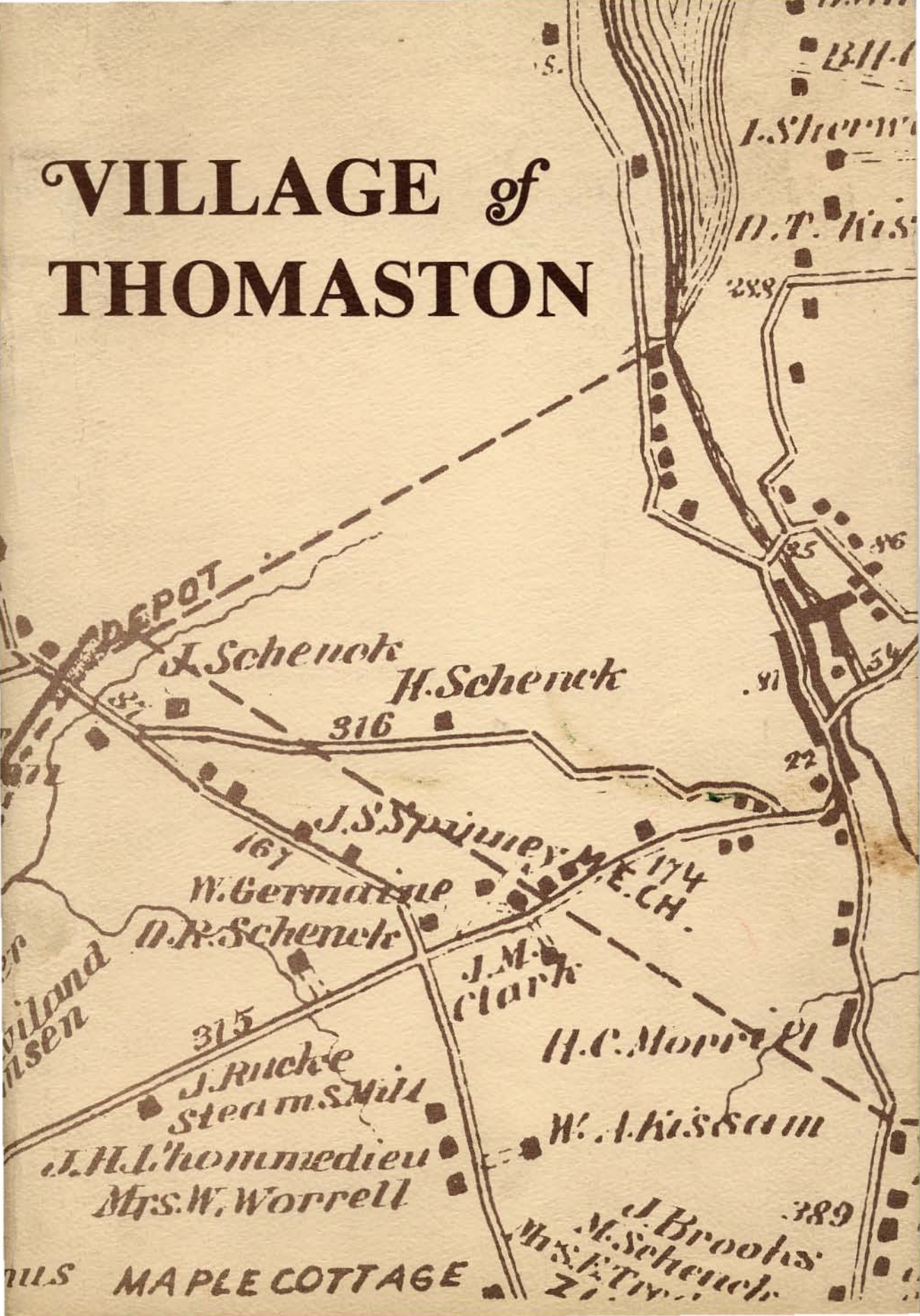


VILLAGE of THOMASTON



Walking Tour

1. 280 Schenck Avenue
Typical farmhouse and barn - Late 1800's.
2. 124 Susquehanna Avenue
One of the oldest Victorian farm houses in Thomaston - approximately 1870
3. 16 Pont Street
Former home of Joseph Hirshhorn including rare Copper Beech Tree.
4. 106, 110 Susquehanna Avenue
Farm workers houses - late 19th century.
5. 21 Lincoln Road
Former residence of Groucho Marx
6. 230 Schenck Avenue
Former residence of Ray Charles
7. Methodist Church Parish House - 1872
8. 9 Pont Street
Probably first house in Belgrave Square
9. Croydon House,
Formerly the 'Towers' built in 1929
10. Toll house for Flushing-North Hempstead Turnpike - 1c toll



VILLAGE of THOMASTON



11. Old stone bridge - on site of present R.R. trestle (U shaped opening permitting only one car at a time to pass)
12. Ben Woods corner
13. 1 Linden Street
Former residence of Helen Morgan
14. 11 Lincoln Road
Jane Cowl's home, Dramatic Actress Broadway Stage
15. 17 Pont St.
Charles Lindberg slept in this house the night before he flew to Paris

16. 23 Brompton Road
This house was moved from the site of the Belgrave Apartment house.



- A. Great Neck Hills Area
- B. Belgrave Area
- C. Avalon Area
- D. Villa Area
- E. Harnaby Area

Map: Village Zoning Map

VILLAGE *of* THOMASTON



DEDICATION



This informal village history, prompted by the celebration of our nation's bicentennial anniversary, is affectionately dedicated to all Thomaston residents — past, present and future.

Published by
The Incorporated Village of Thomaston
Great Neck, New York
1976

THE BICENTENNIAL HISTORY PUBLICATION

The Village of Thomaston

Editor - Corinne Coe

Historian	Leila Mattson
Art Editor	Charles Betz
Cover Design	Dorrit Title
Walking Tour	Mike Orenstein Judy Orenstein
Map for Walking Tour	Dorrit Title
Photographs	Charles Betz Peter Mattson George Pafitis Maida Sperling
Historic Photographs Courtesy of	Louis Gregory Ruth Doncourt Elsie Doncourt Whitney
Contributions	Myron Coe Gerald M. Hertz Toni Hoak Howard Kimmel Franklin Lesser Peter Mattson Theodora Pafitis
Proof Reading	Toni Hoak Leonard S. Zahn
Typing	Gladys M. Landau Leila Mattson

THE BICENTENNIAL COMMITTEE

Corinne Coe, Chairperson

Charles Betz
Lia Hans
Gerald Hertz
Toni Hoak
William Howe
John Idol
Joel Loewy
Naomi Loewy
Lawrence Lyons

Robert Kreutzer
Leila Mattson
Mike Orenstein
Dario Ramazzotti
Viola Ramazzotti
Rita Redlich
Rita Squier
Leonard S. Zahn
Charlotte Zand

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Cover: map: *Atlas of Long Island*, New York: Beers, Comstock & Cline, 1873.

