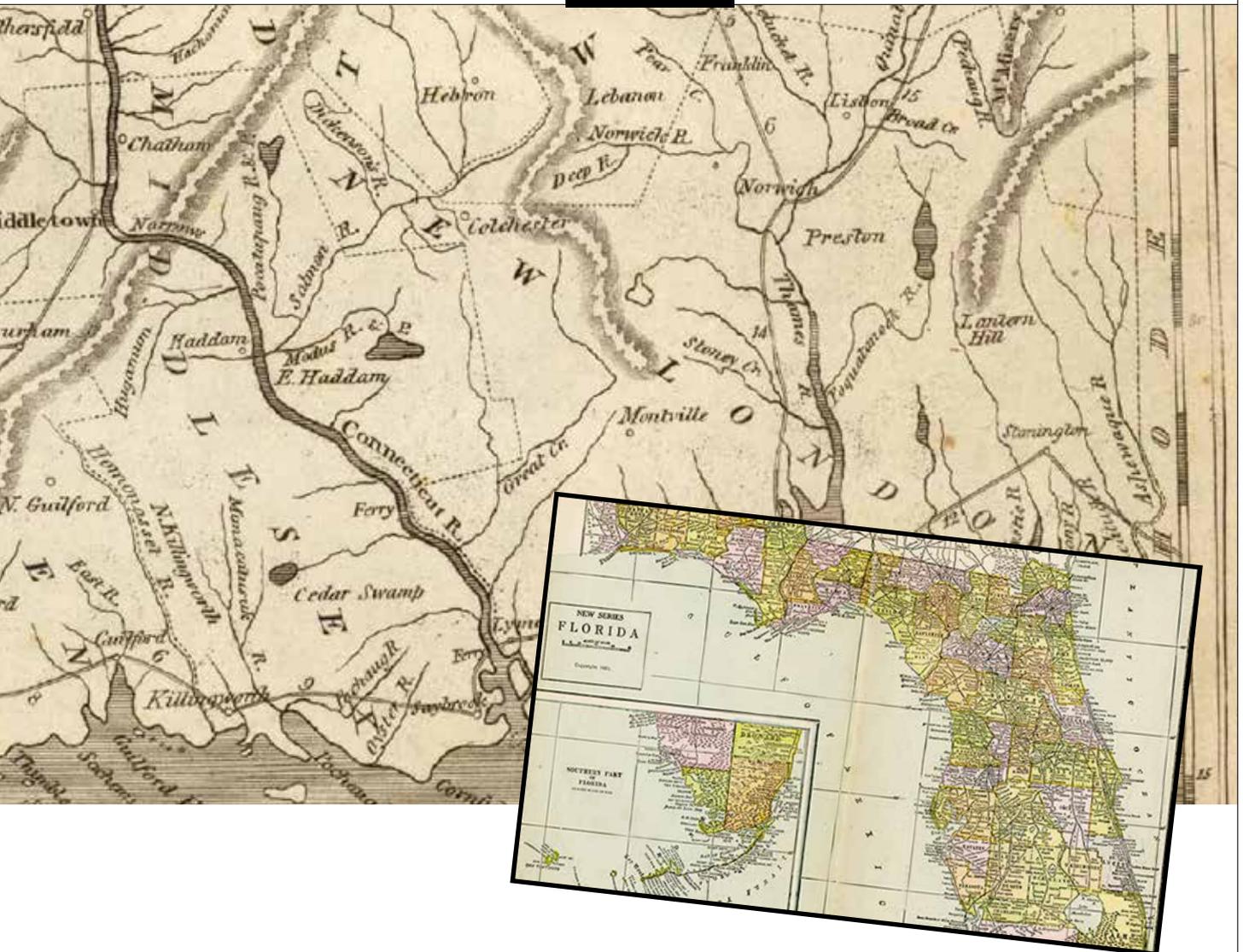


RESIDENTIAL HAVENS

BY BROOKE KELLY

AS SHELTER IN PLACE orders remain, the exodus from epicenter cities like New York City to private, safe havens in Connecticut and Palm Beach gathers steam. Our brokers have adjusted to social distancing measures to show homes by equipping themselves with masks and gloves and prescreening buyers to avoid window shopping. Palm Beach, which recently reopened for business, was gaining



popularity as a permanent residence before the coronavirus due to its tax friendly nature. But now more than ever, prospective owners long for the city's ideal lifestyle, beautiful outdoor spaces, and, above all, unmatched safety. For those looking to leave New York City but stay nearby, Connecticut towns like Greenwich are ideal given their world-class schools and New England lifestyle, with great beaches, clubs, and golf courses. Traveling further up the coast to Lower Connecticut River Valley brings these perks in addition to more land value, with an ideal location two hours from both New York City and Boston. Throughout these pages, our brokers discuss these markets and advise sellers how to prepare their homes.



