

**Welcome to the Ayers-Allen House**  
*Home of Steve, Tyreen, Samuel, & Nicholas Reuter*



**Metuchen-Edison Historical Society**  
**Hallowe'en Open House 2024**

**Thank you for visiting today!**

**Please walk carefully; the floors are very uneven.**

**Note that two teenagers and a puppy reside here in this humble home with their busy adults, so please forgive the notable and obvious gaps in house- and lawn-keeping.**

**Be kind to the ghosts, its a frantic time of year for them.**

The house is thought to have been built ca. 1740 by members of the Ayers family who had come to the Woodbridge area after arriving in Massachusetts from England in the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century. Obadiah and Hannah were likely the builder's grandparents, and it was Obadiah's sister, Mary, who remained in Massachusetts to marry Nathan Parker. Mary was accused of witchcraft and executed by hanging at Salem in 1692. Tyreen also has several ancestral connections to the troubles of that time, some accused, some accusers, some judges, some tavern owners, and is distantly related to Mary Parker herself. Coincidence? Fun fact: Mary is the 8<sup>th</sup> great grandmother of U.S. President George W. Bush.

The house was reportedly used as a tavern in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Thousands of oyster shells found on the west side are said to support this claim, and a tavern license that appears to be associated with the house was located in the New Jersey State Archives. In about 1900, ghost stories began to circulate.

The home stayed in the same family line until the 1920s and that stability likely helped keep it from being changed too much over the years. From there it went to the Wale, Kadison, and King Families before Tyreen and Steve bought the house in September 1998 and were married on the front step that Hallowe'en.

Steve grew up in New Jersey, but Tyreen's family was from Connecticut. Her childhood home had been previously owned by a noted Psychic Medium named Ethel Meyers. Oddly, it was Ms. Meyers who accompanied the Ghost Hunter Hans Holzer to this home in 1960 for a séance. Another coincidence? Coincidences are what you make of them.

**As you make your way around the house, looks for signs describing each room, its contents, and any notable activity.**

**It's recommended that you turn LEFT once you enter the front hall to start your visit in the Dining Room (#1), followed by the Kitchen (#2). Staircase & Hallway (#3), Main Bedroom (#4), Music Room (#5), Living Room (#6), and Office (#7). The teenagers' bedrooms, basement, and laundry room are not open.**

# #1

## DINING ROOM

Here was likely the kitchen for the home when it was a tavern. Note the cooking arm in the fireplace and the bake oven. The collection of pewter mostly comes from Gibson Pewter in New Hampshire. We buy a new piece every year on our anniversary, and to mark other special events also. There is a “secret hatch” in the floor under the chair in front of the window closest to the front door. Some have said this was an Underground Railroad hiding place. We don’t have evidence of its truth and may never be able to find any. Metuchen was along known “routes,” and we don’t know of any person being enslaved to historic owners of this house, but this isn’t “proof.”

A couple of years ago in 2020, Steve and Tyreen were sitting at the table late after a Christmas Eve dinner with the family. The children had left with their grandmother to drive around to see Christmas lights. Steve and Tyreen distinctly heard five knocks, like someone knocking on a door, but no one else was in or around the house, or even across the street.

*Mary Neill, Mrs.  
Louise King’s  
mother, in the  
Dining Room.*



## #2 KITCHEN

Awarded “Metuchen’s Most Hideous Kitchen” for 26 straight years, the Reuters keep things crowded and dark in here so as obscure the obscenely cracked linoleum, dearth of counter space, and other unspeakable horrors. Every time they think to fix it up, something happens – a broken sewer pipe, illness, or other such malady. So, they’ve gone off making plans so as to not invite more disaster. Have some cider and ginger cookies, but don’t let your eyes linger too long.

This is the room where about eight or nine years ago Tyreen distinctly heard marbles being poured into a glass jar. Except there were no marbles, no glass jars being poured into, and no one else in the house at all. To assuage the spirits, we keep a bottle of marbles we have found around the house in the window over the sink. During the Holzer Files television show, they documented a small spoon flying across the room as well, but the spoon is now back in the Dining Room where it came from.