Printed by: Thalmar Graphics

VILLAGE OF THOMASTON

Thomaston today is a friendly, cohesive village characterized by lovely old trees, winding streets and a diversified population. It is primarily a residential village with a small commercial area on the boundaries of Northern Boulevard and East Shore Road and a few multiple dwellings on South Middle Neck Road.



One of the oldest Copper beech trees in Thomaston. Pont Street.

RURAL THOMASTON

The Thomaston area was so sparsely populated in the late 18th and early 19th centuries that few records remain which can be used to construct a detailed history of that period. Undoubtedly, British troops who occupied the area during the Revolutionary War marched down the roads of rural Thomaston and requisitioned firewood for themselves and hay for their horses from the few farms in the vicinity. Well into the 19th century, southern Great Neck remained a rural area of scattered farms devoted to grazing sheep and cows, raising grain, cutting firewood, and mowing hay.

A map published in 1859 is the earliest which shows the Great Neck area in detail. An Indian path which ran down the middle of the peninsula toward Lake Success had become a wagon road known as the Main Road. Another road ran along the base of the peninsula and this later became North Hempstead Turnpike.

Only five houses and one shop had been built by 1859. One of the houses, with property adjoining the Main Road (Middle Neck Road) and North Hempstead Turnpike, was owned by Benjamin Wood. For many years local residents identified that area as Ben Wood's corner. Wood was a colorful figure in both state and national politics. As owner-editor of New York City's *Daily News* and as a member of Congress, Wood consistently expressed pro-slavery views and opposed the Civil War. Ben Wood and his brother Fernando, mayor of New York City, had many successful business interests, including lotteries chartered by some southern states.

The two houses which stood on Schenck's Lane in 1859 were owned by members of the Schenck and Cornwell families, both well known on Long Island. The name Cornwell was spelled in various ways, including Cornell, on early maps. These prolific families, scattered over western Long Island, were descendants of men who had actively supported the Continental Congress and had participated in the secession of North Hempstead from the loyalist government of Hempstead Town. J.R. Schenck, probably Jacob R. Schenck, farmer and overseer of roads for the Town of North Hempstead, owned the farmhouse on the western end of Schenck's Lane in 1859.



Schenck farmhouse, early 19th century.



Barn at 280 Schenck Avenue.



Farm House 280 Schenck Avenue

Roelof Schenck had lived there 40 years earlier when the school district boundaries were first drawn. The east-west boundary of District No. 7 was one rod south of Roelof Schenck's house. By the time the school districts were redefined in 1830, Roelof had died and the house belonged to Mrs. Maria Schenck. This early dwelling and another built by H. Schenck a few years after 1859 remained until 1949 when a proposal was made to move them to another location. Fearing damage to trees on Schenck Avenue, Thomaston trustees were reluctant to grant permission for the houses to be moved and they were razed.

The Cornwell house stood at the sharp turn on Schenck's Lane. One resident of that house was identified by a Great Neck historian as Epegnetus Cornwell, a stage coach driver.¹ The barn which now stands behind the present house at 280 Schenck Avenue may have been one of the structures on the Cornwell farm. The house itself, a typical Long Island farmhouse constructed with hand-hewn beams, may have been built later.

Richard Allen, who lived west of the Main Road, died in 1859, the year the map was drawn. The 1830 school district boundary map referred to him as Richard Allen, Esquire. Allen, a justice of the peace and a farmer, was the only property owner given that title in the official records. To neighbors and family he was known as "Squire Richard," a title honoring his status in the community and distinguishing him from other members of the family with that name. Allen's ancestors were among the very earliest settlers on Mad Nan's Neck. Later, the Allens owned the Saddle Rock grist mill for a time. Squire Richard's house stood off the Main Road near the northern border of what is now the Belgrave area of Thomaston. A small stream near the house ran to the grist mill owned by Richard's twin brother, Daniel. The mill later was sold to farmer-poet Bloodgood H. Cutter, who married Richard's niece, and the mill became known as the Cutter Mill. After 1859, Richard's son, Thomas Tredwell Allen, and daughter, Margaretta Allen, lived in the house.

Some of the oldest remaining houses in Thomaston are found on Susquehanna Avenue. The Italianate Victorian house at 124 Susquehanna Avenue stands at the location of the farmhouse on the 1859 map. However, it is difficult to believe that a surveyor could dismiss this large structure with its three-story tower as merely a farmhouse. Land in this area was surveyed for Jeremiah Johnson, Jr. in 1869; it is likely that the house was built shortly after the survey. Another late 19th century Victorian house still stands at 48 Susquehanna Avenue.

Some modest dwellings were also built at the eastern end of Susquehanna Avenue in the 1870's. Originally occupied by farmworkers, these houses still remain, handsomely maintained by their present owners.

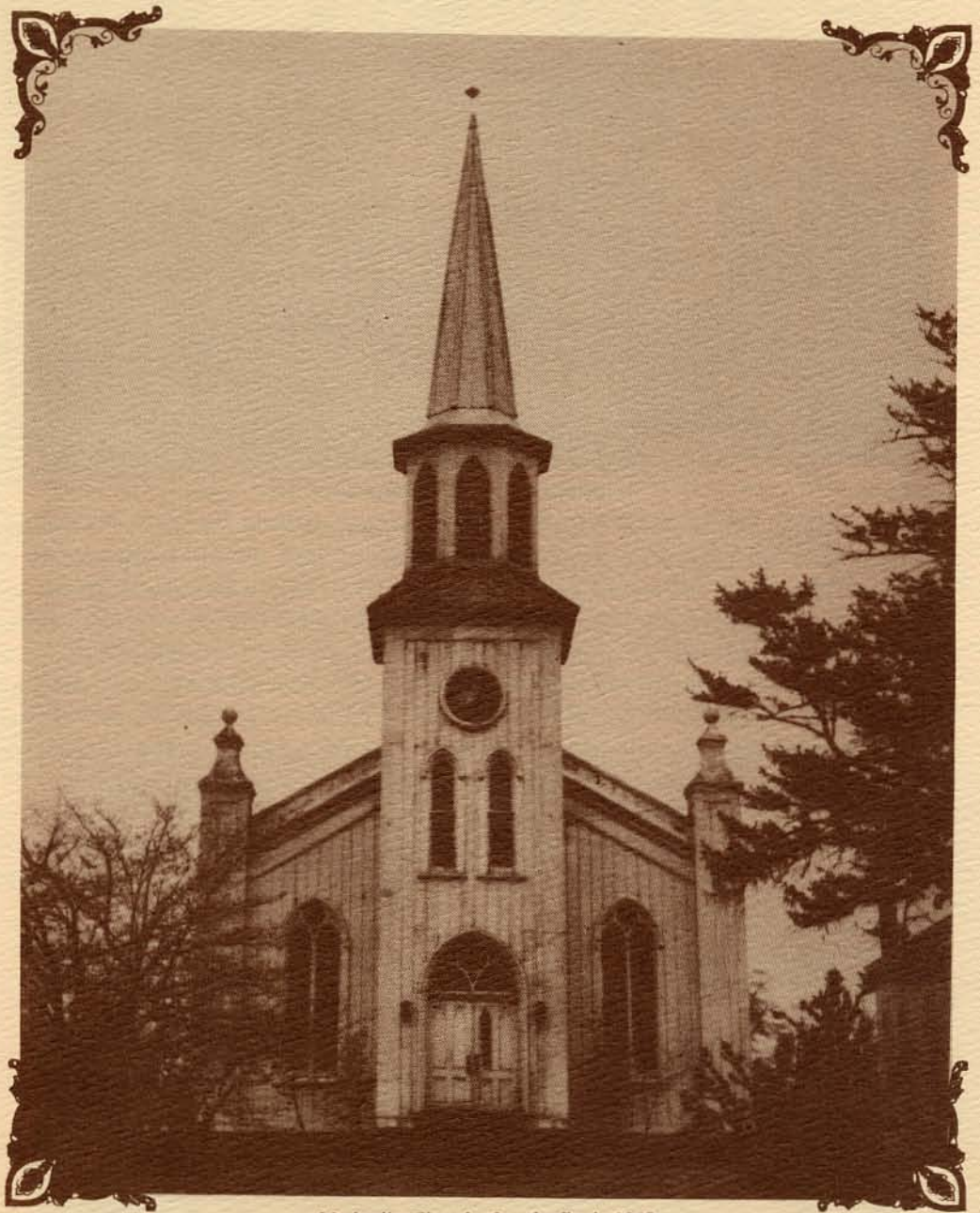
One of Thomaston's most prominent landmarks, the Methodist Church on Northern Boulevard, was built in 1872. Joseph S. Spinney, a commission merchant who commuted to Manhattan by steamboat, lived on East Shore Road near the present Vista Hill Road, facing Manhasset Bay. Spinney, who had been conducting prayer meetings in Great Neck and Manhasset, felt there was a need for a Methodist-Episcopal church in the community. He purchased four acres of the Ben Wood property along North Hempstead Turnpike and, in 1872, donated money for a church, parish house and parsonage.



