

HISTORIC AND NATURAL DISTRICTS
INVENTORY FORM

DIVISION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION
NEW YORK STATE PARKS AND RECREATION
ALBANY, NEW YORK (518) 474-0479

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	
UNIQUE SITE NO.	<u>10305, 00027A</u>
QUAD.	_____
SERIES	_____
NEG. NO.	_____

YOUR NAME: Town of Islip/SPLIA DATE: February 1990
Town Hall, 655 Main St.
 YOUR ADDRESS: Islip, L.I., N.Y. 11751 TELEPHONE: 516.224.5450
 ORGANIZATION (if any): Dept. of Planning, Housing, and Development

Brentwood hist. Dist

1. NAME OF DISTRICT: Washington Avenue Brentwood Pines

2. COUNTY: Suffolk TOWN/CITY: Islip VILLAGE: Brentwood

3. DESCRIPTION:

The White Pines (Pinus Strobus) line the east and west sides of Washington Avenue between the Long Island Expressway to the north and Suffolk Avenue to the south. The greatest concentration of the pines stand in the Flick Place/Van Cedar Avenue vicinity north towards Crescent Drive/Hancock Street and north towards Laurel Drive, with another group northward near Ardmore Drive/Sherwood Street. Approximately 70 trees line the edges of the road in this vicinity.

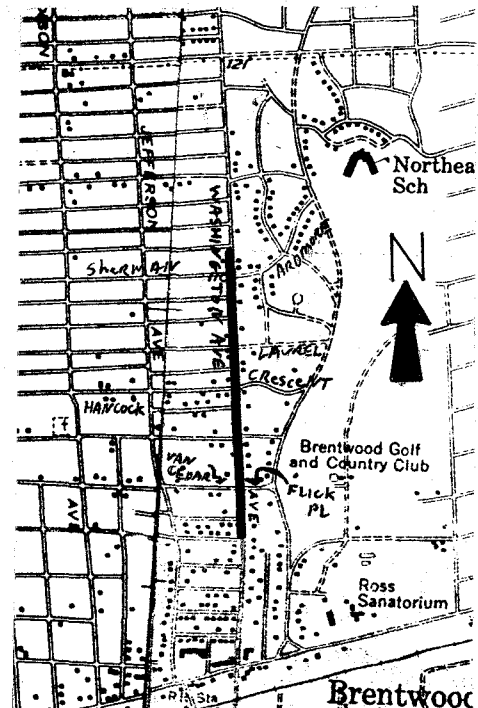
4. SIGNIFICANCE:

The pines were planted in 1908 by Graham Ayling, employed by the Brentwood Realty Company. ?

Refer to American Forestry Association Nomination Form

5. MAP:

NYS DOT Central Islip Quad



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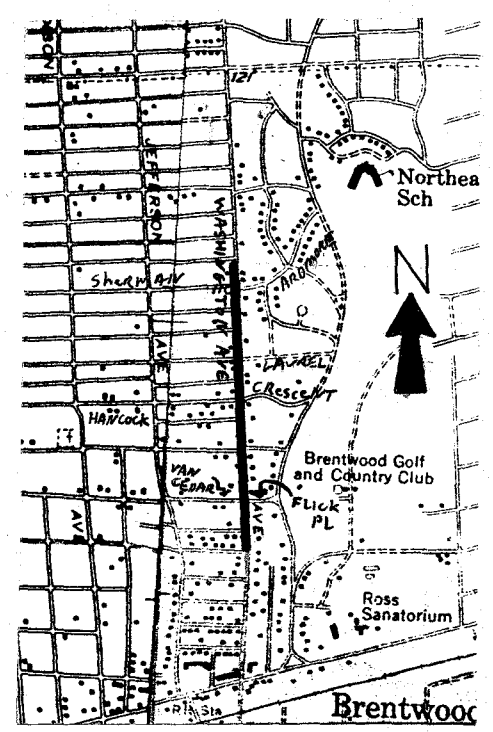
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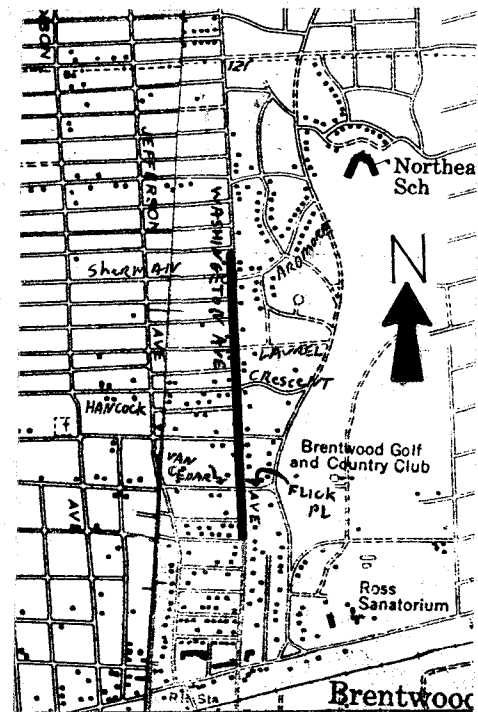
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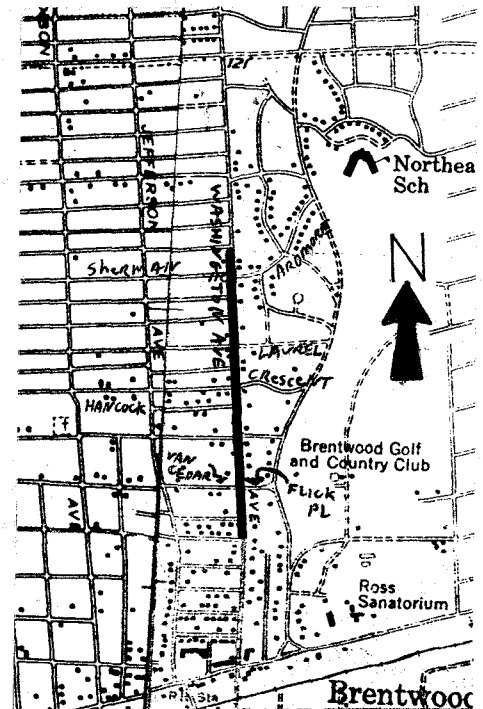
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Continuation Sheet
Washington Avenue Brentwood Pines

