

DENNISON AND LYDIA WOOD HOUSE, 310 Spring Street, Manhattan
Built c. 1818-19

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan, Tax Map Block 594, Lot 34

On June 28, 2011, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Dennison and Lydia Wood House and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 11). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Three people spoke in favor of designation, including representatives of the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation, Historic Districts Council, and New York Landmarks Conservancy. One representative of the owner also testified, stating that the owner had not taken a position on the proposed designation.

Summary

Located just north of Tribeca and a few blocks from the Hudson River, the Dennison and Lydia Wood House stands at the northern edge of Lispenard's Meadows, a former marsh that extended for several blocks along Manhattan's west side. This marsh impeded the area's development until the late 1810s, when the surrounding area boomed. In 1818, ship captain Dennison Wood purchased a parcel on Spring Street from Trinity Church, and in 1819, he, his wife Lydia, and their children moved into their new house at what is now 310 Spring Street.

In the early and mid-19th century, New York City developed into the country's leading port and financial capital. Much of the city's wealth derived from its dominance in the trade of cotton, which was grown and harvested by slaves and funneled to New York City from Southern ports via coastal packet ships. Wood profited from this trade, piloting ships between New York and Savannah into the 1830s. Following his death in the mid-1840s, the house was acquired by a trust composed of his two sons and two sons-in-law, who operated the house as a rental property while maintaining an apartment there for Lydia. The house's storefront space and third floor were likely added at that time; the third floor harmonizes with the floors below, featuring matching windowsills and paneled stone lintels. In 1869, the storefront was occupied by the drygoods business of Thomas Courtney, who later purchased the building. Courtney's business, which later evolved into a manufacturer of shirts and overalls, remained in the building until 1950.

The Wood House displays many characteristic features of the Federal style, including Flemish-bond brick coursing at its first and second floors, a fluted door frame with paneled corners, and paneled stone lintels. Today, the Dennison and Lydia Wood House remains a tangible reminder of the earliest years of its neighborhood's urbanization, when new houses sprouted on and around the former swampland known as Lispenard's Meadows.



DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Development of the Neighborhood¹

Located just north of Tribeca and a few blocks from the Hudson River, the Dennison and Lydia Wood House stands at the northern edge of what was once a large marsh extending for several blocks along the west side of Manhattan. This marsh, connected by streams to the Collect Pond and to the North, or Hudson, River, was a major impediment to northward travel and development.² During early Colonial times, the Dutch set aside land for partially freed slaves just north of this area to serve as a buffer between their settlement and the colony's Native American population; African Symon Congo was granted an eight-acre farm bounded by present-day Hudson, Charlton, Downing, and MacDougal Streets in 1644.³ During British rule, the area surrounding what is now 310 Spring Street was located within the Trinity Church and Anthony Rutgers farms, which were granted in 1705 and 1733, respectively; the building stands on the former Trinity farm, about 50 feet north of the dividing line between Trinity's land and the Rutgers farm to its south.⁴ After Rutgers' death in 1746, his property was transferred to Leonard Lispenard (1715-90), and the marsh eventually became known as Lispenard's Meadows. Upon Lispenard's death, his property was inherited by his son Anthony, a slaveholder, who began to plot the land in 1795.

Around this time, Trinity Church also began preparing for the area's development, ceding the neighborhood's future street beds to the City, starting with Hudson Street in 1797. In 1800, Brannon Street (renamed Spring Street in 1806) was widened from 65 to 80 feet and, with Trinity's assistance, a long, narrow wooden market building was constructed in the middle of the street just west of Greenwich Street. In its early years, this market primarily catered to summer residents of the small rural hamlet of Greenwich Village, including the "old Knickerbocker families" who had country houses there, along with others fleeing the city's heat and recurring yellow fever and cholera outbreaks.⁵

In 1810, the Common Council authorized the construction of a boat basin on the Hudson River at the foot of Canal Street, and in 1817, an ordinance was passed to fill in Lispenard's Meadows. By 1819, the year in which Dennison and Lydia Wood completed their house, the area was booming. In that year, "the business in [the Spring Street] market took quite a start, as many new buildings had gone up around it, and others [were] in the course of erection," leading to calls for the market's expansion or replacement with a larger building.⁶ Also in 1819, a sewer was completed along the length of Canal Street, and four years later, a steamboat ferry was established from the boat basin to Hoboken.