Mrs. King’s butter churn is next to the Hoosier Cabinet.

*Items, including many marbles, found around the house at various times.*



### #3

## STAIRCASE & HALLWAY

**This is where a very disrespectful realtor fell down in July 1998, while she was excoriating the state of the home, vacant and recently suffering the loss of Mrs. Louise King who had lovingly lived here for 50 years.**

**This is also where one of the landing windows flew up and slammed down on Tyreen's hands in October of that same year, just as she was starting to wonder if perhaps this wasn't the best decision to purchase the house. She stopped thinking such things and it's all been hunky dory since. By the way, Tyreen was born in Heidelberg, hence the large carving of that city, and her great grandmother made the quilt that hangs above.**

*An undated photograph of the stairway, taken during Mrs. King's time in the house.*





## **THE “PORTAL” IS NOT OPEN TODAY!**

**When the older son was young, this was his room. One day, when he was about five, he told us that an old lady with white hair and a dress had been in his room. He thought maybe it was our friend Phyllis and so didn't think anything too weird about it. But Phyllis was not visiting that day, nor were any other older friends.**

**Mrs. King's niece, Nancy, visits sometimes and says that she used to stay in this room, and that the ghost visited her here many times. When The Holzer Files television show visited here a few years ago (in 2019), their Medium decided that this room was “The Portal” for souls coming and going. Sort of like a Grand Central Station for ghosts.**

**The younger teenage son, Nicholas, lives in this room now keeps the spirits at bay with dirty socks.**

***An undated photograph of the “Portal,” taken during Mrs. King's time in the house.***



## **SAM'S ROOM IS NOT OPEN TODAY!**

**This room, inhabited by the older teenager, is the most terrifying in the house. It used to be a quaint guest room with delicate blue fleur-de-lis painted on the walls and decorative pillows. No more!**

**Steve's niece, Jessica, was staying here many years ago and heard the door latch rattling, like someone trying to open the door. She told her Uncle Steve she was not amused. Steve was downstairs, though. He swears he did not do it, but Jessica stays with her *other* Uncle when she comes to New Jersey now.**

**Pants have been known to go missing from the closet in this room, even before teenagers lived here.**

***An undated photograph of this room, taken during Mrs. King's time in the house.***



## **THE BASEMENT IS NOT OPEN TODAY!**

**When it was built, there was no full basement in the house, only some small crawlspaces. In the 1960s, Mr. King dug out a full basement and added supporting columns to reinforce the floors above. The large boulders he dug up are supposed to be in the stone on the west side of the house. In the 2010s, the Reuters had the basement finished as office, play, and storage space.**





