**A Great Neck History in Street Names**

Do drivers navigating Cutter Mill Road ever wonder, “Where was the mill?” Elijah Allen, a member of the patriot militia in 1776, owned a mill near Little Neck Bay. It became known as the Cutter Mill after Elijah’s granddaughter eloped with poet Bloodgood Cutter who wrote a poem about the burning of the mill in the 1850s. The street which connects Middle Neck Road to the area of the mill still bears the poet’s name.

Street names honor the peninsula’s early residents. The Mott family, Quaker famers, owned 400 acres in Kings Point, including the site of Adam Mott Lane. Another Quaker, Benjamin Hicks, owner of a large house near East Shore Road, grew hay along both sides of Hicks Lane. The streets named Allen Drive, Allen Lane and Allenwood Road are reminders of the extended Allen family, said to have owned one third of the peninsula. Fortunately, the 18th century Allen farmhouse still stands on Beach Rd. Baker Hill Road traversed the 95-acre farm which Mills P. Baker bought in 1855. To the south was John Henry Woolley’s farmhouse on Woolley’s Lane. George Schenck’s house on Schenck Avenue was razed in 1949 to make way for apartments to house employees of the U.N. Security Council in Lake Success.

Famous residents have left us their names. W.R. Grace was in Peru when he met Lillius Gilchrist of Thomaston, Maine. She had sailed there on a ship her father built. In 1872, the newlyweds came to Great Neck, bought the former Mott farmhouse, and later owned property near the railroad station. Grace Avenue and Gilchrist Avenue remind us of their presence. In the 1930s Seventh Ave., near the station, was renamed for William and Florence Barstow who subsidized lowering the railroad tracks to eliminate the level crossing with Middle Neck Road.

In 1906, Edward Morgan sold his father’s 110-acre property, Arrandale Farm, for $2,000 per acre. Morgan’s house stood at the end of Arrandale Avenue according to Robert Ellard. In his 1963 memoir, Ellard left us many memories and a street name in the Old Village where he lived. Crampton Lane begins at Hicks Lane, the former site of the Crampton brothers’ livery stable, and continues behind the stores on Middle Neck Road to Fairview Avenue. In 1928, the brothers built charming bungalows for working class residents on Crampton Avenue.

Developers arrived around 1910 when the new tunnel under the East River offered easier commuting. They touted their high-class developments residential parks. Thus, we have Park Circle, Park Lane, Parkside, Parkwood, and three streets called Park Place. The McKnight Brothers, who designed Great Neck Estates, emphasized the parklike aspect of their development with tree names such as Cedar, Linden, Maple, Sycamore, Ash, Tulip and Chestnut, Others envisioned grand vistas with Highland, Overlook, Prospect, Valley View, Vista Hill, Shoreward and Soundview. In the early 20th century it was considered good to be up high away from the mosquitos. One hundred years later the trees have grown to block many of those views. In Kings Point, can East Egg be viewed from Gatsby Lane as it was in Fitzgerald’s novel?

In 1925, realtor I. G. Wolf advertised a development on the Brokaw estate. Nirvana Avenue was named for Brokaw’s remarkable home, and Polo Road for his polo field. Other names represent family members: Bernard, Florence, Gould, Henry, Preston, Ruth, Stuart, and William.

Builders, seeking affluent buyers, emphasized English styles. Russell Gardens’ developers pictured an English village with names like Merrivale, Dunster and Wensley. Elsewhere we find Berkshire, Sheffield, Cambridge, Canterbury, Piccadilly, and Windsor. When the McKnight Brothers needed an investor for Great Neck Estates, they approached a rich Englishman, Sir Frederick Mirrielees, who bought property in several sections on the development, one of which he planned to call Mirrielees Park—probably the site of Mirrielees Road and Mirrielees Circle. Thirty years later Saddle Rock chose English authors, Shelley and Keats, as well as American ones, Longfellow, and Hawthorne.

In some cases the origin of street names can be a bit puzzling. Brooklyn surveyor Jeremiah Johnson, Jr. left no explanation for assigning a Pennsylvania name, Susquehanna, to a street in the Thomaston area in 1875. University Road and University Place are also a puzzle as there is no university nearby; but in 1924 two young men, seeking to attract other college and professional men, bought a golf club on the south side of Northern Blvd. and redesigned it as the University Golf Club. By 1928, the property, described as surrounded by exclusive estates, was being subdivided as University Gardens.

Tracing the name of Kensington’s main thoroughfare can also be puzzling. The beautiful tree-lined street which crosses Kensington is now known as Beverly Road. Was it named for the 140-acre Beverly farm described in a 1901 auction notice as extending from Middle Neck Road to Manhasset Creek? One early source tells us that Harpers Lane was the Kensington main road, An early 1900s postcard view of Beverly Road is labeled Deering Lane. Charles Finlay wrote that when they purchased the farm it had a road lined with lindens and maples planted 30 years before. It is still lined with trees, and two lindens were replanted there recently. And then there are the beautiful gates which lead to Beverly Rd. They are described as fashioned after an elegant gateway to a Renaissance palazzo outside Rome--or perhaps Kensington Gardens in London.

Whatever the street names, Great Neck still enjoys the high class residential parks builders were envisioning a hundred years ago.