SALLY MALONEY

Houlihan Lawrence / 203.962.2100 / smaloney@houlihanlawrence.com



Q: How are you communicating with clients and co-workers, and showing homes while working remotely?

A: Communication has actually gone very smoothly. In March we certainly felt the challenge. But my clients and co-workers have adapted beautifully and fallen right into step with the times. In literal terms, the masks are cumbersome, hot, and make it a bit hard to be understood. We

laugh and try saying our words again!

Q: How will this shape the future of how you operate?

A: Initially the changes seemed drastic. Masks, gloves, and booties became de rigueur and people accepted them with tremendous respect, not only for themselves, but for our sellers. Some of my clients are compromised from a health standpoint and we must be extra cautious with the way showings are conducted. I see these changes remaining in place for quite some time. Our clients are realistic and have accepted this new mode of showings.

Q: What can sellers do to improve their home's curbside appeal in these warming months?

A: Curbside appeal is extraordinarily important. A sound, and not too expensive investment, would be some annu-

als, perennials, mulch, planters to frame your front walk or doorway. Make sure that your trees and bushes are trimmed nicely. Cut your grass in a diagonal pattern! An orderly appearance of the front of your home speaks to the condition of the home's interior.

Q: Anything else we should know about the Greenwich?

A: The Greenwich market is very active at the moment. The trend of leaving New York City is growing by the day. Most brokers that I speak to are very busy. High end rentals are virtually disappearing if they are in top locations and have a pool and/or a tennis court. Contracts and sales are increasing as the worry of COVID-19 seems to be lingering. This is real fear and weighing heavily amongst young families.



178 Cat Rock Road in Greenwich, Connecticut; \$2,295,000.



JAMIE CHILDS

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Q: Why are people choosing The Lower Connecticut River Valley as their escape?

A: The fact that this area is two hours from New York and Boston is a major selling point. Both Amtrak and Shoreline East run out of New London and Old Saybrook, and for those who want them, access to ferries, airports, and marinas are easily attained.

From the arts, outdoor pursuits to fine dining throughout the shoreline and Connecticut River, there is no lack of activity. In Old Lyme, there is the Florence Griswold Museum, a few minutes further east, the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center and up the Connecticut River, the Goodspeed Opera House. Farmers markets supply their goods year round, horseback riding, fishing, hunting as well as tennis, golf, squash, and paddle tennis are all easily accessible. For those who love the water, the area offers marinas and yacht clubs for boating enthusiasts. Old Black Point, Fenwick, Lyme, Old Lyme, Old Saybrook and Essex are the gems of Long Island Sound and the Connecticut River.

Q: Do you expect the exodus to the suburbs to continue into 2021?

A: Yes, things will pick up throughout the year as people

put more emphasis on their quality of life. With many people being able to work remotely, I see the current exodus only scratching the surface. The towns in the Lower Connecticut River Valley are ideal for retirees as well as those raising a young family. There are top notch schools, both public and private throughout the region.

Q: Anything else to share about the current market?

A: Time to buy. The dollar goes much further up the coast than it does in Fairfield and Westchester Counties. Cove Haven on Hamburg Cove in Lyme is one of the must-see properties for those looking for an exquisite yet comfortable, private, country waterfront home.



109 Elys Ferry Road in Lyme, Connecticut.



SHELLY TRETTER LYNCH

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Q: How are you communicating with clients and co-workers, and showing homes while working remotely?

A: Following federal, state and local guidelines during the stay-at-home order has turned the conventional showing procedures on their head. Working for a national technologically driven real estate firm has been

a huge plus. Even before COVID-19, Compass was completely cloud based with all support available remotely. That being the case, we were able to easily integrate virtual showings and while helpful to some extent, it is difficult to convey a home properly via videos. When conducting in-person showings, I am following our local protocols as well as the wishes of the homeowner, my own procedures, and the buyers. I also require that the purchaser be pre-approved and evaluate the seriousness of the buyers.

Q: Do you expect the exodus to the suburbs to continue into 2021?

A: There has been a huge increase in demand as one would expect. A year ago today, there were some incredible value plays and a lot of people continued to wait for the market to further decline. While there was been an increase in prices, interest rates remaining low signals it's

still a great opportunity for purchasing. However, we do predict demand to increase into 2021.

Q: How can sellers improve a home's curbside appeal?