124 Susquehanna Avenue.



106 and 110 Susquehanna Avenue.



Methodist Church after the fire in 1948.



Methodist Church parish house.

The handsome, white frame church, designed by **Mundell and Teckritz** of Brooklyn and built by J.M. Carpenter of Great Neck, was set high on the north side of the Turnpike. Its pointed Victorian gothic windows were filled with stained glass. With accompanying buildings, including a barn, it cost \$21,000.² The frame church burned in 1948 and was replaced by a brick building of similar style. The appearance of the original church is echoed in the smaller parish house which remains. The parsonage, a dwelling in restrained Victorian style, is still used as a residence. Unfortunately, the parish no longer has a congregation and the parish house is closed and boarded. Spinney's name remains associated with the area which is known locally as Spinney Hill.

For many years the church that Spinney built served as an important social and cultural center for the community. Printed leaflets in the collections of local families indicate that a variety of lectures, musical events and social activities were enjoyed by residents and parishioners.



Methodist Church seen from North Hempstead Turnpike.

Ties With Manhasset

Much of present Thomaston was long considered part of Manhasset and many ties with Manhasset were not broken until well into the 20th century. For one thing, the main center of activity of this mid-19th century rural area was Manhasset Valley. Shops, a post office and a coal yard lined the road that ran through the valley along Cow Bay (Manhasset Bay). Describing the area in 1845, a historian noted that there were a few elegant mansions at the head of the bay, but the principal part of the village consisted of small tenements undistinguished for beauty of location or symmetry of form.³

Part of Thomaston was also joined to the Manhasset school district and the southeastern tip of modern Thomaston still remains in that district. The story of local school districts is a confusing one because for a time the area was shared by Lakeville, Manhasset and Great Neck. The earliest school district boundary ran along Schenck Avenue and later was moved north to the railroad tracks. Children who lived north of the tracks attended school in Great Neck. Children living south of the tracks were in the Lakeville school district and attended a two-room school on Lakeville Road. The eastern section of present Thomaston was in the Manhasset district. A former resident, Ruth Doncourt, remembers walking from her home on the Turnpike to a school on Plandome Road in Manhasset where she was a pupil in 1907. Later, when residents in the eastern area successfully campaigned to join the Great Neck school district, some Manhasset residents angrily accused school board members of giving away a million dollars in taxable property.⁴ After the Lakeville district joined the Great Neck Schools in 1931-32, most of Thomaston was finally united into one school district.

When the Great Neck Park District was established in 1916, the southeastern corner of the peninsula was excluded because it was part of the Manhasset Park District. It was not until 1954 that Thomaston seceded from the Manhasset district.



Atlas of Long Island, 1873.

The movement to remove the area from the Manhasset Park District and to gain acceptance into the Great Neck Park District was conceived and executed by Don Hoak, who developed the procedures for getting the consent of owners of more than 50 percent of the assessed valuation of the property in the area, as required by the Town of North Hempstead. Hoak was later assisted by a number of Thomaston residents, among them the petitioners Eleanor Berger, Louis Beryl, Estelle Braverman, William Fraser, Arther and Rose Glantz, Fran Greene, Sue Gross, Shirley Howard, Beulah Katz, Sylvia Kimmel, Samuel Klein, Henry Kline, Michael Schnaittacher, Helen Siegel, and Chris Weinstein. In 1961 the area became a part of the Great Neck Park District.

Other services were also centered in Manhasset. The area was served for a time by the Manhasset Post Office. Fire and water services continue to be provided for Thomaston by the Manhasset-Lakeville Fire and Water Districts. Schenck Avenue was labeled Manhasset Avenue on early maps and maps published in the 1970's still give that name to the western end of the avenue.

Transportation

Modern amenities began to intrude early into the 19th century rural scene. The earliest was the construction in the 1830's of Northern Boulevard, then called North Hempstead and Flushing Turnpike. To improve the existing wagon road which ran along the base of the peninsula, shares of stock were sold for \$25.00 each by the North Hempstead and Flushing Road and Bridge Company. A toll house for the Turnpike stood on the north side of the Turnpike; it was east of Schenck's Lane where it remained until the 1950's.⁵ Local farmers, accustomed to building gates across roads to restrict their grazing cows and sheep, resented the building of the Turnpike, especially because it was a toll road. They discovered, however, that the saving of time and wear and tear on wagons merited the small toll of a penny.



Map of Long Island, 1896, when Thomaston was the name for the area near the railroad station. Streets and houses are located inaccurately.

Another intrusion into the area was the construction of the railroad line which divides the Village. The single track line from Great Neck, sometimes called Thomaston Station on the schedules, to Port Washington was built by the Great Neck and Port Washington Rail Road Company, a subsidiary of the Long Island Railroad. The line was opened June 23, 1898.⁶ The need for this service indicated a growing population. Also, to promote business, the Long Island Rail Road, produced a series of hotel guides, cyclist booklets and glowing descriptions of the desirability of living on Long Island, especially on the attractive north shore.