Neg. KK XV-19, fm. S.
Washington Avenue,
north of Flick Pl./
Van Cedar St.



Neg. KK XV-17, fm. S.
Washington Avenue, west
side sidewalk path
beneath pines, north
of Flick Pl./Van Cedar
St.



"Brentwood is within easy commuting distance of New York City, having rapid train service (!) to both Pennsylvania Station, New York City, and Flatbush Avenue Station, Brooklyn."

McWhorter was active around Brentwood for fifteen years or more but neither he nor his associates made money. The magnificent hotel was never built. The Philadelphia Bankers—Wilbur and Cleaver—are said to have lost most of the \$350,000. they invested in Brentwood. When they dropped out of the project, McWhorter and Lukens continued to obtain capital, from other sources to keep them going.

While the plans of McWhorter and his associates fell far from realization, the village did gain much from their operations, especially in physical beauty, in the number of its attractive homes, and in civic improvements. McWhorter was one of the founders of the Brentwood Golf and Country Club and was interested in other civic enterprises.

➔ AYLING PLANTS TEN THOUSAND TREES ←

In 1908, the Brentwood Realty Company employed George Graham Ayling, the present railway agent in Central Islip, to plant four car-loads, or about ten thousand, of white pine trees along Washington Avenue, north of Clark Street, and along Jefferson and Madison Avenues, and Thomas, Hale, and Clark Streets. While many of these trees have been destroyed by forest fires enough remain to give distinction to the village.

Ayling was the son of Charles Graham Ayling, a native of London, who moved to Brentwood in May, 1893, and built a home on Madison Avenue, now occupied by Henry Kopf, painter, and his bachelor son, Philip Kopf, an electrical engineer. There were only about eight houses in the neighborhood when Ayling went there. The elder man was a cabinet maker by trade, but he worked for the Brentwood Development Com-

pany from 1893 to 1907. Mrs. Jesse May Ayling, wife of Charles Graham Ayling and a native of London, died in Brentwood, November 6, 1917, at the age of 66. Ayling died here, October 5, 1928, aged 79. The Ayling family sold their home to the Kopf family in 1924. Mary S. Ayling, sister of George Graham, died on September 11, 1943. George Graham Ayling and Miss Emma Cordingly, born in Central Islip, were married, September 22, 1915.

FIRE DESTROYED THE RAILWAY STATION

Brentwood's first railway station, built in 1870, burned in April, 1904. George E. Gilquist, the agent, built a hot fire in an old stove and went across the street for breakfast. In his absence the wooden structure caught fire from the overheated stove and was destroyed. The flames had gained such a headway that they could not be checked by the volunteer firemen. The present railway station was then built and first occupied in September, 1904.