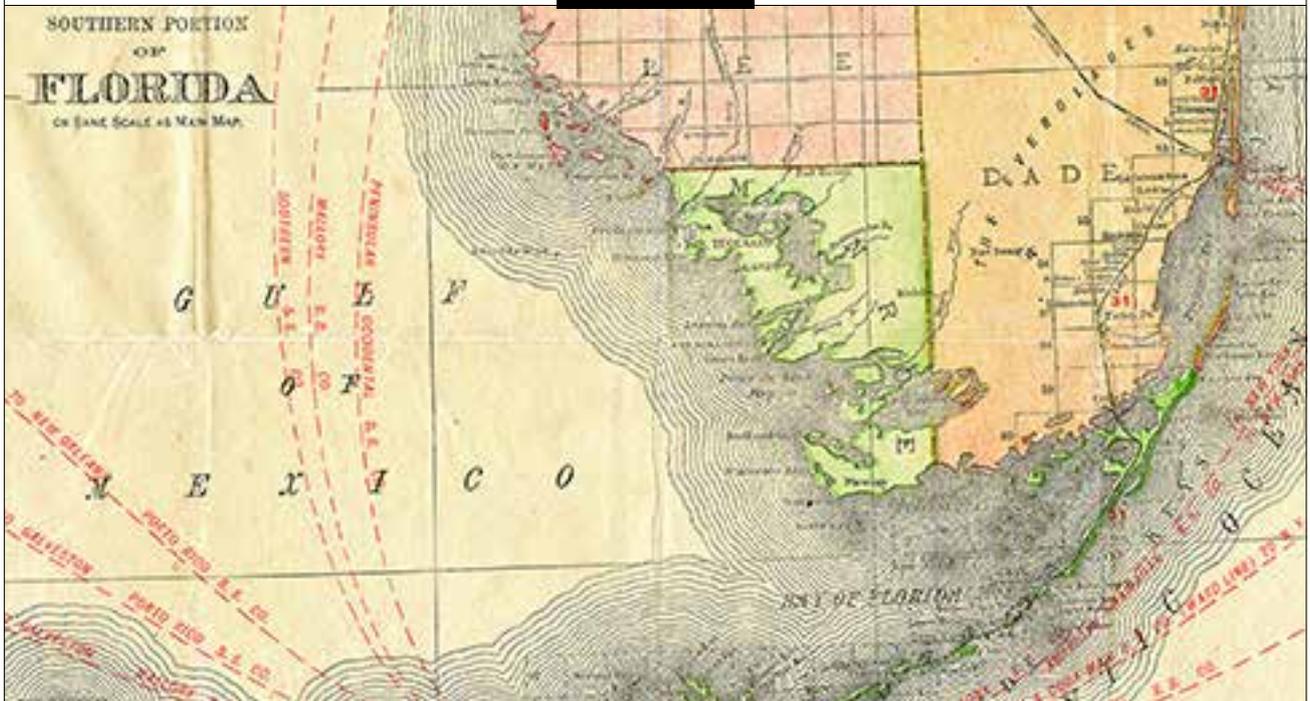
A: Buyers want an oasis, the opposite of their indoor city existence. Sellers should emphasis outdoor living.

Q: What else should know about the current market?

A: Buyers realize that even when restaurants, etc. reopen, protocols will remain restrictive and therefore are focusing their searches on outdoor amenities and land. Buyers want self-sustaining properties where they can enjoy their time with family and minimize public exposure.



21 Upper Cross Road in Greenwich, Connecticut; \$6,650,000.



ASHLEY COPELAND & ASHLEY LICKLE O'NEIL

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Q: How are you communicating with clients and co-workers, and showing homes while working remotely and practicing social distancing?

A: We have been busy showing homes to clients for the past two months, but of course, always wearing masks and gloves, and requesting that they do the same. Condo buildings have just opened up for showings recently. They are taking the temperatures of anyone entering the building and requiring that all wear the ubiquitous mask as well.

Q: Why are people choosing Palm Beach as their escape during this pandemic?

A: First of all, it is an easy flight down to Palm Beach. The town offers a more relaxed lifestyle with lots of beautiful outdoor spaces, but at the same time, this small town has a much higher level of sophistication, culture, shopping, and restaurants than many other small towns. There was already a lot of interest due to its tax breaks, but now add to that the safety factor and ease of living, and we are expecting a very busy year.

Q: Do you expect the exodus from the city to continue into 2021?

A: Yes. As people reevaluate what is important to them, many are choosing an easier, stress free lifestyle. They have realized how easy it is to work from home, away from the office, and therefore they can live where they choose.

Q: Anything else we should know about the Palm Beach market right now?

A: We are experiencing some mega home sales, with back up offers on some. We also have a few condos selling "sight unseen," due to the difficulty of getting down here right now. Once people are free to fly, we expect a lot of activity. ♦



1632 S Ocean Blvd. in Palm Beach, Florida; \$15,700,000.