In 1910 commuting to New York City became easier. A long planned railroad tunnel connecting Long Island and Manhattan was completed, eliminating the need for an East River ferry crossing. Thus the new road, and later the railroad, contributed to the decline of the agricultural character of the area.

SUBURBAN BEGINNINGS

The turn of the century seemed to herald the opening of a new era and Thomaston began to take on a decided suburban appearance. In 1908 official maps were filed for a development called Great Neck Hills, an area bounded roughly by Shoreward Drive, Susquehanna Avenue and Middle Neck Road. Broad lots and handsome houses in this part of Thomaston today are the result of restrictions included in deeds sold by the Great Neck Improvement Company, which developed Great Neck Hills. The concept of a planned development with minimum building standards was not unique at the beginning of the 20th century but it certainly was unusual. The character of the Hills area was jealously guarded by the Improvement Company, which maintained its own plant nursery and worked with Olmstead Brothers, a firm of landscape architects. Through the Olmstead firm the successful Hills development became a model for other communities across the country. In 1920 the residents agreed to extend the original deed restriction for an additional 20 years. Both developer and residents were conscious



Hillpark Avenue, Great Neck Hills, 1909 — Photo from *Long Island Today*



GREAT NECK HILLS

A nine-room vine covered home of hollow tile construction on Schenck Avenue, Great Neck.

First floor contains hall, living room, den, sun parlor, dining room and kitchen.

Second floor--four master bedrooms and one bath.

Third floor has two rooms, bath and attic. Plot 160 foot frontage by 140 feet deep, with beautiful lawns, hedges and shrubs.

Price \$32,000; easy terms. Telephone owner, Great Neck 794 for appointment or further particulars from Harold E. Young, No. 35 Middle Neck Road, Great Neck.

Great Neck News advertisement, 1926.

that these restrictions would serve to attract only what were described as "high class residents" to the area.⁷ The "high class" character of the area is confirmed by the \$32,000 price tag on a Schenck Avenue house advertised in the Great Neck News in 1926.

Enthusiastic property owners formed the Great Neck Hills Association, which organized a country club with tennis courts and bowling alleys. The club, which was on the north side of Susquehanna Avenue between Middle Neck Road and Garden Street, accepted outside memberships. Later it moved out of Thomaston.

The original development continued to expand. Small plots were purchased so that unsightly shacks bordering the Hills homes could be razed. The Improvement Company also acquired 30 acres of adjoining land on the eastern side of the Thomaston area. Known as Great Neck Villa, this section is clearly visible on a 1914 map in which all the streets were named Villa. It could be speculated that the rough stone pillars



Atlas of Nassau County, 1914

on Shoreward Drive at the intersections of Crescent and Windsor Roads marked the formal entrance to the Villa section. The property restrictions were extended to this area but expired later due to lack of interest by the residents.

The Improvement Company was especially proud of a seven-acre acquisition called Avalon. It considered Avalon the finest small development in Great Neck, and said it was planned "with the most scientific protective restrictions man has been able to devise." The company also set aside an area for tennis courts and a park in this development. The courts, which were east of the Avalon Road circle gradually disintegrated into weed covered plots. Two houses were built on the site in the 1960's. A tree-covered island in the middle of Avalon Road remains a small but handsome remnant of the developer's aspirations.



Real Estate Map, Nassau County, 1923.



A house in Belgrave Square, 16 Pont Street.

Meanwhile, across Middle Neck Road, the Allen farm was being subdivided. South of the Allen farm was still another Schenck farm which had been sold in the 1890's to Captain Frederick Russell. In the building boom of the 1920's these parcels were ideal locations for housing developments. Captain Russell's portion became Russell Gardens, and by 1923 Belgrave Realty had subdivided the Allen farm into a development called Belgrave Square. The first house in Belgrave was completed in 1925. Fortunate children whose parents bought the handsome new houses in Belgrave could ride ponies rented for ten cents a ride from the Belgrave Riding Academy.

Continuity Amid Change

In the midst of the sophisticated suburban development many rural practices continued. A 1910 photograph of Susquehanna Avenue shows new houses facing an unpaved street and open fields behind. The house in the foreground was built for Louis Gregory and his bride, Edythe Mae Doncourt. They represented the older families who continued to live in the area even as new residents moved in. The Gregory family had lived in Great Neck for many years and Mrs. Gregory was a daughter of a member of the Allen family.

The proprietor of a store on the Turnpike near the church was Edythe Gregory's father, August Doncourt, who sold groceries there until 1937. Before 1910, when the



Susquehanna Avenue, about 1910.

Doncourt grocery store on the Turnpike.



Doncourt house on the Turnpike. Note watertower in background. 1914 photograph.

railroad tunnel to Manhattan was built, Doncourt made trips to the ferry landing on Steamboat Road to pick up provisions for the store. The Doncourts' Victorian-style house, with lawn and gardens sweeping down to the Turnpike, stood next to the parish house. The Doncourt daughters witnessed a changing scene on the Turnpike which reflected the changes taking place in the early 20th century. Elsie and Ruth Doncourt remember carts on the Turnpike transporting farm produce from eastern Long Island. The steep hill was an obstacle for the heavily laden produce carts, and extra horses were necessary to bring the carts up the hill. Contrasting the lumbering horse-drawn carts were the newly popular automobiles speeding through the Vanderbilt Cup races in 1908, 1909 and 1910. The autos came up the hill, passed a grandstand at the corner of Lakeville Road and the Turnpike, and turned south on Lakeville Road.

Philip Kelly who has lived on Schenck Avenue for more than 50 years remembers a trolley line on the Turnpike. Ruth Doncourt traveled to high school in Flushing on the trolley. The electrified trolley service they remember was extended along the Turnpike from Roslyn to Flushing in 1910 by the Mineola, Roslyn & Port Washington Traction Company. In winter the electrified cars fared no better on the steep hill up from the valley than the horse carts. This and financial troubles brought an end to the trolley service in 1920.

Mr. and Mrs. Tito Cimarelli who have lived on Susquehanna Avenue since 1930 remember the Doncourt grocery store. Chickens were raised behind the store, and fresh eggs and chickens were peddled by horse and cart through the Village. Trucks driven by the Mastro brothers delivered ice in the Village from the Knickerbocker Ice Plant. The ice plant, built on the eastern end of Susquehanna Avenue by the American Ice Company, is now known as 777 Northern Boulevard. The father of Susquehanna Avenue resident Fred Biegel, helped to build the plant.

The First Apartments

On the edge of Great Neck Hills, at the corner of Schenck Avenue and Spruce Street, two seven-story apartment buildings called Great Neck Towers rose in 1929. Standing on the highest elevation in Great Neck, the buildings boasted an observation tower 300 feet above sea level, living rooms with fireplaces, separate quarters for maids and chauffeurs, and bus service to the railroad station. It was rumored that the observation tower provided a pleasant setting for Prohibition-era parties, at least until 1933.

