records. **Hudde's** plot was 63' wide, Rhineland measure, on the Strand - slightly less in English measure - about 62', confirmed to him in 1656. **He** must have had the plot much earlier for he was an officer at Fort **Casimir** from the time it was first built in 1651. The many changes in holdings on the Strand between that time and 1701 when a deed for the Bank Lot opposite and of "**equal** width to the church **yard**" was given to William Houston may account for the width of only 37 feet, although the width in feet is not mentioned until 1730. In a deed of 1701 for the bank lot adjoining to the north, the lot confirmed to Houston is called "**the** bank lot belonging to **the** Dutch church. "

That William Houston had confirmed to him the bank lot "**belong-**  
**ing** to the Dutch church<sup>n</sup> is of special interest because of William Houston's interest in the Presbyterian church at a period when it is traditionally **assumed** that a merger was being considered. In his **will** dated 25 May 1707, proved December 11, 1711, Houston **describes** himself as "sometime merchant, Burgess of **Whithorn**, **Bur-**  
**gess** and gildbrother of the city of **Glasgow**, both in Scotland. Otherwise called **Wm. Houston of New Castle.**" **Whithorn** is only a

few miles from Sorbie, the place from which the first Presbyterian clergyman at New Castle, John Wilson, came. In his last will written in 1707, the year of the purchase of ground for the Presbyterian Church, Wm. Houston left to John Wilson and his successors as Presbyterian ministers at New Castle, a glebe of "300 acres of land on the south side of Christina betwixt the land of Mr. Jasper Yeates and Dr. Spry's." Houston had made one or more earlier wills, giving land for the glebe, but according to a complaint, said to have been registered with Penn's government as early as 1686.\* William Houston's brother Anthony refused conveyance of the property.

When William Houston's last will was proved in 1911, his heirs withheld the 300 acres that had been definitely bequeathed to John Wilson and his successors as a glebe. To date in this search access has not been had to the papers on the administration of Houston's estate, if these exist; but meanwhile it is logical to suppose that the court would not condone the ignoring of such a clear cut bequest in the will when it was proved; the heirs would necessarily have had to make some settlement with the pastor of the church. John Wilson had left the New Castle church in 1710, and is believed to have devoted all his time to White Clay Creek church until he died in 1912. He was succeeded by James Anderson.

• Richard Webster, in A History of the Presbyterian Church in America, quoting from Samuel Hazard's "Colonial Documents of Pennsylvania."

The writer of this summary is inclined to believe from documentary and circumstantial evidence studied, that the reasons for the purchase of additional ground and the building of an addition to the Presbyterian Church, 1711-1712, were because of means supplied from the estate of Houston, and the **merger** about that time of the property and interests of the Dutch and Presbyterian congregations.

#### The Bank Lot

In 1726, William Houston's **brother**, Anthony Houston of London, furrier, to whom **William** left his **Mw** Castle County property (except the 300 acres for the **glebe**) being dead, his son Jonathan who inherited, sold the bank lot opposite the church at public sale to Dr. Patrick Reilly, the highest bidder, for 193 pounds; and in 1730, Dr. **Reilly's** widow and her second husband, **Gideon** Griffith, sold "**all** that **messuage** or tenement and bank lot or piece of ground being right over against and of equal breadth to the **burying** ground or graveyard. Containing in breadth 37 feet or thereabout, be the same more or less" - to **William** Read, merchant, with "**houses, wharves,**" etc., for "**130** pounds and other **considerations.**"

Judge **Jehu** Curtis who kept the Indian King Inn across the **street**, next door on the north to the Dutch church site, acquired the property opposite the church lot, probably about 1740. **It** was later owned by his son-in-law, **Slator** Clay, who after the death of Judge Curtis in 1753 continued the inn. The alley along

the south side of the **bank** lot, leading to the wharf, where packet **and** passenger vessels **tied** up, must have been of value to the Indian King, and of convenience to travelers, who when they emerged from Packet Alley, had only to cross the street to what was called by a traveler\* in 1744, "**a** good house of entertainment."

By Judge Curtis the bank lot was bequeathed in 1753 to his daughter Ann Curtis Clay, **wife** of Slater Clay, and by her executors was sold to William Lees, her son-in-law in 1789. Soon afterward **William** Lees acquired the adjoining 60' bank lot **to** the north and on this double site, of approximately 100' in breadth on the Strand, with store houses, wharves and Facket alley, the importing and merchant firm of Bond and Lees conducted a thriving business. William **Lees** was an English merchant of London who married Elizabeth Clay, daughter of Ann and Slater Clay and who about 1797 returned to England with his wife and **two** young **chil-**  
**-dren** where he conducted the English partnership in the New Castle importing business. Bond and Lees at the site of #25-27 the Strand became Clay, Bond and Company, **William** Clay, brother of Elizabeth Clay Lees, having taken William Lees' place at **New** Castle. **The** wharf at the end of Packet Alley **was** then known as **Bond's** wharf.

About 1008 this large property of William Lees was sold to settle his **New** Castle estate, to John **Gardiner** and Woodbridge

\* Dr. **Archibald** Hamilton of Annapolis

<sup>North 2</sup>  
Odlin of Philadelphia. This plot on the south side of the Strand then included #25 to #33 inclusive. There was on it at the time of purchase by the Philadelphia merchants a brick and a frame house occupied as tavern and store, two frame warehouses, the whole with the wharves covering "an acre more or less." In 1818, James McCullough Jr. of New Castle bought the property. In 1807, McCullough had bought the lease hold of #28, the north part of the church lot. In 1818, he bought also the former tavern and dwelling of Judge Curtis, #30 the Strand.

James McCullough operated a large merchant business together with the tavern house on the site of #25, continuously improving his property until the fire of 1824 destroyed warehouses and tavern and all other buildings on his riverside property as well as those on the west side of the Strand. After the fire, between 1824 and 1827, James McCullough built the row of brick houses, #25 to #33.

The corner house #25 of James McCullough, was a brick store-house and not a dwelling. With rebuilt store-houses and wharves at the back, James McCullough Jr. continued his merchant business. After his death in 1836, his son James McCullough III along with William McCullough carried on the business. In 1847 William Janvier had this property and the following year the firm of Crippen and Lawbson continued the business, followed after ten years, by Cleland and Doughton and then by James Crippen alone.

In 1866, David Boulden bought #25 **without** any of the adjoining property to the north. **He** later enlarged the brick storehouse, improved the wharves and continued a merchant business on this site until his death, the property descended to his **wife** and finally to his daughter Agnes Boulaen, who sold the property to Mrs. Philip Laird, the present owner, 1929.