In the early 19th century, New York City developed into the largest port in the United States; by the early 20th century, it was one of the busiest in the world. South Street along the East River had long been Manhattan's primary artery for maritime commerce, but West Street became a competitor in the 1870s and supplanted South Street by the 1890s. Throughout the 19th century, the corridor of blocks closest to the Hudson River hosted a mixture of residential, commercial, and industrial uses that was typical of waterfront neighborhoods of the time. Businesses in the vicinity of 310 Spring Street included lumber, stone, and coal yards; iron and copper works; sugar refineries; soap, lantern, glass, pipe, wire, and steel-wool factories; elevator works; food-processing facilities; and bonded warehouses along West and Washington Streets. Major highway projects, including the Holland Tunnel (1919-27) and the elevated Miller Highway (1929-31) over West Street, provided easier access between the Hudson River waterfront and the greater metropolitan region, leading to increased truck traffic and the

construction of large loft buildings. Most of the Federal style houses that once stood near 310 Spring Street have been demolished, as have the elevated railroad and Miller Highway. A small number of early 19th-century houses, including the Dennison and Lydia Wood House, the James Brown House at 326 Spring Street (c.1817), Nos. 502 to 508 Canal Street (1818-41), Nos. 486 and 488 Greenwich Street (both attributed to John Rohr, mason, c.1823), and Nos. 32 to 36 Dominick Street (Smith Bloomfield, c.1825) have survived in the area, in part because they remained viable for commercial and residential use.⁷ They are among the few tangible reminders of the neighborhood's earliest years of urbanization, when new houses sprouted on and around the former swampland known as Lispenard's Meadows.

Federal Style Houses in Manhattan⁸

As New York City grew following the Revolution, large plots of land in Manhattan were sold and subdivided for the construction of rows of brick-clad houses. Their architectural style, which was fashionable from the 1780s into the early 1830s, has been called "Federal" after the new republic, but in form and detail they continued the Georgian style of Great Britain. In Manhattan, Federal style houses were constructed from the Battery to 23rd Street. Typically, each house lot was 20 to 25 feet wide and 90 to 100 feet deep in accordance with the grid plan of Manhattan, which was laid out in 1807 and adopted in 1811; houses were generally as wide as their lots and 35 to 40 feet deep, with a small front yard or areaway and a fairly spacious rear yard, which usually contained a privy as well as a cistern to collect fresh water. The houses were of load-bearing masonry construction or modified timber-frame construction with brick-clad front facades, and were often constructed in rows, sharing common party walls, chimneys, and roof timbering. The design of some houses has been identified with certain architects or builders, such as John McComb, Jr., although such documentation is rare. The increasing availability of pattern books, such as Asher Benjamin's *American Builders Companion* (published in six editions between 1806 and 1827), gave local builders access to drawings and instructions for exterior and interior plans and details.

Federal style row houses usually had a three-bay facade with two full stories over a high basement, and an additional half-story under a peaked roof with the ridge line running parallel to the front facade. Very modest houses were sometimes two bays wide; grander town houses had three full stories, and could be up to five bays wide. The front (and sometimes rear) facade was usually clad in red brick laid in the Flemish bond pattern, which alternated a stretcher (the long side of the brick) with a header (the brick's narrow side) in every row. This system allowed the linking of more-expensive face brick with the cheaper, rougher brick behind. The planar quality of Federal style facades was relieved by ornamented lintels, entrances, cornices, dormers, and stoops with iron railings. Doorway and window lintels were commonly stone and were executed in a variety of types; the earliest surviving Federal houses in Manhattan generally feature splayed lintels with double keystones, while paneled, molded, and pointed lintels became common afterward. Regarding Federal style lintels and their various types, Ada Louise Huxtable notes that "in every case all details are marked by simplicity and modesty; there is none of the pretentiousness of later styles. It was a timelessly tasteful way of building, and its dwindling legacy is to be treasured."⁹

The doorway itself was often framed with columns and sidelights and topped by a rectangular transom or fanlight, and had a single, wood paneled door. The entrance was usually approached by a stoop—a flight of stone steps usually placed to one side of the facade—on the parlor floor or above a basement level, although some houses had ground-story entrances and

commercial shopfronts. Window openings at the parlor and second stories were usually the same height (the height sometimes diminished on the third story), aligned, and were the same width from story to story. The wood sashes were double-hung with multiple lights, typically of six-over-six configuration. Exterior window shutters were common. A wood cornice with molded fascia extended across the front of the eave, which carried a built-in gutter; a downspout extended down the facade on the opposite side of the doorway. Pedimented or segmental dormers on the front roof slope usually had decorative wood trim, and the top sash of each dormer was often arched, with curved muntins. The roof was covered with continuous wood sheathing over the rafters and clad in wood shingles or slate.