A NEW SCHOOL BUILDING

The small, one-room octagonal school building, erected by the colonists of Modern Times, was in use for fifty years, and during most of the time, with only one teacher on duty. A proposal to erect a new school house was brought before the voters of the district in August, 1902, when a resolution to appropriate the required sum of money was lost by a close vote of 19 to 18.

Four years later the plan to erect a new school structure was revived with a considerable amount of public discussion. A notice calling a special meeting of residents for August 7, 1906, brought out the largest attendance in the history of the school district. A resolution to erect a two-room school building to cost five thousand dollars was passed by a vote of 63 to 16.

The two-room school building was in use for exactly twenty-

B-5c

THE AMERICAN FORESTRY ASSOCIATION

1319 - 18th Street, N. W.

Washington, D. C. 20036

Nomination to the
Historic Trees of the United States

Please submit two eligible copies of the nomination to The American Forestry Association at the above address, not later than April 18, 1975, or as soon thereafter as possible. A separate nomination should be submitted for each proposed tree for inclusion in the book *Historic Trees of the United States*.

Name of nominator: Society for the Preservation of L.I. Antiquities
Address: 93 N. Country Road
Setauket, NY 11733
Position or title: _____
Employer or affiliation: _____

Describe below the tree nominated

Species: Common name

Botanical name

Pine

Historic or popular name, if any:

"Cathedral Pines"

Explain below why this tree is historic or famous. If the tree is associated with an historic event, or with persons or institutions, or with notable landmarks, please identify fully and in detail.

In the 1850's Brentwood was the site of an attempt to create an ideal community known as "Modern Times." The settlers planted pine trees for which the village became famous. While the utopian community failed, these "cathedral pines" continue to flourish.

Location of tree. Please be precise, so that a stranger can find it. Give location by state, county, township, or other civil division; street address, if any; forest, park, or cemetery; or grounds where tree is standing.

New York State
Suffolk County
Town of Islip
Brentwood

In Brentwood, on Washington Avenue, north of Cedar Avenue, these pine trees are on both sides of the street.

Owner. Please state whether the tree is in public or private ownership, and give the name and address of the owner, whether an institution, private individual, or public agency.

Public ownership

Reference in literature. If the tree has been described in a book, magazine, or other publication, please give the name of the book and publisher; or if a periodical publication, the name, date, and page number, if known.

Long Island Forum, June 1961.

Dyson, Verne. Anecdotes and Events in Long Island History.
Port Washington, N.Y.: Ira J. Friedman, Inc., 1969. Page 67.

Photograph. Has the tree been photographed? Is a copy of the photograph available? Is it black and white? Or in color? Where is it, and by whom is it owned?

Additional information, not given above.

resembled the form of a witch. Or it may have been so named because it was believed possessed by a witch. Whatever the reason, the name is apt.

Possibly Minnesota's oldest living landmark, the well-known cedar is visited annually by many people attracted by its legendary history and weathered, rugged distinction. It can be reached by Cook County Road 17, off U.S. Highway 61 near Grand Portage Bay. The tree is at the end of the county road, two and one-half miles east from Grand Portage Stockade.

THE MEMORIAL DRIVE PIN OAKS (Mississippi)

Lining Memorial Drive in Cleveland, Mississippi, are 225 pin oaks (*Quercus palustris*) which were planted as a memorial to the servicemen of World War I. The Madame Hodnett Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, has undertaken to preserve the trees since 1923.

THE TREE THAT OUTLIVED A RAILROAD (Nevada)

In the early 1840s, shortly after the first settlers arrived in the Carson River Valley, an unknown person planted a cottonwood cutting (*Populus fremontii*) in what is now Carson City. When the Virginia Truckee Railroad began operations in 1861, the line passed beneath its branches. As laboring locomotives left the Carson station on the run to Reno, black smoke and cinders poured from the stacks, engulfing the tree's crown. By late summer, the formerly green foliage had become blackened and grimey.

The railroad, a regional carrier, operated for eighty years, then its roadbed was abandoned. Despite the constant pollution of four score years, the hardy cottonwood endured and is living today, a healthy seven feet in diameter. It stands on the corner of Division and Washington Streets in Carson City, a tough old survivor of a colorful frontier era.

THE SHOEMAKER HOLLY (New Jersey)

When the southernmost portion of New Jersey's Garden State Parkway to Cape May was under construction in the early 1950s, a large and beautiful holly tree (*Ilex opaca*) was in direct line of the highway. The Parkway Authority interceded and saved the tree by changing the route of the road by 120 yards.

Known as the Shoemaker Holly, it takes its name from a former owner of the property on which it stands. The tree, with its picnic and rest area, is open year round and is accessible from

both north and south bound lanes. It is illuminated nightly by flood lights and colorful decorative lights during the Christmas season.

