

# HERITAGE RECOGNITION PROGRAM

## To Identify and Honor Great Neck's Most Notable Homes

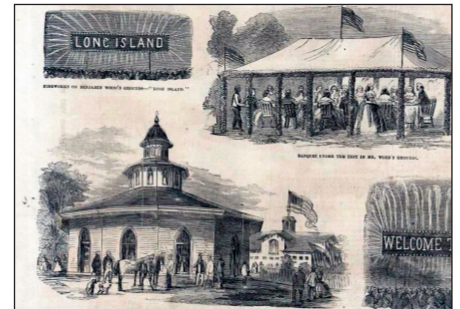


### 124 SUSQUEHANNA AVENUE, GREAT NECK, NY

The Victorian Second Empire-style house with a wraparound porch and cupola was built c. 1858 for Benjamin Wood, editor and publisher of the New York Daily News (not related to today's Daily News) for forty years. Because of his anti-Lincoln, pro-slavery views, the federal government effectively shut down his paper in 1861 for a year and a half by suspending its delivery by postal service. Wood was viewed as a traitor by many in the north; from 1863 to 1865, when the paper was back in business, it printed letters from readers (southern spies) with coded messages for its southern readers. Benjamin Wood was elected to the U.S. Congress as a Democrat, serving from 1861–1865 and again from 1881–1883. In between, from 1866–67, he was a New York State senator and author of a novel.



Benjamin Wood's home originally faced Flushing North Hempstead Turnpike, which was renamed Northern Boulevard sometime around 1900. His extensive property included a twelve-sided stable and a round barn with arched windows, which provided ample room for Wood's famous July 4th parties, described in an article in Leslie's Illustrated Weekly of July 1860. The magazine story emphasized the beautiful 60 acres of property and the popularity of Wood's annual event, which attracted thousands of guests and gave them a "few hours of uninterrupted enjoyment," including fireworks. The house retains the original fireplace and



marble mantelpieces in two rooms.

In September 1869 a New York Times advertisement announced an auction of the property. About that time Joseph Spinney bought four acres, where he subsequently built his Methodist Church. Several times in the 1880s Spinney had advertisements in the Brooklyn Eagle announcing that the former home of Benjamin Wood was for rent, and then for sale. At an unknown date, most likely prior to 1900, the house was moved to its present location on Susquehanna Avenue.



According to Carlyle Shreeve Smith, a professor of archaeology who grew up in Great Neck and whose family owned property on Susquehanna Avenue since 1884, his great grandfather Thomas Shreeve bought a portion of the Wood property. Shreeve built houses nearby on Susquehanna in the 1880s using wood from some of the buildings associated with the Wood house.



1915 photo of Lulu Allen Smith, Carlyle Smith's mother, who lived at 114 Susquehanna. The house at 124 Susquehanna is behind her, on the right.