With Manhattan's continuous population growth throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, and the movement of commercial and manufacturing activities into formerly residential neighborhoods, most of Manhattan's Federal style houses were ultimately replaced by larger structures or expanded in size to accommodate their conversion from single-family houses to factories, warehouses, and tenements. Generally, expansion entailed the removal of a house's peaked roof and dormers and its raising to a full three, four, or five stories with a flat roof. Occasionally, this work was done in a way that complemented the original house, by incorporating Federal style elements that replicated its original features. Perhaps recognizing the historical significance of their buildings, some owners of Federal style houses continued to add to their buildings in this harmonious manner for many years, and many decades, after the style had been supplanted by the Greek Revival and Italianate styles. Examples of this approach include 74 Franklin Street (c.1815, within the Tribeca East Historic District), and 361 Greenwich Street (c.1807, within the Tribeca West Historic District), which were raised in height in 1853 and 1872, respectively, using splayed, double-keystone window lintels that match the houses' original lintels; and 321A Greenwich Street (c.1800, within the Tribeca West Historic District), which was raised using Federal style lintels in 1894, nearly a century after the house was originally completed, and six decades after the Federal style faded from popularity in Manhattan.¹⁰

Wood-framed with brick cladding, the Dennison and Lydia Wood House displays many characteristic features of the Federal style.¹¹ These include the Flemish-bond brick coursing at its first and second floors, its fluted main-entrance door frame with paneled corners, and the original paneled stone lintels crowning its main-entrance opening and three second-floor window openings. The house was raised to three stories, probably in 1847; the third-story portion of the main facade is faced with brick laid in running bond, which supplanted Flemish bond with the passing of the Federal style in the 1830s. Nevertheless, the third-floor addition harmonizes with the original structure, featuring projecting stone sills and paneled stone lintels that replicate the second-floor originals. The conversion of most of the ground floor to commercial space likely dates from the time of the third-floor addition; it is unclear whether the existing wood storefront, which appears to have lost some of its original detail, dates to the mid-19th century, whether it was replaced or altered following an 1878 fire, or whether it was installed around the turn of the 20th century. Window shutters, likely historic if not original, were present at the second and third floors in the late 1930s, but they have since been removed.¹²

Dennison and Lydia Wood and Their House¹³

The house at 310 Spring Street was constructed by shipmaster Dennison Wood and his wife Lydia. Little is known about their early lives; Dennison (who also appears in records as Denison and Denniston) was born between 1775 and the mid-1780s.¹⁴ He and Lydia McKildo,

who was born in New York State, married in the Dutch Reformed Church of New York City in 1804, when she was 17 years old.

Dennison Wood's rise as a ship captain paralleled New York's development, in the early and mid-19th century, into the country's dominant port and financial capital. Much of the city's growth during this period was fueled by trade with Southern cities in goods produced by American slaves, especially cotton. In the late 17th and early 18th centuries, cotton production boomed on Southern plantations, and New York's merchants came to dominate its trade, establishing an extensive network of agents throughout the South and investing heavily in coastal shipping lines that funneled the good from Southern ports to New York. From New York, cotton was shipped domestically and across the Atlantic, to be consumed by the ravenous textile mills of England, New England, and Upstate New York. Ships returning from Europe brought luxury goods that were marketed by the city's merchants to wealthy Southerners; these goods, along with Midwestern wheat brought to New York via the Erie Canal, garments made of "Negro cloth"—a tough, cheap fabric used for slaves' clothing—and other Northern manufactured goods were shipped to Southern ports from New York in coastal packet ships. "New York's turn to cotton initiated the most important era of economic growth and capital accumulation in the city's history," historian David Quigley explains, as "New York positioned itself as the primary mediator between the leading Southern ports of New Orleans, Mobile, Savannah, and Charleston, as well as the two most important destinations for American cotton, Liverpool and Le Havre."¹⁵