The exact location of the tree is the Cape May toll plaza, 23 miles north of Cape May, or three miles south of the Ocean City exit from the Parkway.

THE CATHEDRAL PINES (New York)

In the town of Brentwood on Long Island is a row of white pines (*Pinus strobus*), known as the Cathedral Pines. They mark the site of a utopian community, named Modern Times, founded in 1853 by a group of intellectuals. Their leader was Joseph Warren, a philosopher, inventor, and teacher of music, whose philosophy of life was highly idealistic. During his career, he established three towns based on "the sovereignty of the individual," one in Ohio and two in New York State. Modern Times was the most famous.

The site on which Modern Times was established consisted of 750 acres. Settlers, some from England, arrived in response to advertisements in Horace Greeley's *New York Tribune*. They built homes, and planted fruit and ornamental trees for beautification, including the white pines for which the village became noted. Among the settlers were artists, musicians, a dentist, a lawyer, a philologist, and several scientists. Their schoolhouse was built in 1857 and a circulating library was established.

Modern Times was dissolved as a communal enterprise in 1862. Two years later, the town was given the name Brentwood-in-the-pines, later simply Brentwood, after a town in Essex, England, whence some of the residents had emigrated. Although the original colony passed away, Brentwood has endured. It is in Suffolk County, in the town of Islip. The Cathedral Pines are on both sides of Washington Avenue, north of Cedar Avenue.

THE OYSTERPONDS SYCAMORE (New York)

The village of Orient, on the extreme northeast tip of Long Island, overlooking Long Island Sound, was formerly known as Oysterponds. A handsome old sycamore or buttonwood (*Platanus occidentalis*) is a prized possession of the community and a plaque informs the public that "This tree was planted by the early settlers of Orient and stood here July 4, 1776."

Just when during the colonial era the tree was planted no one knows. According to the Oysterponds Historical Society, there is a tradition that citizens met under its branches and pledged

was built between the Brooklyn Elevated line on Crescent St. and the surface tracks on Jamaica Ave. and on May 30, 1903, Broadway elevated trains started to run to Jamaica by that route. However, as there were so many accidents involving farm wagons and pedestrians, the service was discontinued on December 8, 1903. Finally, in 1916, the elevated line was extended from Crescent St. to 111th St. and a further extension was made to 168th St., Jamaica, in 1917. Also, the Fulton St. elevated line was extended from Grant Ave. to Lefferts Ave. in 1915. In recent years, the latter has been connected to the Independent Subway System. Then, too, the Independent subway in Queens Blvd. and Hillside Ave. came into the picture in the 1930s.

The extension of rapid transit lines into the Richmond Hill - Jamaica area had, of course, taken much passenger business away from the L I R R and the various improvement programs had taken away much freight business.

Brentwood

(continued from page 129)

Other societies were founded by men and women, each society having its own special philosophy of life. The male members of one society wore long hair and their wives went in for what today would be called boyish bobs. One society is said to have sponsored polygamy. In fact, before very long Josiah Warren's philosophy became lost in a conglomeration of conflicting cults, some of which cast undesirable shadows over the fair name of Modern Times. In

1864, therefore, the residents assembled and adopted a new name for the village. They chose Brentwood after a town in Essex, England, from which some of them hailed.

This change of name occurred in 1864, towards the close of the Civil War in which fifteen local residents served with the Union forces. One of them, George Dexter, was killed in battle. He was especially missed as he had belonged to the Modern Times Brass Band before the war, a group which toured the island and met with great public favor.

Among the leading residents of Modern Times were W. U. Dame, Peter L. Blacker,

Edward Linton, and Henry Edgar, an English lawyer who brought a large family, together with 300 books with which he founded a circulating library. He and James D. Blacker planted many arbor vitae hedges about the village.

Stephen Pearl Andrews, co-founder with Warren of the community, was a scientist and philologist, while Dr. Edward Newberry, the naturalist, went in for phrenology, chemistry, botany and geology. He and his wife were also successful artists. From Ohio came Isaac Gibson, a Quaker, bringing Mr. and Mrs. William Jenkins and their two children; also a Mr.

See
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The Franklin National Bank

OF LONG ISLAND, NEW YORK

MEMBER FEDERAL DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION

ORY

THE BRIEF DREAM OF A BETTER WORLD

much to introduce into the United States from England.

