

Senator **Nicholas Van Dyke House**  
 Southwest Corner of Fourth and Delaware Streets

Present Owner:

Three grants of land were made in **the Dutch** period, **1656** and earlier, extending 300' deep from Beaver to Otter Street, **south** of Wood Street (between 4th and 5th Streets south of Delaware St.). **The first**, next to Delaware Street, **was** owned by Gerrit Jansen Van Beek, the smith, who is called in some records Gerrit Jansen alias Smith or just Gerrit Smith; the second lot adjoining Gerrit Jansen to the south was granted in 1656, in width on 4th Street, 56 feet, to Jan Hendrickson. The third plot belonged to Alexander Eoyer, who came from Fort Nassau, **down** the Delaware, in 1651, to Join Peter **Stuyvesant** in building and protecting Port **Casimir**. Boyer **was** interpreter with the Indians and was one of the founders of New Castle. Boyer and Jansen had their land before **Hendricksen**, for **his** deed bounds his plot between them and no original grants for the older properties **have** been found. **Whether** the ~~two~~ older **grants** were originally for lots of the same width is not known.

**Gerrit Jansen** and Jan Hendricksen were naturalized by William Penn in 1683. **Hendricksen**, a "turner" died in 1689. Jansen, the smith, is listed as owner of three town lots in 1687-88, and **was** in that year buying from John **Moll** a stretch of land west of Otter Street bounded by marsh on the north, **amounting** to 5 or 6 acres.

John **Moll's** tract of 100 acres, granted him by Governor **Andros** in **1676** bordered on Otter Street (**Fifth**) and did not include the **lots** along **Delaware** Street between Beaver and Otter (4th and 5th).

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In the 1690's James Read who bought from John Moll a tract adjoining Jansen's 5 or 6 acres, had acquired all the property that belonged to Gerrit Jansen.

In 1689, James Read and wife Sarah (late the wife of John Smith deceased and executor of his estate) sold property in New Jersey formerly belonging to the late John Smith. In 1695, the will of Mary Smith daughter of John and Sarah Smith, mentions in her will her "father-in-law" James Read and brother-in-law John Read, son of James. She must have meant step-father and half-brother.

Mary Smith's mother must have died before 1793. In that year James Read acknowledged in court an indenture in trust of his house and lots to John Heally, as a provision for his intended wife, Anna Peterson, daughter of Adam Peterson of Appoquinimink, in order that Anna might be provided with a sufficient fortune in case she should survive him; he pledged to hold his dwelling, land and improvements without impairment for the use of Anna and her lawful heirs after his death. If the marriage should not take place the property was to remain to him.

Whether or not James Read had the property through Sarah Smith, wife of John, he sold in 1698 to John Richardson for 54 pounds 5 shillings, the property, described as his dwelling house and two lots extending along Wood Street (Delaware) 332' and along Beaver and Otter Streets (4th and 5th), 235'. This may have included what was formerly Jan Hendrickson's and perhaps Alexander Boyer's

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as well. The adjoining land to the southeast was then owned by John Watts. The land had been sold to Watts in 1695 by Abraham Inloes and Cornelius Derickson. Watts had bought the brick yard "at the west end of town", and this was nearby.

(James Read had bought a house and lot in 1696 from Henry Wright and Jacobus Alrichs, location not yet determined in this search.)

John Richardson, merchant, in 1699 sold to John Donaldson, merchant the six acres of land at Otter and Wood Street (Delaware and Fifth) that he had bought from James Read, adjoining the former Gerrit Jansen property, and in 1701 Donaldson had acquired from John Richardson the Gerrit Jansen plot of one acre and 36 perches and a second adjoining plot of two acres and 110 perches.

John Donaldson died in 1702 leaving his property to his daughters Catherine and Mary.

Governor Gunning Bedford at the time of his death, 1798, owned the property between 3rd and 4th Streets, running south from Delaware Street a distance of about 350 feet. He had acquired it from Nicholas Waln and his wife Sarah in 1795. The transfers of the property between the will of John Donaldson, 1702, and ownership by Nicholas Waln, have not yet been successfully traced.

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Mary **Bedford**, widow of Gunning, and **John Stockton**, the executors of Gunning **Bedford's** estate, sold to Nicholas Van **Dyke** in 1799 the Delaware Street **end** of this plot extending from 4th to 5th **Street** and running back from Delaware Street **173'-4"**, for \$615.70.

The executors of **Gunning Bedford** sold the remainder of his plot **between** 4th and 5th Streets to Dr. **Henry Colesberry**, and **from** Dr. Colesberry **and** his wife Sarah in 1804, Nicholas Van **Dyke** bought the 6th Street end of this plot, extending **173'-4"** down 5th Street from the back of his Delaware **Street** property and **165'-9"** deep from 5th Street toward 4th Street.

In the southeast corner of his Delaware Street plot, Nicholas Van Dyke built the **house**, #400 Delaware Street soon after his purchase of 1799.

By his will, 1825, Senator Nicholas Van **Dyke** left to his wife, Mary, all that **manse and** lot of ground **in** the town of **New Castle**, **bounded** by **Vine Street** (4th) and Union **Street** (5th) and by lots formerly of Samuel Rowan and late of Dr. **James McCallmont**.