New York merchants also established trade lines with South America and the Caribbean, becoming major importers of coffee and sugar harvested by slaves on Cuban plantations.¹⁶ Dennison Wood's earliest-documented work was as a mate on the brig *Ceres*, which left Havana in 1805 bound for New York and "loaded with sugars."¹⁷ Two years later, he was the co-owner of the sloop *Cornelia*, which sailed to St. Thomas.¹⁸ By 1819, "the veteran Dennison Wood," as described by maritime historian Carl C. Cutler, was captaining the brig *Levant* for the firm of Hall & Hoyt, a leading Savannah packet operator of its time.¹⁹ He continued to pilot the *Levant* in 1820, but by 1824, Wood was master of a much larger vessel, the *Louisa Matilda*, for the Established Line, as the partnership of Hall & Hoyt of Savannah and James & Cornelius Seguine of New York was known.²⁰ Wood continued to sail the New York-to-Savannah route into the 1830s, captaining the *Tybee*, which was among the ships advertised as "vessels of the first class—their accommodations for passengers are extensive and well furnished; they sail very fast and their commanders are men of capability and experience."²¹ Wood's last-documented sail was as captain of the 427-ton ship *Trenton* between New York and Savannah in 1837.²² At some time in his career, a portrait was painted of Wood; passed down to his great-great grandson before being acquired by a private collector, the painting depicts Wood posed in front of the sea, wearing a black coat and white waistcoat and holding a telescope.²³

Directories show Wood as a shipmaster living on Vestry Street in 1816, and on Greenwich Street in 1817 and 1818. In October of 1818, he purchased the lot now known as 310 Spring Street from the rector, church wardens, and vestrymen of Trinity Church for \$1,400.²⁴ The Dennison and Lydia Wood House was apparently completed the following year, as 1819 tax assessment records show a house owned by Wood located on Spring Street; his address appears as "Spring near Greenwich" in the 1819 directory. In 1820, Wood's address appears as 282 Spring, the street number of the house until its change to No. 310, in 1848. Dennison and Lydia Wood raised several children in the house, including at least two boys—Dennison B. and

William A.—and at least seven girls—Antoinette, Mary, Adelia, Sarah Ann, Harriet, and Ellen, as well as Lydia, who married shipmaster George Bucknam.²⁵

Dennison Wood probably died in 1846, the first year in which Lydia is listed as a widow in the city directory. He apparently left the state shortly before his death, possibly to escape his debts;²⁶ in 1846, the trustees of Dennison’s creditors auctioned off the house, but it was purchased by merchant Samuel C. Brown, who was Dennison and Lydia’s son-in-law, the husband of their daughter Antoinette.²⁷ In the following year, Brown conveyed the house to a trust consisting of himself, George Bucknam, and Dennison B. and William A. Wood, each of whom put up money for its purchase. According to the terms of their agreement, the four trustees were to rent out a portion of the house while enabling Lydia, then 60 years old, to reside there for the rest of her life. Following Lydia’s death, the house was to be sold, with the proceeds used to reimburse the trustees.²⁸

It seems likely, with the house’s apparent conversion from a single-family to multiple-family residence, that its storefront and third story were added in 1847.²⁹ Tax assessment records of that year show a jump in the house’s valuation relative to its neighboring properties, suggesting that improvements were made to the building at that time. In 1848, the house had its earliest-documented commercial tenant, the drygoods business of James Haydock. Although Haydock apparently never lived in the house, he kept his business at 310 Spring until 1869, when it was replaced by the drygoods business of Thomas Courtney. By 1870, Courtney and his wife Mary, who were both Irish immigrants, had moved into the house with their three young children, and were sharing the house with Lydia Wood, who was then in her 80s. Lydia died in Poughkeepsie in 1873; shortly before her death, she had apparently moved in with her son, William, who lived on West 22nd Street. Lydia was buried in Brooklyn’s Green-Wood Cemetery near her son Dennison B. Wood, who had died in 1865, and her daughter Lydia and son-in-law George Bucknam, who had died in 1849 and 1870, respectively. Captain Wood’s place of death and burial are unknown.

