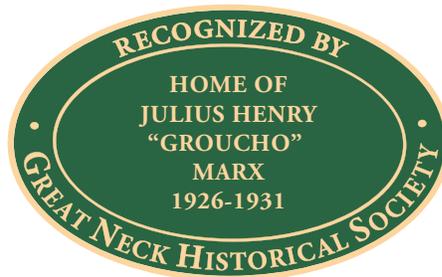


HERITAGE RECOGNITION PROGRAM

To Identify and Honor Great Neck's Most Notable Homes



21 LINCOLN ROAD, GREAT NECK, NY

The home at 21 Lincoln Road was built in 1923 in Great Neck Villa, a colony in the hills southeast of the railroad station developed by the Shields Brothers. Julius Henry "Groucho" Marx (1890–1977), moved into the house in June 1926 and remained there until 1931, when he relocated to Hollywood. That year the Village of Thomaston was incorporated, and before his departure Julius Henry Marx signed the register of residents. The purchase price of the house was \$27,000. Groucho was



36 years old and married to his first wife, Ruth (whom he divorced in 1942; he later had two more wives). Their son Arthur was almost six; their daughter Miriam was born the following May. At the time, Groucho was appearing in *The Cocoanuts* with Chico (Leonard Marx), Harpo (Arthur Marx) and Zeppo (Herbert Manfred Marx) at the Lyric Theater. It had opened the previous December and ran for 275 performances, a full season on Broadway, as well as two years on the road. The Marx Brothers had another big hit in 1928 with *Animal Crackers*. Groucho's parents, Sam and Minnie Marx, lived at 34 Jayson Avenue from 1929 to 1931 and his brother Chico was at 11 Myrtle Drive in the Estates section. In summer 1930 Harpo rented a house in Great Neck. [The fifth Marx brother was Gummo (Milton Marx)].

Groucho had lived in large cities before moving to Great Neck, so suburban life was a big change. In an article in the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, published two weeks after Groucho became a homeowner, the comedian was quoted as saying: "I am now a regular resident of Great Neck, 200 by 150 feet of Long Island now belongs to me, body and soul, except for a few slight

mortgages and assessments which are not very important until the time comes to pay them." He provided details of his new lifestyle: "I am becoming well versed in the four topics of conversation, which are of paramount importance in a small community, i.e., domestic help, golf, bridge, and the trappings of mice. If these were listed in the order of their interest, mice would be



leading the suburban league with domestic help as a snappy second." He went on to describe his "War Against the Rodents," which ended in failure to catch any of them. He concluded: "I am seriously thinking of abandoning the whole thing. Plus this, I am getting suspicious. I think the neighbors, knowing I was a city chap, were kidding me. I should have known better; how could a place as fair as Great Neck be infested with mice? The more I think of it, the more I realize how ridiculous it was."

In his book *Arthur Marx's Groucho: A Photographic Journey*, Groucho's son recalled his happy days at 21 Lincoln Road: "Our house overlooked hundreds of acres of deep forest rich with birch and oak trees, unpolluted ponds and streams, and all sort of wild flora...there was also an abundance of rabbits, squirrel, frogs, owls, and snakes, everything necessary to make life interesting for a boy."