Shortly after construction of the apartment buildings a series of articles authored by Walter W. Davis appeared in the *Great Neck News*. Davis, who had been influential in the development of Great Neck Hills, urged that zoning restrictions be adopted for the unincorporated areas of southern Great Neck. In a thinly veiled reference to the Towers apartments, Davis noted the shock and outrage of "...our good citizens--not at apartments in any utilitarian or aesthetic sense -- but by the construction of monstrosities detestable alike to beholders and occupants. "

Walter Davis's comments indicated that the construction of the two towers may have been the impetus to create the Village of Thomaston. However, incorporation of small villages was a trend in the building boom of the '20's when the need for zoning protection was becoming apparent. Whatever the reasons, the creation of the Village was a remarkable accomplishment in an area with little historical identity, divided by a railroad track and a major road, and served by three school districts, two water districts, two fire districts, and two park districts.



Great Neck Towers apartments.

INCORPORATION

Incorporation of the southern part of the peninsula had been recommended as early as 1926 in a regional study made for the Great Neck Association.¹⁰ It was recognized that the area which lay between the railroad station and Northern Boulevard, one of the few remaining unincorporated areas, was very vulnerable to haphazard development.

Interest in incorporation was particularly strong among homeowners in the Great Neck Hills and Belgrave areas. On June 19, 1931 the Great Neck Hills Protective Association met in the firehouse on Prospect Street to discuss incorporation of a village which would include Great Neck Hills, Great Neck Villa, Belgrave Square, Russell Gardens, University Gardens, and the area between the railroad tracks and Kensington which had not been included in the recently incorporated Village of Great Neck Plaza. Previous plans to include areas near Little Neck were abandoned because that area was considering incorporation as a separate village. The University Gardens area did not join in the incorporation plan, and Russell Gardens homeowners quickly carried out their own plans for incorporation as a separate village.¹¹

Negotiations for incorporation of Thomaston had coalesced by July 1931 and necessary petitions were prepared. Thomaston at that point was to include Great Neck Hills, Great Neck Villa, Belgrave Square, and the area south of Kensington and east of Tenth Street (Gilchrist Avenue). Filing of the petition for incorporation was delayed when it was discovered that the Village of Great Neck Plaza had made application to annex the area bounded by Gilchrist Avenue, Schenck Avenue, Highland Avenue, and Shoreward Drive, the area now known as the Wyngate section of Great Neck Plaza. According to the *Great Neck News*, W.W. Davis, a property owner of that area, wanted the property to be in the Village of Great Neck Plaza.

Naming of the Village

Members of the Thomaston Committee which planned the incorporation were Williston Benedict, Frederick P. Byington, Hunter Delatour, Guy C. Heater, L. Stuart Love, Henry A. Singley, Jr., J. Whitney Stueck, Jr., and Edward M. Wharff, Jr. Many of these men later became Trustees of the Village. The committee left no written explanation of the choice of the name Thomaston for the new Village. Originally the name had applied to the area near the station. William R. Grace, who owned a large parcel of commercial property there, had named the area in honor of his wife's birthplace in Maine. When the station area incorporated in 1930 as Great Neck Plaza, the name Thomaston was available for the adjacent new village.

The final step in the approval of the incorporation of the Village was a special election held September 17, 1931. Eighty residents voted for incorporation, 33 opposed it. The Village, which officially came into existence October 1, 1931, had an assessed valuation of \$3,498,410 and a population of 402. At a later election Henry A. Singley, Jr., a leading member of the former Thomaston Committee, was elected the Village's first mayor.

The first meetings of Thomaston's newly elected Board of Trustees were very business-like, according to the records. Village officials moved quickly into the process of

developing zoning ordinances. New traffic signs were erected because the Fords, Chryslers, Locomobiles, and Hupmobiles which sold for less than \$1,000 were speeding on Village streets. At the height of the Depression there was high unemployment in the area, so the Village made a contribution to a peninsula-wide welfare fund. Unemployed men were set to work trimming and tending trees in the village.

Village minutes reflect relatively few disruptions due to World War II. A light manufacturing plant was established in the Belgrave Motors building on Middle Neck Road in violation of the zoning ordinance. Several hearings upheld the Village's decision to refuse a zoning variance, but by this time the War was almost over. The Village truck was loaned to several paper and scrap drives with gasoline provided by the donation of gasoline ration coupons.

After the War, when food shortages were no longer a problem, Village officials listened to complaints about chickens kept by several Village residents. Putting a formal end to the last of the rural ways of the past, the Trustees passed an ordinance prohibiting the keeping of animals, reptiles and birds, except dogs and other pets normally kept in a residence. The demand for low-cost housing prompted the trustees to protect Village housing standards. They enacted an amendment to the zoning ordinance that required a minimum of 1500 square feet of living space in a private residence. Through 1946, Shadow Lane, the lower part of Highland Avenue, St. George Road, and part of Brompton Road were private streets. The Village refused to continue services to these areas until the streets were dedicated to the Village. In 1947, after extensive discussion, the Village granted permission for the establishment of a private school within the Village. Very popular with residents throughout the peninsula, the Great Neck Community Nursery School has been operating in a former residence at 225 Schenck Avenue since that time.

The last remaining area of open land in the Village disappeared when Harnaby-Ardmore, Inc. submitted plans in 1950 to build houses in the northeastern corner of the Village. The eastern end of Grace Avenue was constructed at that time and the former route of Grace Avenue below the railroad bridge was renamed Colonial Road at the suggestion of residents in the area. Other new streets in this development were named for former Village Mayors Gallagher, Weigt and Singley.

The Towers

Problems involving the Towers apartment buildings occupied the attention of Village officials and residents in the 1960's. The buildings had retained their luxury status for many years, but by the 1960's they had become extremely overcrowded. Welfare recipients were housed there by the County even though violations and frequent fires plagued tenants and Village officials alike. The buildings continued to deteriorate as rent control and owners' profits came into conflict.

The Towers situation was described widely in the press and became for a brief time almost synonymous with Thomaston. Realtors refrained from printing the name of the Village in their ads, and some residents suggested a return to the name "Great Neck Hills." The Towers encountered financial setbacks leading to foreclosure. Then total renova-

tion was proposed, and at the suggestion of a representative of the NAACP, Mayor Robert Howard established a negotiating committee to resolve the problems of relocation of tenants. In order to defuse a volatile situation, the landlord and the tenants committee, headed by Earl Jenkins, agreed to negotiate in good faith and to avoid trying the case in the press. Relocation plans were facilitated with a monetary settlement, but this took so long in coming that only a small percentage of the tenants remained to receive payment.