No. 310 Spring Street had other residents at the same time as Lydia Wood. In the early 1860s, it was the home of brushmaker William Wainwright and his wife Catharine, as well as their daughters Mary E. and Emma, both of whom were public-school teachers.³⁰ In 1870, 310 Spring Street was the home of John Coughlin, aka John Taylor, who was arrested for allegedly stealing suitcases and trunks from the city’s hotels, and stashing them in his room there.³¹

Later History³²

In 1875, a fire broke out in Courtney’s drygoods store, destroying almost all of his stock and causing \$200 worth of damage to the building. Both the drygoods business and the building were insured for the full value of the damage; the present storefront may have been installed, or altered to its present condition, at that time.³³ One month after the fire, Samuel Brown, as trustee, sold 310 Spring Street for \$11,500 to John H. Heaselden, a liquor dealer, who operated it as a rental property.³⁴ The building continued to house the Courtneys and their business, and in 1878, William Stanley, a locomotive engineer living at 310 Spring, allegedly broke into Courtney’s store and “gathered up a large quantity of goods” including blankets, shirts, underwear, shawls, skirts, wool socks, and a cardigan before being “caught on the sidewalk with the bundle of stolen goods on his back” and arrested.³⁵ In 1884, Courtney apparently expanded his space, as in that year, architect L. Sibley completed a one-story rear addition that increased the depth of the ground floor from 32 to more than 60 feet.³⁶ By 1888, Courtney had taken on his son Thomas Jr. as a partner, and the business was renamed Thomas Courtney & Son.

Heaselden retained ownership of 310 Spring Street until 1897, when he conveyed it to his daughter Hannah, who then conveyed it to Thomas Courtney.³⁷ Courtney apparently altered the house after acquiring it, adding a segmental rooftop pediment reading “COURTNEY’S” that was present through the late 1930s but was removed by the late 1980s. Although the Courtneys kept their business in the building, they moved their residence to West 11th Street around 1900. At that time, the description of their business changed to “working men’s clothes,” and by 1904, Thomas Courtney & Son was listed as “shirtmakers” in the telephone White Pages. Although at least a portion of 310 Spring had apparently been converted into a garment factory, it also continued to house residents, who, in 1910, were Mary McCarthy; her sister Nora, the foreperson of a laundry; and their sister Julia, a clerk for a publishing company. All three were in their 20s and shared the house with Mary A. Driscoll, age 26, who was a bookkeeper for a drygoods store; Driscoll and Nora and Julia McCarthy remained in the house in 1920. A late-1930s photograph of the house shows a large horizontal blade sign, since removed, extending from below the westernmost second-floor window and reading “Courtney’s Headlight Overalls.”

Mary Driscoll and Nora McCarthy continued to live in the house for decades to come, and they were joined by an apparent relative of Nora, Charles McCarthy, around 1947. Following the death of Thomas Courtney, Jr., Thomas Courtney & Son was apparently shuttered, and 310 Spring Street was sold to Driscoll and the McCarthys in 1950 for \$6,000.³⁸ In 1953, the building had a new tenant: Bell Maintenance Company, designers and manufacturers of neon signs.³⁹ Bell Maintenance remained there into 1967, when Nora McCarthy’s executors sold 310 Spring Street to Theodore and Norma Mass of the Bronx for \$25,000.⁴⁰ From that time through the early 1980s, the building apparently only had residential tenants, but in 1986, it had two commercial tenants, including Mark Gillen, an industrial designer.⁴¹ In 1989, the Masses sold the house to Unity Environmental Corp., which continues to own the property.⁴² In 1992, the building housed a restaurant—the Bell Caffe—on its first floor and apartments above.⁴³ The storefront of 310 Spring Street presently houses a nightclub called The Anchor.⁴⁴

Description

Three-story Federal style house; Flemish-bond brick at first and second floors; paneled wood main-entrance reveal; fluted wood main-entrance door frame with paneled corners and transom bar decorated with Vitruvian scroll; paneled wood main-entrance door; wood main-entrance threshold; paneled stone main-entrance lintel; projecting stone second-floor windowsills; paneled stone second-floor window lintels. *Alterations*: third-floor addition, probably added in 1847, faced with running-bond brick, and with projecting windowsills and paneled stone window lintels matching those of the second floor; replacement stoop with non-historic metal railing installed after 1939; doorbell button on main-entrance frame; main-entrance lintel painted; modern light fixture on main-entrance lintel; metal conduit above, and adjacent to, main entrance; basement adjacent to main entrance parged; dryer vent on westernmost second-floor lintel; wall anchors at second and third floors installed prior to 1941; replacement second- and third-floor window sashes; second- and third-floor window shutters removed after 1939; denticulated metal cornice installed prior to 1941; metal downspout along western edge of main facade.

