



NEWSDAY / AUDREY C. TIERNAN

All in the family

Homes that have sheltered many generations

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Special to Newsday

Despite a bustling real estate market, with properties changing hands every day, Long Island still has a number of homes that are considered heirlooms, remaining in the same family for generations.

Here are three, and another that's for sale.

THE OLD FARMSTEAD

The small, three-story farmhouse sits in the same place on Hicksville Road that it has for more than 80 years, though to Rosemarie Columbo, it might as well be in another world.

Years ago, in rural Bethpage, the house was surrounded by acres of farmland as far as the eye could see. Hicksville Road lived up to its name as a small country lane covered in gravel. When she wasn't picking string beans or riding the pigs on the farm, Columbo, who was born in the home's living room — back then, with no hospital nearby, home birth was a necessity rather than a trendy choice — spent many of her afternoons in a one-room schoolhouse on Hempstead Turnpike, the kind of building that's now on display at Old Bethpage Village Restoration.

"Sometimes I wonder if I'm living the same life," says Columbo, 75. "It is so different from when I grew up."

Columbo's maternal grandfather, Joseph Walsh, bought the



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Rosemarie Columbo, with Tootsie, in the Bethpage home where she was born and, at left, out front, as family looks on. Below, an undated photo of roller-skaters passing the house on Hicksville Road/Route 107.



FAMILY PHOTO

property in the late 1800s and established a vegetable farm, later giving his daughter and son-in-law, Columbo's mother and father, a small piece of property to build the house as a wedding gift in 1930. They brought up five children in the house,

then Columbo raised her three children there. At one point, Columbo's eldest son, Tom Diognardi, lived in the house with his wife, Cindy, and their young daughter.

In all, five generations have lived on the property, with four