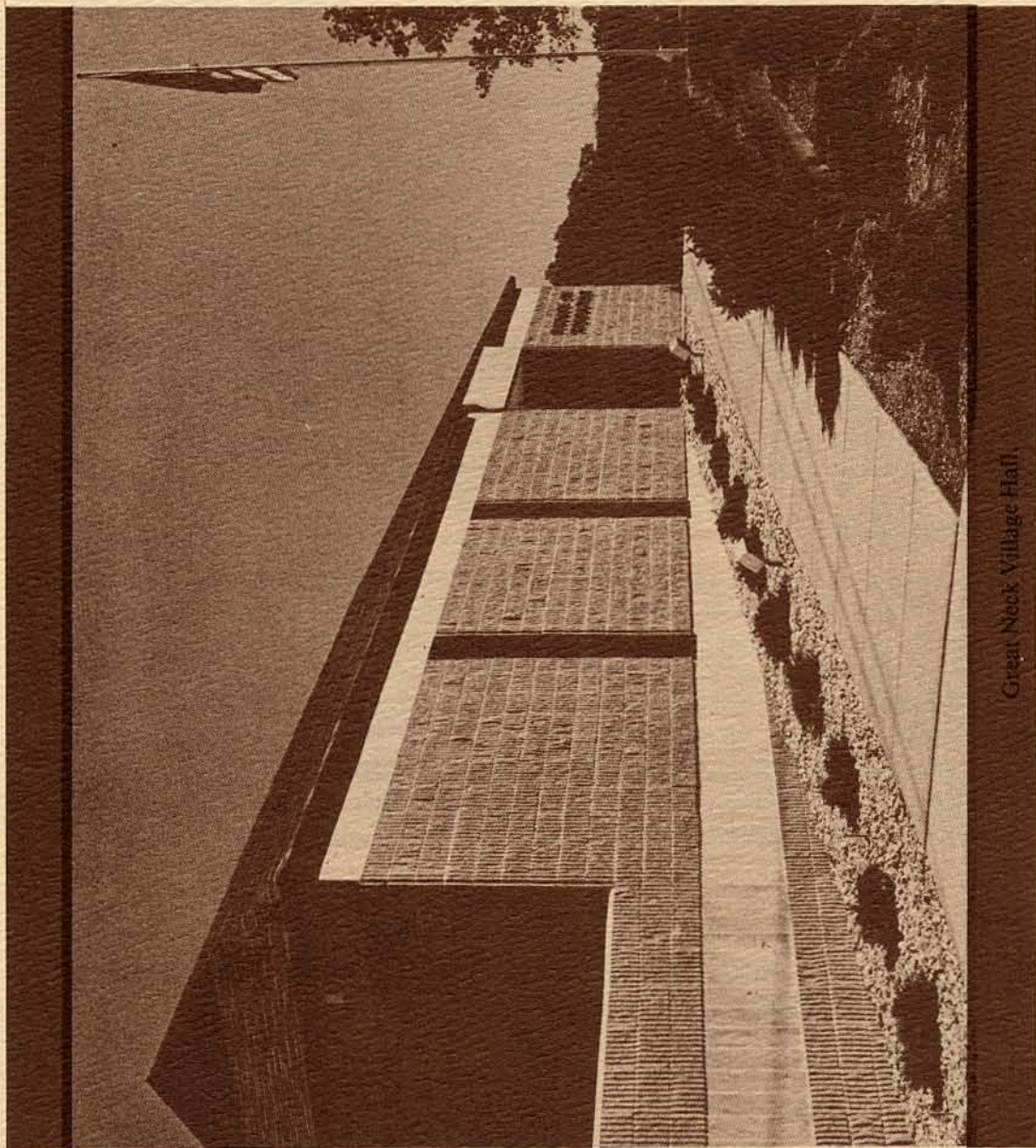
Shortly after the two buildings were vacated, one was badly damaged by fire and the Village insisted that it be razed on grounds of safety. A new owner proposed to raze both buildings and to construct a new 13-story building, but this was rejected by the Village because it represented overuse of the small site. After lengthy negotiations, a proposal to restore the remaining building was accepted in 1971-72. The restored building, which retained the original large apartments with high ceilings, was renamed Croyden House.

Thomaston Pioneers the Head Start Program

The Thomaston Homeowners Civic Association sponsored and conducted a Nursery Play Center located in the Methodist Church on Northern Boulevard from September 1964 to June 1965. This early program was a pioneering attempt to provide day care help for working mothers, which later came to be known as Head Start. It was operated under the volunteer leadership of Fran Greene.

The Village Hall

For years Village meetings were held in the firehouse on Prospect Street. Records were stored in homes of very patient Village clerks. This burden, plus the need for storage of maintenance equipment, dictated the construction of a permanent Village Hall. Aware that residents did not want a site on a residential street, newly elected Village officials acquired vacant, non-residential property on East Shore Road on the edge of Thomaston. For this site Great Neck architects Blum & Nerzig designed a handsome building with meeting rooms and offices on the main level and a garage for village trucks below. The Thomaston Village Hall, constructed of natural colored, split-face concrete block, was dedicated in January 1971.



Great Neck Village Hall.

Thomaston Village Hall.

THOMASTON TODAY

The one square mile on the Great Neck Peninsula called the Village of Thomaston lies north of Northern Boulevard and principally east of Middle Neck Road. Approximately 60 percent of the Village's 2,800 residents live in one-family homes in the heart of the Village. The rest reside in two-family houses and apartment buildings. Two six-story buildings predate zoning. Two recently built multiple dwellings on South Middle Neck Road are condominiums whose occupants exhibit pride of ownership. At its southern perimeter, Northern Boulevard, or Route 25A, stretches for one-third of a mile with under-improved commercial buildings. The Village's small East Shore Road frontage is similar.

Today, the Village of Thomaston is governed by a Board of Trustees composed of a Mayor and four Trustees, each elected for a two-year term. The Board of Trustees enacts local laws and Village ordinances concerned with such matters as building requirements, maintenance of housing, zoning, parking, and traffic. The Board of Trustees is responsible for the maintenance of the streets in the Village, collection of garbage, street lighting, and all aspects of Village government. The Mayor and Trustees serve without compensation.

In addition to the Board of Trustees, there is a Board of Appeals whose major function is to rule on applications for relief from the provisions of ordinances dealing with structures and use of land. In certain instances, the Board of Appeals sets conditions under which certain businesses can be established in the Village. The Board of Appeals is composed of five unpaid members, each of whom is appointed by the Board of Trustees for a three-year term. One of the five is appointed chairman by the Board of Trustees for a one-year term.

The Planning Board consists of five members appointed by the Board of Trustees. The Planning Board functions in an advisory capacity to the Board of Trustees in a variety of areas designed to make the Village a better place in which to live, work and play. The Planning Board currently has four subcommittees: Parks, which is seeking to identify and preserve appropriate areas in the Village; Traffic, which is concerned with traffic and parking planning; and Subdivisions, which examines and make recommendations about proposed land subdivisions. The fourth subcommittee is seeking to develop a complete Village plan to include items not covered by the other subcommittees, such as beautification, lighting, sidewalks, and long-range planning. The Planning Board also receives assistance from a Technical Advisory Board consisting of Village residents with expertise in various specialties. Members of the Planning Board, its subcommittees and the Technical Advisory Board serve without compensation.

The Thomaston Village Court is presided over by a Village Justice who is elected for a four-year term. In addition to the Village Justice there is an Acting Village Justice who is appointed by the Board of Trustees and sits in the absence of the Village Justice. The Village Court hears matters arising from alleged violations of the Village ordinances and vehicle and traffic laws of the State of New York which occur within the Village.