Storefront: opening probably created in 1847; present storefront installed before 1941, and may date from 1847, following 1875 fire, or from early 20th century; projecting, wood storefront with display windows and recessed central entrance; paneled bulkhead; paneled and modillioned wood cornice with molded cap. *Alterations*: Portions of bulkhead covered with

patterned metal sheeting; water meter reader on bulkhead; display-window frames probably simplified from original frames; door and door frame replaced; air conditioner installed within wood entrance transom panel; hanging screen composed of metal slats, with decorative anchor, within entrance recess; security camera and modern light fixture; automated teller machine at eastern end of storefront; cementitious coating above storefront.

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NOTES

¹ This section is adapted from LPC, *486 Greenwich Street House Designation Report* (New York: City of New York, 2007), prepared by Jay Shockley, 2-3. Additional sources include Andrew Coe, *James Brown House: Ear Inn Virons, History of the New York City Landmark and Neighborhood* (Hong Kong: Odyssey Publications and New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2002); and Thomas F. De Voe, *The Market Book: Containing a Historical Account of the Public Markets in the Cities of New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and Brooklyn* (New York: 1862), 375-82; John Fink and Andrew Sparberg, "Railroads," in Kenneth T. Jackson, Ed., *Encyclopedia of New York City* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2010), 1075; Christopher Gray, "When a Monster Plied the West Side," *New York Times*, December 25, 2011, RE7; and Erica Judge, Vincent Seyfried, and Andrew Sparberg, "Elevated Railways," *Encyclopedia of New York City*, 405.

² Collect Pond was located near present-day Foley Square, just north of City Hall in the vicinity of Centre Street, according to Carol Groneman, "Collect," *Encyclopedia of New York City* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2010), 277. It was filled in by 1813.

³ Africans were barred from owning property under the British, who took control of the city in 1664 and changed its name from New Amsterdam to New York.

⁴ The dividing line between the Trinity and Rutgers properties is shown on E. Robinson, *Robinson's Atlas of the City of New York* (New York: E. Robinson, 1885).

⁵ De Voe, 379.

⁶ De Voe, 380.

⁷ All of these houses are designated New York City Landmarks.

⁸ This section is largely adapted from LPC, *Hardenbrook-Somarindyc House Designation Report* (LP-2439) (New York: City of New York, 2011), prepared by Jay Shockley and Cynthia Danza, 5-6.

⁹ Ada Louise Huxtable, *Classic New York: Georgian Gentility to Greek Elegance* (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, 1964), 44.

¹⁰ For information on these buildings, see LPC, *Tribeca East Historic District Designation Report* (LP-1711) (New York: City of New York, 1992), 132-33; and LPC, *Tribeca West Historic District Designation Report* (LP-1713) (New York: City of New York, 1991), 127, 141.

¹¹ No. 310 Spring Street is shown as a "framed dwelling with store under" in William Perris, *Maps of the City of New-York* (New York: Perris & Browne, 1857). It is described as a frame building with brick front in Fire Department, City of New York, Bureau of Inspection of Buildings alteration no. 418 (filed March 18, 1884).

¹² The window shutters are shown in the New York City Department of Taxes photograph taken between 1939 and 1941.

¹³ Sources for this section include Carl C. Cutler, *Queens of the Western Ocean: The Story of America's Mail and Passenger Sailing Lines* (Annapolis, Maryland: United States Naval Institute, 1961), 87, 127, 473-5, 478; *Marriages from 1801 to 1866 in the Reformed Dutch Church, New York City* (New York: New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, 1941), 35; New York County, Office of the Register, New York City Tax Assessments (1817-58); *New York City Directories, 1786-1933/34* (New York: New York Public Library, 1950); David Quigley, "Southern Slavery in a Free City: Economy, Politics, and Culture," in Ira Berlin and Leslie M. Harris, Eds., *Slavery in New York* (New York: The New Press, 2005), 263-88; and United States Census (New York, N.Y.: 1820, 1830, 1840, 1850, 1860, 1870). Other sources include burial records provided by Jane Cuccurullo, Corporate Secretary of the Green-Wood Cemetery, in a transmission dated October 18, 2011; and Surrogate's Court, County of New York, Letters of Administration for Lydia Wood, Deceased (filed July 12, 1873).