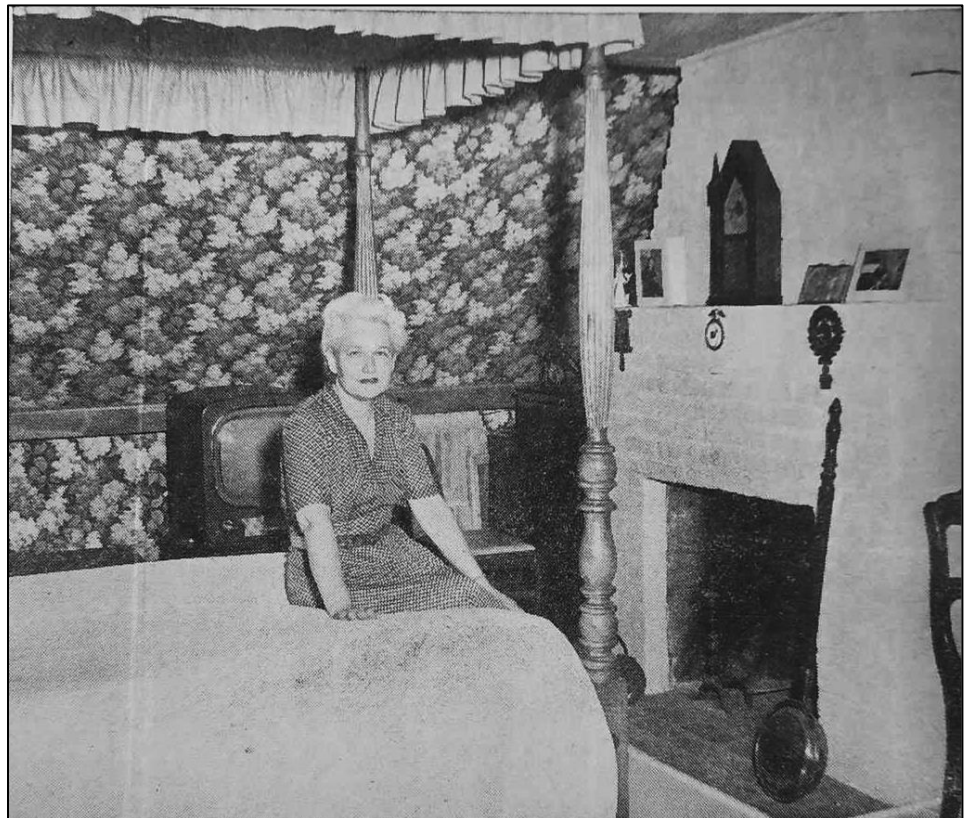
## #4 MAIN BEDROOM

The previous resident, Louise King, loved purple flowers and this room was once wallpapered with huge purple lilacs on a dark background. The upstairs bathroom in the next room also had purple lilac paper and decorative fixtures. Sadly, none of it was in any condition to save. In 2022, Sam found (by stepping on, ouch!) a pair of clip-on purple flower earrings. He himself had recently vacuumed the area where they were found. He thought it was rather odd the earrings showed up.

Mrs. King died here in this room, in bed, at the foot of which she said she seen “her” ghost standing, by the fireplace. He had “fiery blue eyes.” Sometimes there is sudden chill in this room, but you know, it’s an old house with drafts.

Artist Billy Seccombe painted the portrait of the Reuter boys over the fireplace.

*A 1958  
photograph of  
Mrs. King in the  
main bedroom,  
sitting near  
where she saw  
her soldier.*



## #5 MUSIC ROOM

In the 1920s, this room was the Gift Shop of Mrs. Margaret Wale, who lived here with her family. There was a fireplace in the corner where the stuffed chair is now. Mrs. King had a large piano in here (see the photograph)!



There is another secret hatch under the pump organ (which belonged to Tyreen's great grandparents). Her grandfather (Opa) slept in this room for a few weeks when Steve and Tyreen first bought the house while he helped make needed repairs (he was an old-time carpenter). Opa didn't abide much nonsense, but said he was visited a fair number of times in the night while here.

In 1999, a hotel bell in the room rang out five times while Tyreen was upstairs. There was no one else in the house, except for two dachshunds snoozing on the couch. They didn't bark, but always did when they'd see anyone "real" in the home.

It was also in this room that the Medium from the Trvl Channel show said she felt hands around her neck, and they caught a shot of something coming through the door that leads to mudroom and Tyreen's office. The Reuters have recently removed that door.

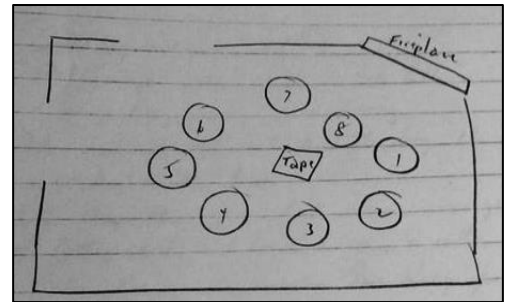
A couple years ago while sitting in the stuffed chair, Tyreen saw a dark shadow move, about shoulder height, from the basement door into the Living Room. If it was a mouse, it was a very, very tall mouse!

To honor the Wales' Gift shop, buy some historical society merchandise!

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**Christmas Gifts**  
AND PRIZES  
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## #6 LIVING ROOM

In the 1870s, two “spinster” sisters from the Ayers family lived here and were known to smoke their pipes in the living room; the elder sister was believed to be the oldest living resident of Metuchen at the time. Dr. Ezra Mundy Hunt interviewed them for his history book put out in 1870.