These two very remarkable gentlemen, late in the year of 1850, stepped off a Long Island Railway train at Thompson's Station, about three-quarters of a mile west of the present Brentwood railway station. They walked down the railroad track to the site of the present village, then entirely uninhabited. They had been in negotiation with Long Island real estate dealers. After inspecting the area, they arranged to purchase 750 acres. Ninety acres of this tract were set aside for the main settlement and were laid out in 49 blocks of about four acres each. In turn, the blocks were divided into four building sites, each with a street frontage of 200 feet. In the center of each block, for the convenience of pedestrians, was an alley about twelve feet wide and running in a north and south direction. The tract was surveyed and the original map registered in Riverhead, the seat of Suffolk County, where it may still be seen.

Shortly before the arrival of the colonists, the land which they purchased and which now constitutes the heart of the village of Brentwood was bought by Dr. Edgar Fenn Peck of Smithtown, according to his own statement, for \$2.75 an acre "without the wood." The price paid by the promoters from New York City is not known but it is supposed to have been not much above that figure.

Warren had an advertisement printed in Greeley's New York *Tribune* in January, 1851, setting forth the advantages of the ideal community. Soon settlers began to arrive, clear the land, build log cabins, plant gardens and the tall "cathedral pines" for which the village became famous. Fruit trees also were planted along the streets and highways to supply free food for hungry travelers.

To Warren's colony of Modern Times, when it was about three years old, came Henry Edger, an English immigrant and reformer, mentally and spiritually adrift and seeking some new and more satisfactory way of life. He had

Dyson, Verne. Anecdotes and Events in Long Island History, 1969.

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I. Harris and a Miss Jenny Frantz. This band, traveling east in covered wagons, brought many small evergreens, including pines, which years later inspired the name of Brentwood - in - the - pines. Many still flourish.

Gradually, as Brentwood grew in size and importance, Modern Times blended with the newcomers. By the turn of the century few people remembered Josiah Warren and his strange teachings. Scarcely any of the original settlers remained by then, having either passed to their reward or moved away. Today one finds little evidence of the community's fantastic beginning. W. N. Dame's octagonal residence ~~stands on Brentwood road, between Third and Fourth avenues.~~

On the east side of Brentwood road, opposite the Presbyterian Church, stands the old Codman home. It was called the Hermitage of the Red Owl because of a legend that such a bird visited the place back in 1877 and held converse with Codman, who claimed that it had identified itself as the spirit of a Secatogue chief. The village's first schoolhouse, also ~~now stands on Second Street between Third and Fourth avenues, remodeled into a dwelling. It was built in 1857.~~

There may be other buildings of the early days still standing, but we know of none. Following the demise of the original colony, Brentwood became the home of large, attractive villas, and several mansions. When in 1896 the Sisters of St. Joseph acquired some 800 acres on which to found the Academy of St. Joseph, on the property was the former mansion of Robert W. Pearsall, completed in 1870 along the lines of a French chateau with lofty ceilings and inlaid hardwood floors. Pearsall engaged Frederick ~~who had laid out New York's Central Park, to landscape his grounds.~~

Also on the Academy's 300 acres stood the fabulous Austral Hotel of 185 rooms, erected by a syndicate during

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Address:

PAUL BAILEY

BOX 805, AMITYVILLE, N. Y.

Note: Bailey's 2-volume Island History and Historic Long Island in Pictures. Prose and Poetry are out of print.

File: Brentwood

The Long Island Horticultural Society, Inc.

Climax
New York 12042
Oct. 30, 1975

Mrs. Harry R. Van Liew
Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities
93 North Country Road
Setauket, New York 11733

Dear Mrs. Van Liew,

I was very pleased to receive your letter of October 17th. Although my wife and I retreated from Long Island after the last issue of "The Trees of Long Island" was published and settled in a 1795 Powell House with twenty-two acres of wilderness in the Catskills, we are always happy to hear from Long Island, especially old-time friends there.

The Brentwood trees are Eastern White Pine, Pinus strobus. They indeed were a beautiful sight; I remember that back in 1925 I was greatly impressed by these trees that gave Brentwood an individuality different from any other Long Island village.

I am sorry that I have no definite knowledge of the early history of the Brentwood pines. However, a clue is found in Paul Bailey's "History of Long Island", wherein N.R. Howell, writing about the Town of Islip states that Brentwood was founded in 1853 by a "group of intellectuals led by Josiah Warren laid out the community, then called Modern Times, in blocks of 4 acres each". Undoubtedly the planting of the pines was a part of this "intellectual" development.

In my correspondence with several other "horticulturally minded" persons on Long Island I will mention the Brentwood pines and if I receive any further information I will pass it on to you.

Sincerely,

George H. Peters...

George H. Peters.