¹⁴ The 1820 Census lists Dennison Wood as 26 to 45 years of age, the 1830 Census as 40 to 50 years of age, and the 1840 Census as 60 to 70 years of age, placing his birth year between 1775 and 1794. Given his and Lydia's marriage year of 1804, Dennison Wood was likely born between 1775 and in the mid-1780s.

¹⁵ Quigley, 269.

¹⁶ For more on the Cuban sugar trade as it pertained to New York's commercial development, see LPC, *Havemeyers & Elder Filter, Pan and Finishing House Designation Report* (LP-2268) (New York: City of New York, 2007), prepared by Matthew A. Postal.

¹⁷ *The Federal Cases Comprising Cases Argued and Determined in the Circuit and District Courts of the United States, Book 3* (St. Paul, Minnesota: West Publishing Company, 1894), 835.

¹⁸ William Johnson, *Reports of Cases Argued and Determined in the Supreme Court of Judicature of the State of New-York, vol. VIII* (New York: Isaac Riley, 1811), 272-3.

¹⁹ Cutler, 127.

²⁰ "Savannah Packets" (Advertisement), *Spectator*, February 17, 1824, 4. Cutler shows the *Levant* as 181 tons and the *Louisa Matilda* as 313 tons.

²¹ "Line of Packets for Savannah" (Advertisement), *Morning Courier and New-York Enquirer*, November 17, 1829, 1; "Line of Packets for Savannah" (Advertisement), *New-York Evening Post*, August 29, 1831, 1.

²² Cutler, 478.

²³ *Illustrated Catalogue of the Remarkable and Widely Known Collection of Early American and British Portraits, Landscapes, and Historical Pictures Formed by the Connoisseur, the Late Frank Bulkeley Smith of Worcester, Mass.* (New York: American Art Association, 1920), n.p. (123). Although this catalog asserts that Wood's portrait was painted by the renowned American artist Rembrandt Peale, records in the collection of the Frick Art Reference Library explain that "This portrait is stylistically unlike authentic works by Rembrandt Peale recorded in the Frick Art Reference Library Photograph Files" (Frick Art Reference Library Collections; email correspondence from Arielle Dorlester, Frick Art Reference Library, to Michael Caratzas, October 27, 2011).

²⁴ New York County, Office of the Register, Conveyance Liber 289, 210 (October 31, 1818; recorded October 15, 1832).

²⁵ Lydia Wood and George Bucknam were married on April 7, 1838. *Selected Extracts, The New York Genealogical and Biographical Record* (New York: New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, 1932), accessed through Ancestry.com.

²⁶ New York County, Office of the Register, Conveyance Liber 483, 118 (September 26, 1846). This conveyance, which covers the acquisition of 310 Spring Street by the trustees of Dennison Wood's creditors, explains that for a period of nine months beginning in late 1845, a weekly notice was published in a local paper stating that the personal and real estate of Dennison Wood, "a non-resident of the State of New York," would be sold off if he did not appear and repay his debts, and that he had not done so by the end of this period.

