

## 103 S. Penn Street

This outstanding property is located on Wheeling Island, once known as Zane's Island – the most populated island in the Ohio River. The Island is approximately one mile long and one-half mile wide at its broadest point. The aerial view shown is facing south, with the city of Wheeling, WV, on the left (east) and Martins Ferry, OH, on the right (west). Interstate 70 bridges cross the island itself; I-470 crosses the river to the south. The historic Wheeling Suspension Bridge crosses the main channel of the river just south of the I-70 bridge, on the left/main channel.



Brothers Daniel and Noah Zane, sons of Wheeling's founder Ebenezer Zane, were the original 'owners,' after Native Americans left the area. Daniel (1792-1860) farmed the south half and lived in the first brick house on the Island; Noah (1778-1833) rented his portion to tenant farmers.

After the Suspension Bridge was built in 1849, the Island became a convenient location for residents who worked in the city. Eventually, the farmland was divided into building plots, with the legal description of 103 South Penn (J. Armstrong<sup>1</sup> Lots 1 and 2) reflecting this division.

In 1885, R. K. (Kennedy) Friend purchased the land from J.A. Armstrong and others. It was likely Friend who built the house around 1888.



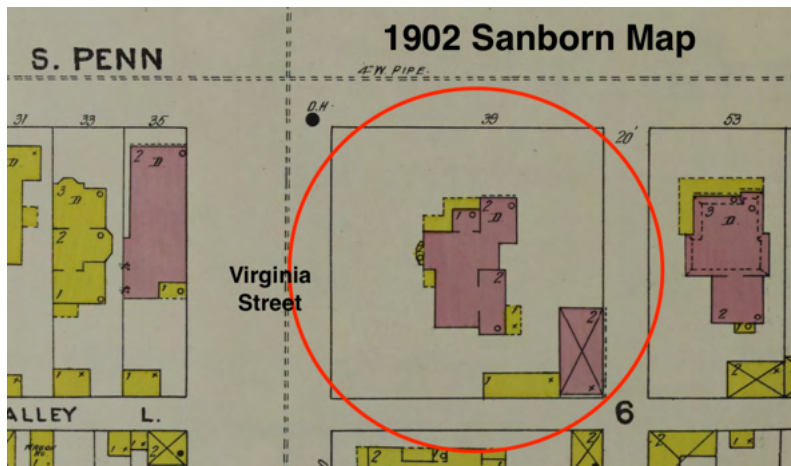
According to an 1890 biography, "Kennedy Friend was born at Pittsburgh, January 10, 1842. Coming to Wheeling at four years, he received his education here, attending the public and private schools and graduating at Duff's Business college. He made his debut in business as the book-keeper for the firm of J. Clemmans & Co., at seventeen years of age, and three years later he embarked in business in partnership with his father. At the death of the latter he took possession of the business, and has since conducted it under the old firm name, and has an extensive retail trade in general

furniture and carpets, and conducts an undertaking establishment."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> J. Armstrong was John A. Armstrong, a partner in 1884 in Armstrong Coen & Company (Keystone Planing Mill and Lumber Yard) and President of the Monitor Towboat and Lumber Company. He lived a few doors away, also on South Penn Street.

<sup>2</sup> From "HISTORY OF THE UPPER OHIO VALLEY," Vol. I, pages 293-294. Brant & Fuller, 1890. Note, the ad is from the 1884 city directory. At the time, it was common for furniture makers to also be funeral directors, since they built the caskets.

Although Kennedy Friend built the house, he didn't live there, instead renting it to John. S. Naylor and his family. The first Wheeling City Directory that references this address was in 1888, with Naylor listed as the resident. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, the Sanborn Insurance Company made detailed maps of Wheeling for fire insurance purposes. The first of those maps to include Wheeling Island was done in 1902. It clearly shows the property with a substantial brick house (noted by the red color) with wooden porches (shown in yellow). The same configuration is still evident today, as shown on the aerial view.<sup>3</sup>



The Wheeling Island nomination to the National Register of Historic Places describes the building as, “2 ½ story brick house with a complex gable roof. This house has segmentally arched windows with hood moulds. Contributing building, c. 1865.”<sup>4</sup> The estimated date is probably too early, based on deed records and the general style of the house. The 1888 date of construction is much more likely.



According to city directories and census records, John S. Naylor (1843-1916) and his wife Anna and sons A.G. and Wilson B. lived in this house<sup>5</sup> until around 1910. Naylor's extensive obituary states, “John Sargent Naylor was born in Morgan County, Ohio, of Quaker ancestry. In his youth, he moved with his parents to Wellsburg, WV. His father was a schoolteacher and later clerk of the courts and postmaster of Wellsburg. John Naylor came to Wheeling in 1864 and engaged in the employment of the George K. Wheat wholesale notion

<sup>3</sup> In these views, the top of each image is east.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.wvculture.org/shpo/nr/pdf/ohio/92000320.pdf>, p. 21

<sup>5</sup> Street numbers on the Island changed over time, with the original street address being 37 South Penn Street.



establishment. Later he became a partner. In 1869 he established the John S. Naylor company, which is today one of the largest establishments of the kind in this section of the country. The store was for many years located in the old List property, Fourteenth and Main streets.<sup>6</sup> Mr. Naylor was a member of the First Christian church and a member of the board of trustees of the church, and also a trustee of Bethany college. He was politically a Democrat and at one time was chairman of the Democratic county committee. In 1892, Gov. A.B. Fleming appointed Mr. Naylor a member of the West Virginia World's Fair commission. He was a member of the Masonic lodge and had occupied some high offices in the order.<sup>7</sup> A glowing tribute to him appears on page 4 of the same issue of the paper. By the time of his death, he had moved "out the pike" to the Woodsdale neighborhood of Wheeling, living at the corner of Bethany Pike and Poplar Avenue. He was buried in Greenwood Cemetery.