In addition, the Village Government has a Village Clerk-Treasurer, Clerk of the Court, Housing and Building Inspector, Fire Inspector, Village Attorney, and Village Maintenance Crew. All the foregoing are hired by the Board of Trustees on a one-year

basis with the exception of the Village Clerk who is hired on a two-year basis. All are compensated annually.

A non-governmental but important organization in the Village is the Thomaston Homeowners Civic Association. Meetings of the Association provide a forum for information and the discussion of problems. The Association also organizes varied social activities which bring residents together in an informal way.

Thomaston's officials have worked diligently through the years to upgrade the Village. In the past decade, for example, the following advances were made:

A new building code was adopted to control new construction.

A model housing code was passed to assure safe occupancy of existing housing.

Northern Boulevard was designated for redevelopment for office buildings in a park-like setting. Similar business zone standards were established for East Shore Road.

With Russell Gardens, the Village of Thomaston fought for the preservation of a wooded area along the creek which ran to Allen's mill and now divides Belgrave and Russell Gardens. Preservation of this natural park, a small portion of which lies within Thomaston, was assured when the Great Neck Park District purchased the four-acre site from a developer in 1973.

A master plan for parks has been proposed. The Village has proposed as its first priority the Susquehanna Avenue play area in the vicinity of the Methodist Church parking lot. Village entrance improvements are envisioned. Lighting plans are being considered. Of course, since the Village's tax base is limited, Federal and State funds have been sought and received for such things as recodification and traffic signs.

The Village of Thomaston has a historic past, a vital present, and a bright future which will continue to keep it a delightful community in which to live, work, and play for years to come.

FOOTNOTES

1. Whittle, **Map of Historical Great Neck**.
2. **History of Queens County**, p. 428.
3. Prime, **History of Long Island**, p. 294.
4. Match, **Lucky Seven**, p. 31.
5. Smits, **A Tour of the Historic North Shore of Nassau**, p. 12.
6. Smith, **Early History of the Long Island Rail Road**.
7. **Great Neck News**, April 20, May 18, May 25, 1929.
8. W.W. Davis, **Great Neck News**, May 18, 1929.
9. **Great Neck News**, May 25, 1929.
10. Schermerhorn, **Master Plan of the Great Neck District**.
11. **Great Neck News**, June 21, 1931.

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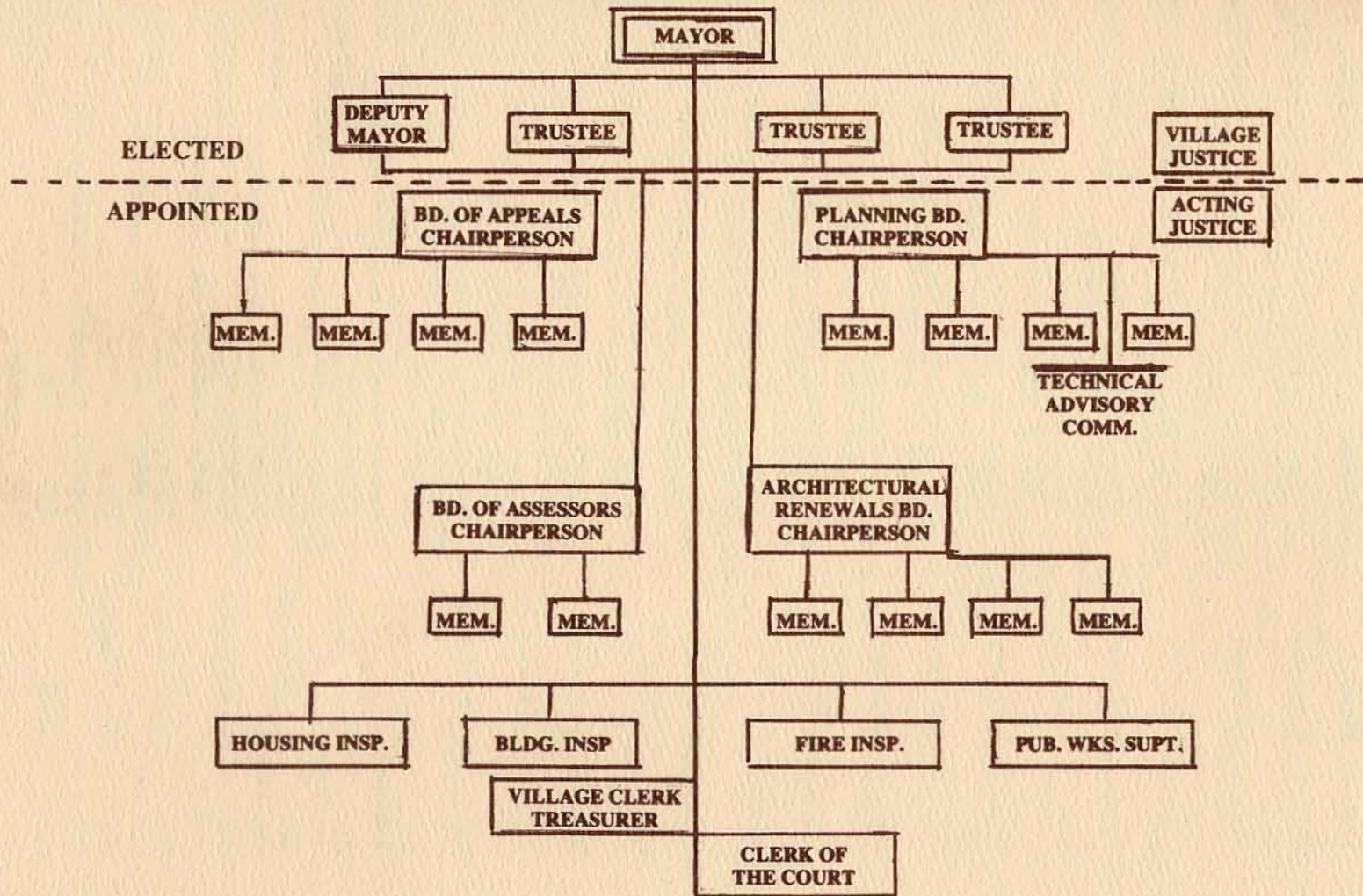
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VILLAGE OFFICIALS 1931-1975