In March of 1960, the Ghost Hunter Hans Holzer held a séance with Ethel Meyers as Medium. They sat with the Kings and some other guests in a circle near the fireplace (see diagram from the evening).

In the front window closest to the door are scratched the initials “JW,” which we discovered during an irregular cleaning. They may be for John Wale, Margaret’s son, who grew up here with his sister Katherine. They both attended Metuchen High School. Katherine was known for writing ghost stories and was married in this room. When John was young, he liked to roll marbles along the uneven floorboards. Marbles are still found everywhere.

The painting over the couch is a memorial group portrait of the deceased children of Steve’s great grandparents.

Under the floor here is a large tree trunk (no longer visible with the basement renovation) used as a supporting beam. When the Medium was here a couple years ago, she said she felt a tree growing up through the house while she was in this room. Perhaps the tree that was used to unjustly hang members of Lenape during “colonial times” was felled and used to construct the house? Wild speculation.

*An undated photograph of the living room during the King’s time in the house.*





# #7 OFFICE

The mudroom and office were created from a screened-in side porch many years ago. The large red painting of a little girl on a horse was done by musician/artist Jon Langford for Tyreen's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday (the little girl was Tyreen in Texas, with her horse Star).

In case you are interested, below is a copy of one of the tavern licenses at the New Jersey State Archives that may be related to this house.

To the Honourable the Court of General Quarters  
Held at New Brunswick in and for the County of  
Middlesex  
The Humble Petition of  
Ezekiel Ayers  
We the Subscribers Inhabitants of Woodbridge  
and County aforesaid Humbly Recommend  
S<sup>r</sup> Ezekiel Ayers as a fit Suitable Person to keep a  
Publick House or Inn Where he Now lives and has  
for Years past occupid it for that Purpose  
Therefore We the Subscribers Humbly Pray  
your Honours Will Grant him the S<sup>d</sup> petitioners  
Licenses to Continue to keep a Tavern for the year  
Insuring as he is provided With two good Horse  
fether Best Stables and Every other necessary  
agreeable to law  
and We as In Duty Bound shall here  
October Term 1794 Pray  
Milanthon Freeman  
Joseph Randolph  
Dugal Campbell  
Daniel Compton  
Ezra Ayers  
Shewell Compton  
21



## **Mary Ayers Parker (1637-1692)**

**As a young man, Obadiah Ayers (1635-1694) sailed from England to Massachusetts with his family and settled in the Haverhill area. He was married to Hannah Pike, and then was one of the notable leaders of the European settlement here in New Jersey in 1664. Much is known about Obadiah's and Hannah's actions in New Jersey and their descendants here, including their grandson Jonathan who was the first owner, and assumed builder, of the Ayers-Allen House.**

**Obadiah's sister, Mary Ayers, did not move to New Jersey but stayed behind in Massachusetts and married a man named Nathan Parker of nearby Andover. He predeceased her around the same time that she also lost sons in "King Philip's War" (the Great Narragansett War or Metacom's Rebellion).**

**On September 1, 1692, the widow Mary Ayers was accused of Witchcraft by 15-year-old William Barker. The following day she was arrested, then tried and convicted over the next two weeks. On September 22, 1692, she was taken by cart to the execution site in Salem and hung along with Martha Corey, Margaret Scott, Mary Eastey, Alice Parker (her daughter in law), Ann Pudeator, Wilmot Redd, and Samuel Wardwell. Her daughter, Sarah, was also accused and Mary was executed before knowing what Sarah's fate would be. She proclaimed innocence until the end.**

**Obadiah died in Woodbridge, New Jersey two years after his sister was executed in Salem, Massachusetts. It's hard to believe he didn't know about it, despite the geographic distance.**

**Religious extremism, outright greed, and petty political & social grudges combined to explode into the disaster which was the trials and executions of 1692. There had been a similar but earlier "outbreak" in Connecticut, and there would be others after, but none as famous as Salem. The trials are a piece of history marketed for tourism now, but that period demonstrates the danger of radicalized religion, unchecked power, and ambition.**



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