In 1902, Edward L. Stone purchased the property from R.K. Friend for \$16,000<sup>8</sup>,



although it appears that the Naylor family remained in the home until about 1910. The 1911 city directory lists Stone as living at 103 South Penn. Stone (1858-1930) was a son and nephew of the co-founders of Stone and Thomas Department Store.<sup>9</sup> By the time he lived in this house, he was serving as vice president of the company. The store had been founded in 1847 and eventually expanded to Huntington in 1910 and later grew to 19 stores in West Virginia, two in Virginia, and one each in Kentucky and Ohio. Stone and Thomas was known to be a very teenager-friendly store, sponsoring high school fashion shows, holding tea parties, and having "Stone-ager" programs for teens. Owned and operated by five generations of the same family, the company prospered for more than a century, becoming one of the top 75 independent retail store chains in the country.

After his retirement, Stone sold the South Penn property in 1919. He died in 1930; the announcement of his death appeared on the front page of the Wheeling paper<sup>10</sup>. It stated, "Mr. Stone was born in Wheeling, the son of Elijah James and Elizabeth [Thomas] Stone. He had spent his entire life in Wheeling, with the exception of winter sojourns in the south and

<sup>6</sup> "John S. Naylor Co., Importers, Jobbers and Manufacturers of Dry Goods, Notions – in business with sons Allen G. and Joseph. Son Wilson later joined the firm." This building still stands and is now a restaurant and bar on the first floor with the offices of Wheeling National Heritage Area Corporation above.

<sup>7</sup> *Wheeling Intelligencer*, Nov. 27, 1916, page 9

<sup>8</sup> \$16,000 is the equivalent of about \$485,000 today.

<sup>9</sup> The former Stone and Thomas store in Wheeling is now offices and loft housing.

<sup>10</sup> *Wheeling Intelligencer*, April 9, 1930

other vacation trips. During his active business life, he was a member of the firm of the Stone and Thomas department store in this city. The business was founded by his father and uncle [Jacob Thomas]. He retired fifteen years ago. He is survived by his widow, the former Miss Elizabeth Elson, one son, Mr. E.J. Stone.” He is buried in Greenwood Cemetery.

From 1919 until 1923, deed records show that the property was owned by Louisa Marsh (1848-1937), the wife of William M. Marsh (1842-1921). William Marsh was the son of Marsh Wheeling Stogies founder Mifflin Marsh. An editorial<sup>11</sup> following his death states, “The father of William M. Marsh is said to have made the first Wheeling stogies, and the son was the first to recognize the possibilities of the business and to expand it into one of the leading industries of this section. Wheeling stogies have since become known all over the world. The genuine product is admired by all smokers and is extensively imitated by unscrupulous manufacturers.” Marsh died at his summer home in Atlantic City and was survived by his wife and four daughters. His remains were returned to Wheeling, and funeral services were held at 103 South Penn Street; he is buried in Greenwood Cemetery.



The now-abandoned Marsh Stogies factory still stands on Main Street, across from the I-70 eastbound ramp into downtown Wheeling. Tentative plans are underway for redevelopment of that property, which still features a Marsh Wheeling Stogies sign on its roof.

In 1923, widow Louisa Marsh sold the property to Penn Apartment Company, and the house was divided into rental units. Two years later, it was purchased by the Real Estate Finance Company. After taxes on the property went unpaid in 1935 and 1936, the Circuit Court stepped in and sold it for \$10,000<sup>12</sup> to Homeseekers Fire Insurance Company in 1937.

In 1942, Dr. George E. Strobel (1900-1974) and his wife Lou Olive White Strobel (1900-1986) purchased the property, which they sold in 1967 to Dr. Basil Papadimitriou and his wife Rita. Dr. Papadimitriou (born 1930) had his medical practice office in the building until his retirement in 1989. In the interim, he sold the building in 1979 to Contract Development.

Ten years later, in 1989, Contract Development sold the property to Lawrence A. and Della M. Dierkes, Judith Ann Voigt, and Larry Dierkes. Following the death of Lawrence A. Dierkes in late 1996, his widow sold the property, along with a second parcel, to Theresa L. and James E. Childers in the spring of 1997.

Prepared by Jeanne Finstein,  
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Sources:

- Ancestry.com
- Findagrave
- Ohio County Census Records
- Ohio County Circuit Court Records
- Ohio County Deed Records
- Wheeling City Directories
- *Wheeling Intelligencer*
- WV Vital Records

<sup>11</sup> *Wheeling Intelligencer*, June 25, 1921

<sup>12</sup> The equivalent of about \$183,000 today.