Year	Mayor	Trustees	Justice
1931	Henry Singley	William Mullon, Hunter L. Delatour Jr. Frederick P. Byington, Lemuel Bolles	Henry Singley
1932	Henry Singley	William Mullon, Hunter L. Delatour Jr. Frederick P. Byington, Lemuel Bolles	Williston Benedict
1933	Henry Singley	William Mullon, Hunter L. Delatour Jr. Frederick P. Byington, Lemuel Bolles	Albert C. Rothwell
1934	Henry Singley	William Mullon, John W. Weight Frederick P. Byington, Lemuel Bolles	Albert C. Rothwell
1935	Henry Singley	William Mullon, John W. Weight Frederick P. Byington, George M. Winemuller	Ben W. Hill
1936	Henry Singley	L. Stewart Love, John W. Weight Frederick P. Byington, George M. Winemuller	Ben W. Hill
1937	Henry Singley	L. Stewart Love, John W. Weight Frederick P. Byington, George M. Winemuller	Ben W. Hill
1938	Henry Singley	Charles Fredericks, John W. Weight Frederick P. Byington, George M. Winemuller	Ben W. Hill
1939	John W. Weight	Charles Fredericks, Frederick P. Byington Frederick W. Holmes, George M. Winemuller	Ben W. Hill
1940	John W. Weight	Charles Fredericks, Frederick W. Holmes Ernest A. Gallagher, Robert F. Riddell	Ben W. Hill
1942	John W. Weight	Charles Fredericks, Frederick W. Holmes Ernest A. Gallagher, Robert F. Riddell	Ben W. Hill
1943	John W. Weight	Frederick G. Heumann, Frederick W. Holmes Ernest A. Gallagher, Clifford B. Marshall	Ben W. Hill
1944	John W. Weight	Frederick G. Heumann, Frederick W. Holmes Ernest A. Gallagher, Clifford B. Marshall	Ben W. Hill
1945	John W. Weight	Charles E. Waldner, Frederick W. Holmes Ernest A. Gallagher, Clifford B. Marshall	Ben W. Hill
1946	Ernest A. Gallagher	Charles E. Waldner, Frederick W. Holmes Fuller Jarbeau, Clifford B. Marshall	Ben W. Hill
1947	Ernest A. Gallagher	Charles E. Waldner, Frederick W. Holmes Fuller Jarbeau, Clifford B. Marshall	Ernest A. Gallagher
1948	Clifford B. Marshall	Kurt T. Pothoff, Neal Fisk Frederick W. Holmes, A. Cuyler Ten Eyck Jr.	Ernest A. Gallagher
1949	Clifford B. Marshall	Kurt T. Pothoff, Neal Fisk Frederick W. Holmes, A. Cuyler Ten Eyck Jr.	Ernest A. Gallagher
1950	Clifford B. Marshall	Kurt T. Pothoff, Neal Fisk Frederick W. Holmes, A. Cuyler Ten Eyck Jr.	Harold Green
1951	Clifford B. Marshall	Kurt T. Pothoff, Neal Fisk Frederick W. Holmes, A. Cuyler Ten Eyck Jr.	Harold Green
1952	Clifford B. Marshall	Kurt T. Pothoff, Neal Fisk Frederick W. Holmes, Wilbert B. Hammersla	Harold Green
1953	Neal Fisk	Albert Alden, Wilbert B. Hammersla Frank D. Sargent, Robert T. Pothoff	Harold Green

Year	Mayor	Trustees	Justice
1954	Neal Fisk	Kurt T. Pothoff, Albert Alden Frank D. Sargent, Wilbert B. Hammersla	Harold Green
1955	Neal Fisk	Kurt T. Pothoff, Albert Alden Frank D. Sargent, Wilbert B. Hammersla	Harold Green
1956	Neal Fisk	Kurt T. Pothoff, Albert Alden Frank D. Sargent, Wilbert B. Hammersla	Harold Green
1957	Neal Fisk	Kurt T. Pothoff, Albert Alden Frank D. Sargent, Wilbert B. Hammersla	Harold Green
1958	Neal Fisk	Albert Alden, Wilbert B. Hammersla Lawrence Atkin, Malcolm MacGregor	Harold Green
1959	Neal Fisk	Albert Alden, Wilbert B. Hammersla Lawrence Atkin, Malcolm MacGregor	Harold Green
1960	Neal Fisk	Wilbert B. Hammersla, Lawrence Atkin Malcolm MacGregor, Robert Howard	Harold Green
1961	Wilbert B. Hammersla	Malcolm MacGregor, Robert Howard Eli Katz, Charles Levine	Harold Green
1962	Wilbert B. Hammersla	Malcolm MacGregor, Robert Howard Eli Katz, Charles Levine	Harold Green
1963	Wilbert B. Hammersla	Malcolm MacGregor, Robert Howard Eli Katz, S. Benjamin Barley	Harold Green
1964	Robert Howard	Eli Katz, Marion Besan S. Benjamin Barley, Henry Klein	Harold Green
1965	Robert Howard	Murray Grode, Gerald Hertz Eli Katz, Marion Besen	Harold Green
1966	Robert Howard	Murray Grode, Gerald Hertz Eli Katz, Marion Besen	Harold Green
1967	Eli Katz	Murray Grode, Gerald Hertz Marion Besen, Henry Grubel	Harold Green
1968	Eli Katz	Murray Grode, Gerald Hertz Arthur Litz, Harold Mitherz	Harold Green
1969	Gerald M. Hertz	Arthur Litz, Harold Mitherz Franklin Lesser, Corinne Coe	Robert Howard
1970	Gerald M. Hertz	Arthur Litz, Franklin Lesser Corinne Coe, Adolf Nuchtern	Robert Howard
1971	Gerald M. Hertz	Arthur Litz, Franklin Lesser Corinne Coe, Adolf Nuchtern	Robert Howard
1972	Gerald M. Hertz	Arthur Litz, Franklin Lesser Corinne Coe, Adolf Nuchtern	Robert Howard
1973	Franklin Lesser	Arthur Litz, Corinne Coe Howard Kimmel, Mortimer Natkins	Gerald M. Hertz
1974	Franklin Lesser	Corinne Coe, Howard Kimmel Mortimer Natkins, Leonard S. Zahn	Gerald M. Hertz
1975	Franklin Lesser	Howard Kimmel, Mortimer Natkins Leonard S. Zahn, Renee Zarin	Gerald M. Hertz

Phone Numbers for Services

Fire: North of L.I.R.R. Vigilant Hook and Ladder	482-5000
South of L.I.R.R. Manhasset Lakeville	466-4411
Police: Emergency	911
6th Precinct	365-8000
Dog Warden	944-8220
Village Hall	482-3110
Lighting - Lilco	773-4018
Gas - Lilco	931-5800
Garbage - Donno Co.	627-0711
Sewer - Great Neck Sewer District	487-4787
Belgrave Square	487-2759
Water - Citizens Water Supply - North of L.I.R.R.	487-7973
Manhasset Lakeville - South of L.I.R.R.	466-4413
Thomaston Homeowners Civic Association, P.O. Box 130 Great Neck, N.Y. 11020	
Great Neck Park District	482-0181
Great Neck Library	466-8055
Hours and Program	466-8747
Great Neck School District	482-8650
Board of Elections	535-2411
League of Women Voters	487-5933
Medical Emergencies	
Ambulance - Manhasset Lakeville South of L.I.R.R.	466-4411
Vigilant North of L.I.R.R.	482-5000
Poison Control Center	542-2323
Suicide and Crisis Counseling	538-3111
North Shore University Hospital Emergency	562-2461
Great Neck Visiting Nurse	627-0530
Doctors Emergency Service	333-3500
Consumer Affairs	
Senior Citizen-Senior Hot Line - Complaints	535-3282
Consumer Complaints	535-3100

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