

*JOHN K. SPEAR HOUSE**

REMODELED by the new owners Mr. and Mrs. William J. Clark, the house at 236 Park Avenue is one of the few homes now standing whose address in the 1800's was Avondale Road. Records secured by the Nutley Historical Society trace the property to Sarah E. Spear whose father was John K. Spear of the Second River Speer family and whose original homestead was on the site of the Hawkins Coal Company. The old stone house, remembered by many Avondalers, was torn down and the brown stones from it, now form part of the front steps leading to the Hawkins Office.

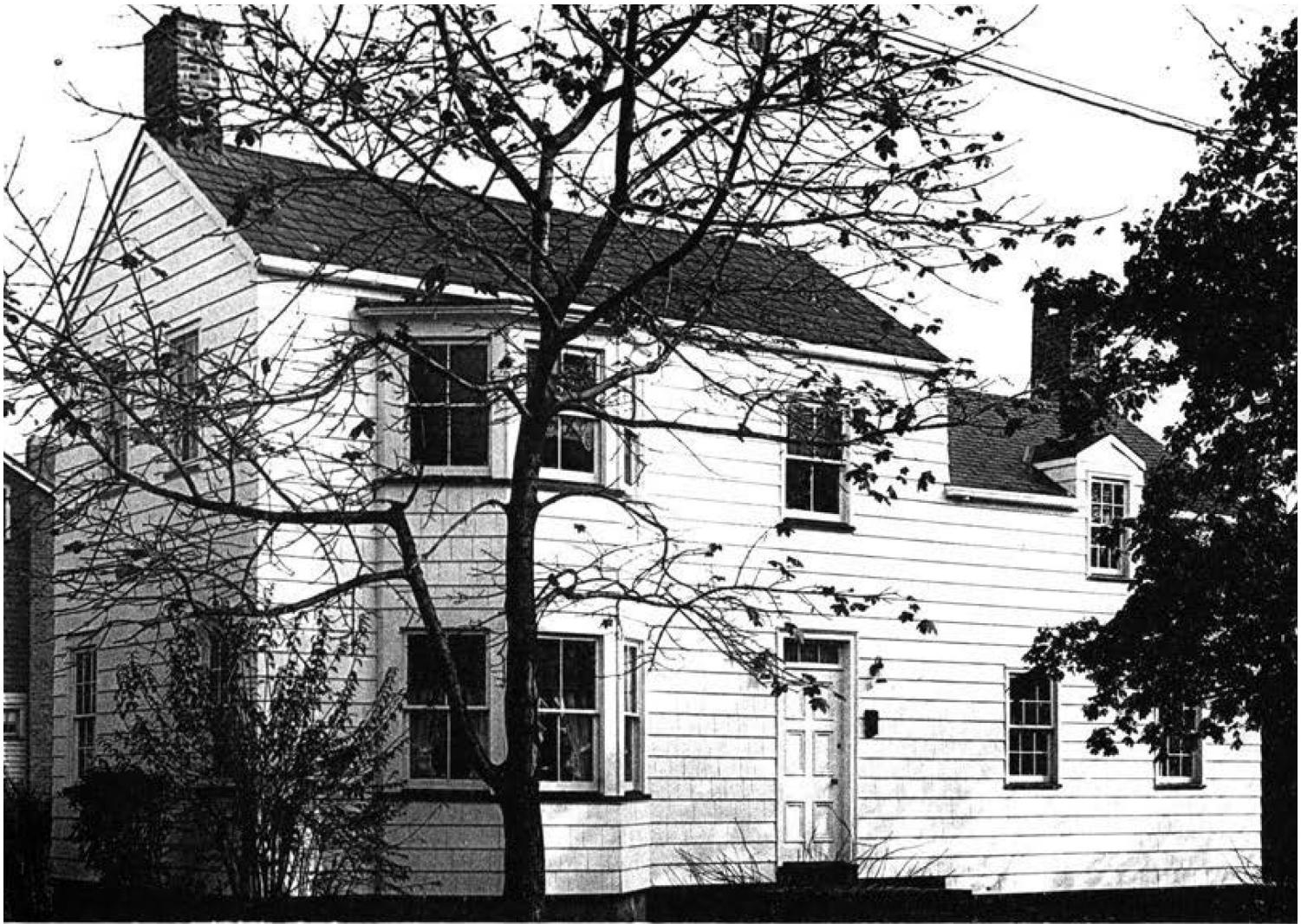
John K. Spear was a well-known builder and according to family records built the new house on Avondale Road about 1850, upon his return from a trip to the West Coast in the Gold Rush Days. There he went as a carpenter and not as a prospector. His daughter, Sarah, unmarried, died in 1920, having made her home with her cousin Mrs. Fred Naylor, whose daughter Mrs. Cornelius Arensman, formerly of Union Avenue is the only direct descendant. Mrs. Arensman, in studying notes left by her mother's cousin, discovered that the land at the corner of present Park Avenue and Passaic Avenue was originally part of the Spear estate and had been presented to "old Nutley" for school purposes. 'Twas here that the Avondale School stood for many years.

In 1893, the Clark home was purchased from Sarah Spear by Jacob and Gottlieben Fouser. This couple, according to their son Otto Fouser of Myrtle Avenue, had "arrived at Avondale Station from Germany in 1882 and had lived on Avondale Road till their death." Other children of the couple in Nutley are Mary Fouser and Nancy Fouser Gardner, living at the Gardner home at 226 Park Avenue.

Mr. Clark who has superintended the remodeling of the historic site, reports many characteristics of the homes built in the early 1800's. While the old well and cistern have long been boarded over, hand hewn white oak beams and corner posts are found in the foundation. In the attic are mortise and tenon joints fastened with wooden dowel pegs. Two of three original fire places have been preserved with brackets and hooks. Old tinted bubble glass remains in a few of the window panes. The floor boards are of random width and are fitted tongue and groove.

The old house has witnessed many changes, chief of which is the change of address from Avondale Road, a name given to the old road in the days when the Passaic River was known as the "Avon of New Jersey."

*This branch of the Speer family used the spelling Spear.



JOHN K. SPEAR HOUSE (built 1800). 236 Park Avenue. Recently restored by present owners, Mr. and Mrs. William J. Clark.

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- [Speer](#)
- [Houses](#)