

Lincoln Park Gardens and the man who built it

Memories of growing up in an early Port Jefferson Station community

BY GEORGE MORAITIS

Over the years, Port Jefferson Station has had many real estate developments. One of the earliest was called Lincoln Park Garden Plots. This and many others such as Belle Croft, Echo Plaza, Linden Place and Bergen Estates were owned by what was to become the Chas. A. Squires Land Company in Port Jefferson Station. His office building was in the area of today's Weylan's Drug Store on Main Street.

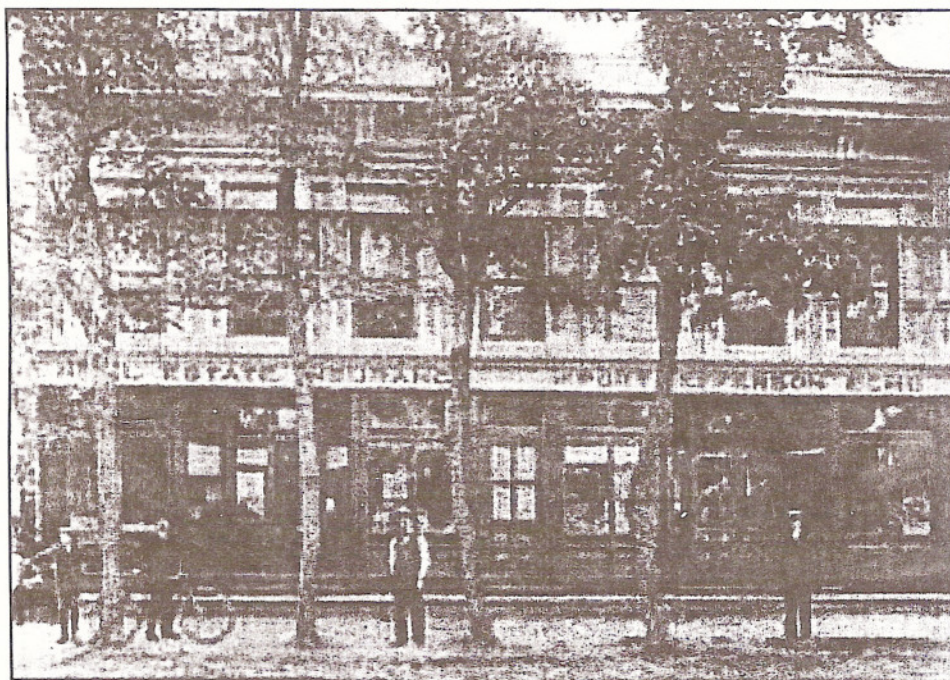
Charles A. Squires, according to his obituary (*Port Jefferson Times-Echo*; November 16, 1934) was born at Good Ground (now called Hampton Bays) in 1855. He married Minnie Conkin of Canoe Place in 1884. They moved to Port Jefferson Station in 1886. Here, he served as a station agent for the Long Island Rail Road before starting the area's first postal service. Shortly after his arrival, he established the Echo Post Office and was its postmaster for almost 25 years being appointed by then-President Grover Cleveland. He was the postmaster until 1910. During this time, he founded the *Port Jefferson Echo* newspapers in 1892, what would appear to be the "great-great granddaddy" of today's *Port Times-Record*. He continued as editor and publisher until he sold the business in 1899. The *Echo* published its newspaper in Port Jefferson Station for 39 years before it merged with the *Port Jefferson Times* and became the *Times-Echo* newspapers.

Squires was a member of the Town of Brookhaven Board of Assessors from 1919 until 1927. He was president of the Port Jefferson Chamber of Commerce and the Port Jefferson Building Company. Also, he was on the board of education of Port Jefferson Station.

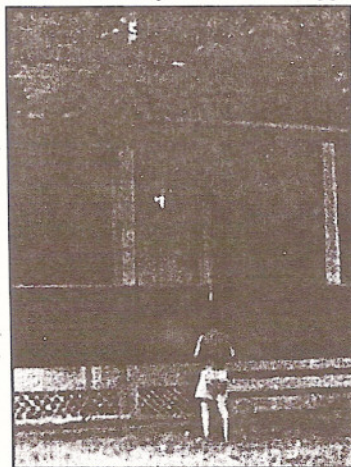


Collection of G. Moraitis.

Photo postcard of Arthur Greene of Port Jefferson. Titled "View from Lincoln Park." (Looking north. When Lincoln Avenue was a dirt road)



The office of the Chas. A. Squires Land Company in Port Jefferson Station.



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At far left, No. 17 Lincoln, ca. 1956. The writer here at the age of around five.

Around 1955, left, notice the floor heat vent.

My parents, Stamatis and Alice Moraitis, below, at No. 32 Lincoln Avenue, ca. 1945.

Schools #25 (now called Brookhaven-Comsewogue school district) as the district clerk from 1892 to 1905. Mr. Squires continued as a board member and acting clerk until he and his wife, Minnie, who also served on the board, moved downtown to Port Jefferson in 1915.

During his active civil life, his hobby was buying and selling real estate. He established a real estate and land owning company. At one time, again according to his obituary, he owned practically all of Port Jefferson Station and was dubbed the "Father of Port Jefferson Station." Charles A. Squires died at his home at 210 Chestnut Street in Port Jefferson in 1934 and is buried with his wife at Cedar Hill Cemetery. At the time of his death, he still owned a great deal of property in Port Jefferson Station. The one dearest to this writer is the Lincoln Park Gardens. This is the area where I grew up on Lincoln Avenue.

The area called Lincoln Park Garden Plots starts from Crystal Brook Hollow Road, runs west through Two Rod Road on the north side of Hallock Avenue (Route 25A) and Lincoln Avenue to the south and adjoining areas. These plots are among the oldest sections of Port Jefferson Station, surveyed and mapped for Chas. A. Squires Land Company by Israel G. Hawkins, civil engineer of Stony Brook in 1906.

As one of the earliest families to own several plots in Lincoln Park Gardens, my parents had moved a summer cottage from the family farm (Poulos Farm) in



South Setauket to what would become No. 32 Lincoln Avenue in 1944. My family members had been in the Setauket and Port Jefferson areas since around 1915, but this move started our branch of the family to have residency for the first time in Port Jefferson Station.

However, by 1949, my parents brought a bigger home at No. 17 Lincoln. It was this home, where I spent my young boyhood before my family moved again, for the third time, on Lincoln, in 1960, to yet a bigger home next door to No. 27. Researching the building records of the earliest homes in the area was not possible since I was told that builders may not have been issued building permits at the time when the houses were built and any building records before 1959 were destroyed. Records show that land properties were sold as early as 1910, but I can only guess when No. 17 was built.

This old house had three bedrooms and bathroom on the second floor and a kitchen that once had a wood-burning stove, living room with a four-by-four floor heating vent that heated the whole house, and a small dining room and den room. There was a hand-pumped well in the rear of the house. Over the years the home was modernized and looks quite different today.

In the 1980s, my family officially sold off all holdings of houses and property after living on Lincoln Avenue for more than 40 years marking the end of an era. I had moved to the adjoining area called the German-American Real Estate Development Company that was established in 1928. The German-Americans in this area in 1928 are, in themselves, worthy of research. But back on Lincoln Avenue, new homes have been built on empty plots we left behind, and older homes have been modernized. Today, you will see many new families who have come to live in Lincoln Park Gardens.

Photo postcard collection of G. Moraitis