

RUTAN HOUSE

THE residence at 123 Prospect Street, long known as Rutan Place, was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. John F. Meyer, Jr. because of its historic background. When visited by Myron S. Teller, noted authority on Dutch architecture, many evidences of the early 1800's were pointed out by Mr. Teller. Mr. Meyer, an architectural designer by profession, has attempted to preserve the colonial identifications of the old wing. Here original ceiling beams, large open fireplace with the old cooking crane, are still preserved. On the western side of the house, an extension shows where the old Dutch oven was located.

Records of the New Jersey Historical Society place the original owners of the property in the Rutan family in the late 1700's. The map of North Belleville, as this section was known in 1859, shows the extensive farmlands owned by Henry S. Rutan, Samuel H. Rutan and Abraham Rutan. Deeds of the property investigated by Mr. Meyer, indicate some of the land was owned by the Duncan family and sold to Samuel H. Rutan in 1836. The old stone house, near what was known as Plenge's Farm, was a Rutan homestead and the home of parents of Estelle Rutan, who died in 1938 at 87 years of age.

Another branch of the family, according to records of Abner Rutan, formerly of 18 Brookway, settled in New Paltz, New York and from there moved to Paterson in 1801. Records of the Civil War Days, list James R. Rutan and Calvin Rutan as having fought to preserve the Union.

While long in the possession of various members of the Rutan family, the remodeling of the house in 1913 by Mel Quackenbush, Jr. attracted much attention in the growing community. Upon the acquisition of the property, extensive repairs were made to the newest wing which is now the main house. Dormer windows were added in the upper floor and a distinctive porch, in Georgian style of architecture, was added. These improvements were done by White, an architect of the famous Stanford White firm.

Following the occupancy of the Quackenbush family, the house was rented for a number of years. It was finally sold by the Bank of Nutley in 1939 to Mr. and Mrs. Meyer. While both are art designers, Mr. Meyer is popularly known for his membership in the New York Water Color Society, American Water Color Society, and the New Jersey Painters and Sculptors Society.



RUTAN HOUSE (built late 1700's). Duncan Family to Rutan Family in 1836. Secured by present owners, Mr. and Mrs. John F. Meyer, Jr. in 1939, 123 Prospect Street.

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