- ²⁷ The Letters of Administration for Lydia Wood show Antoinette as Antoinette Brown; Samuel C. Brown and Antoinette were shown residing together in New York City in the 1860 U.S. Census.
- ²⁸ New York County, Office of the Register, Conveyance Liber 498, 38 and Liber 498, 39-41 (both October 18, 1847). In Conveyance Liber 498, 39, Dennison Wood is described as deceased.
- ²⁹ The third story was definitely added before 1858, as tax assessment records of that year (the first to include information on buildings' number of stories) shows 310 Spring as three stories in height.
- ³⁰ *Manual of the Board of Education of the City and County of New-York* (New York: George Russell, 1862), 209; *Directory of the Board of Education of the City and County of New-York* (New York: Baptist & Taylor, 1865), 33; "Committed Suicide," *New York Daily Tribune*, May 3, 1865, 6. The U.S. Census for 1850 and 1860 shows the relationships among the members of the Wainwright family.
- ³¹ "Criminal," *New York Herald-Tribune*, March 9, 1870, 2.
- ³² Sources for this section include *Manhattan Address Telephone Directories, 1929 to 1993* (New York: New York Public Library, 1983-1994); New York City Department of Taxes photograph (c.1939-41); New York City Department of Finance photograph (c.1983-88); *New York City Telephone Directories, 1878 to Summer 1928* (New York: New York Public Library, 1957); *New York City Telephone Directories (Manhattan), Winter 1928 to 1987-88* (New York: New York Public Library, 1957-88); and United States Census (New York, N.Y.: 1870, 1880, 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930).
- ³³ "Losses by Fire," *New York Times*, April 2, 1875, 1.
- ³⁴ New York County, Office of the Register, Conveyance Liber 1323, 365 (May 1, 1875); "The Real Estate Market," *New York Times*, April 9, 1875, 9. Heaselden's profession is shown in the 1870 U.S. Census.
- ³⁵ "Court Notes," *New York Times*, January 12, 1878, 3.
- ³⁶ Fire Department, City of New York, Bureau of Inspection of Buildings alteration no. 418 (filed March 18, 1884).
- ³⁷ New York County, Office of the Register, Conveyance (Section 2) Liber 50, 319 (February 26, 1897) and Liber 52, 191 (April 29, 1897).
- ³⁸ New York County Office of the Register, Conveyance 4695, 656.
- ³⁹ New York City Department of Housing and Buildings, electric sign application 778-1953 (filed October 15, 1953).
- ⁴⁰ New York County Office of the Register, Conveyance Liber 177, 411 (May 5, 1967).
- ⁴¹ "Northeast Journal," *New York Times*, July 27, 1986, 26.
- ⁴² New York County Office of the Register, Conveyance Reel 1550, 211 (January 23, 1989).
- ⁴³ Phoebe Eaton, "The Cool World," *New York* (June 29 to July 6, 1992), 51.
- ⁴⁴ Website of The Anchor (www.theanchornyc.com), accessed March 15, 2012.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and other features of this building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Dennison and Lydia Wood House has a special character and a special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage, and cultural characteristics of New York City.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the Dennison and Lydia Wood House stands at the northern edge of Lispenard's Meadows, a former marsh extending for several blocks along Manhattan's west side that impeded the area's development into the early 19th century; that the house remains a tangible reminder of its neighborhood's early development, which boomed in the late 1810s; that the house stands upon a lot purchased by Dennison Wood from Trinity Church in 1818, and that Wood, his wife Lydia, and their children moved into the house in 1819; that New York City developed into the country's leading port and financial capital in the early and mid-19th century based largely upon its dominance in the trade of cotton, which was grown and harvested by slaves and funneled to New York from Southern ports via coastal packet ships, and that Wood, as a captain of coastal packet ships between New York and Savannah into the 1830s, is a representative figure of this period in the city's history; that the house's storefront space and third floor, which harmonizes with the floors below, featuring matching windowsills and paneled stone lintels, were likely added soon after Dennison Wood's death in the mid-1840s; that in 1869, the storefront was occupied by the drygoods business of Thomas Courtney, who later purchased the building, and that Courtney's business, which evolved into a manufacturer of shirts and overalls, remained in the building until 1950; and that the Dennison and Lydia Wood House displays many characteristic features of the Federal style, including Flemish-bond brick coursing at its first and second floors, a fluted door frame with paneled corners, and paneled stone lintels.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3020 of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 3 of Title 25 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark the Dennison and Lydia Wood House, 310 Spring Street, Borough of Manhattan, and designates Manhattan Tax Map Block 594, Lot 34 as its Landmark Site.

Robert B. Tierney, Chair
Frederick Bland, Diana Chapin, Michael Devonshire, Joan Gerner, Michael Goldblum,
Christopher Moore, Margery Perlmutter, Elizabeth Ryan, Commissioners



Dennison and Lydia Wood House
310 Spring Street
Manhattan
Manhattan Tax Map Block 594, Lot 34
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2012



Dennison and Lydia Wood House
Ground floor and upper stories
Photos: Christopher D. Brazee, 2012





Dennison and Lydia Wood House
Photo: New York City, Department of Taxes (c. 1939-41), Municipal Archives



Dennison Wood in an undated portrait (artist unknown)

Source: Illustrated Catalogue of the Remarkable and Widely Known Collection of Early American and British Portraits, Landscapes, and Historical Pictures Formed by the Connoisseur, the Late Frank Bulkeley Smith of Worcester, Mass. (New York: American Art Association, 1920), n.p. (123)



DENNISON AND LYDIA WOOD HOUSE (LP-2486), 310 Spring Street
 Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan, Tax Map Block 594, Lot 34

Designated: March 27, 2012