Sited on the north side of Maiden Lane, the George Leopard House is surrounded by houses of similar age. A driveway is located on the west side of the house. Large trees border the property on the east.
This building has been drastically altered from its original appearance. Once half shingle and half clapboard, the house displays aluminum siding and a modern bay window to the west of the entry door. The gambrel roof is capped with two gable-roofed dormers and a brick chimney. Note the exterior brick chimney on the west elevation. One-over-one sash, not original to the building, exist throughout the house.

In 1909 Edith (Fison) Wollenberg sold a 69' x 200' lot to blacksmith George Leopard (FLR 77:260). Leopard was born in 1882 to peddler John Leopard and Amelia (Gross) Leopard, immigrants from England and Hungary. According to the Farmington House File, sometime in 1910 he commissioned Henry H. Mason of Farmington to design his house which was built by a Mr. Rush of New Britain. The house was sold in 1917 to Clarence A. Mason, a farmer, perhaps related to the architect (FLR 77:669). He married Gertrude Delaney, daughter of William and Margaret (Skinner) Delaney of Berlin in 1918. After Clarence’s and Gertrude’s deaths, the house was sold to A. Joseph and Carol S. Tofani, the present owners.

The George Leopard House is historically significant due to its association with the early development of Maiden Lane.

**SOURCES**

OWNER'S NAME: TOFANI, A. JOSEPH & CAROL S.
1950-res.

ADDRESS: Maiden Lane

DATE BUILT: 1910 FOR: George Leopart

ARCHITECT: Henry H. Mason

MASTER-BUILDER: Mr. Rush of New Britain (inf. G. Leopart)


REFERENCES: 

This house does not appear in the Farmington Book as it was built four years after that book was published.

George Leopard, in 1910, purchased the land on which it stands, from Edith Wollenberg, mother of Col. Christopher Wollenberg. She then lived in what is now 125 Garden Street, widowed.

George Leopard and his family had lived earlier at the house on Mountin Road, on the site of the present #24 Mountain Road. It was known by some as "Honeymoon Flats", a two-family house which had been occupied by several newly wed couples. See photo on page 172 of the Farmington Book. Mr. Leopard's blacksmith shop had stood east of where the Village Library now stands, in a building which also housed the woodworking shop of Nelson Keyes. See photo on page 147. When that building was moved to the rear of 21 Main Street Mr. Leopard set up a shop here at the rear of 8 Maiden Lane. Most of the equipment came from the former Fred Hurlburt shop which stood on Garden Street just south of 54 Garden Street. See photo on page 111.

Mr. Leopard did not operate here very long, as on June 28, 1917, the property was sold to Clarence A. Mason. The Leopards then moved to the house at the corner of Mill Road and Garden Street.

Clarence Mason was the youngest son of Charles Stanley Mason, Jr., of 3 Garden Street, later of 174 Main Street. Clarence Arnold Mason was married on January 22, 1918, to Gertrude W. Delaney, daughter of William Delaney and Margaret Skinner. The Masons had two children while living here, but both died in infancy. On April 25, 1921, the property was quit-claimed to Gertrude W. Mason by her husband Clarence A. Mason.

In 1930 the Clarence Masons purchased from Clarence's parents the house at 172 Main Street, where they lived thereafter.

This house at 8 Maiden Lane was probably rented out for the next six years, but its tenants are not known.

Mrs. Mason died in 1933 and in 1936 this house was sold by her estate, to A. Joseph Tofani and his wife, the former Carol Skoglund, the latter of the house at 11 Maiden Lane. See photo on page 126.

Carol Skoglund had been married in 1933 to Mr. Tofani, and it is possible that they had lived in this house as tenants since that time, as it had been vacated by the Masons in 1930.

A. Joseph Tofani had been born in New Haven, son of Arthur Tofani and Cora Borsachi, both of whom had been born in Comeana, a suburb of Florence, Italy. Arthur Tofani was in New Haven a skilled stone cutter, specializing in highly intricate designs. Some of his work could be seen at Yale University or Harkness Memorial. Joseph Tofani, a registered pharmacist, came to Farmington from New Haven to work in Mr. Kremendahl's drug store.

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Mr. Kremendahl's drug store was at that time situated in the building which had housed Erastus Gay's store, where Carol's father had worked for several years, operating the general store. Mr. Tofani later purchased both the drug store and the building, as will be found told in more detail in the sketch of "Gay's Store", Main Street.

Mr. Tofani called his drug store the Colonial Pharmacy, and it was operated in that building until around 1948 or 1949, when it was moved to a new building which Mr. Tofani built on Farmington Avenue. The old building, standing north of the present Corner House, had to be razed to permit widening of the highway, Route 4.

The new building housed the drug store, a barber shop, and for many years the Epicure Market, which was moved to its present location around 1966 or 1967, a Cumberland Farms convenience store taking its place.

Mr. and Mrs. Tofani operated for twelve years what they called "The School Store", located at 50 Main Street, in the Porter School library building. This was from 1948 to 1960. It was a private store, just for the girls and teachers. Girls were not allowed to go into local public stores at that time, but now have much more freedom, and there is no more need for the private store.

Semi-retired since about 1961, Mr. Tofani is certainly not inactive, working occasionally as pharmacist, and he and his wife golfing frequently, and busy at other things too. They have three children; A. Philip, Gail Dunbar and Stephen J. Tofani.

A. Philip is married to Ann Hubbard of Rumson, New Jersey. They live in Mt. Carmel, Illinois, where he is editor and publisher of the Republican Register, a daily newspaper which is distributed over a 30 mile radius of Mt. Carmel. Ann Hubbard attended New Jersey schools and in 1956 was named outstanding girl athlete of the state. She later majored in Physical Education at Pennsylvania State. Philip attended Kingswood in West Hartford and later Wesleyan and Columbia Universities on scholarships, where in Columbia he majored in Finance. He was in army service, two years of which were as Spec 4 in a chemical warfare unit at Camp Dietrich. Upon discharge he was employed at Ford Motor's Dearborn Office, then as business manager of the Mt. Carmel Radio and TV Station, before taking over the Register in 1970. Their three children are: Glenn, Patricia and Peter.

Gail is a graduate of Mt. St. Joseph Academy in West Hartford, and of Colby Junior College. She and a classmate migrated west to Denver, and she has now been in Palo Alto, California, seven years, an executive secretary for Xerox.

Stephen joined the Marines right after graduation from the Farmington High School, thirteen months of his Marine service being in action in Viet Nam. Discharged in 1970 he is now with a West Hartford Ambulance Service.

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