

## NEWSLETTER

Representing Nassau & Suffolk Counties

Vol. 20, No. 1  
Spring, 1994

### SCAA ANNUAL MEETING MONDAY, JUNE 20TH, 6:30 P.M.

Hoyt Farm Park, New Highway, Commack

#### NATIVE FEAST - Fish Baked in Clay

Bring Native foods using corn, beans, squash, berries, melon

#### ELECTION OF OFFICERS NOMINATIONS

President - Douglas DeRenzo

Vice-President - Dr. John Strong

Record. Sec. - Eleanor Marx

Corresp. Sec. - Suzan Habib

Treasurer - Dr. Gaynell Stone

8:00 PM Speaker: Edward Platt, President New York  
Anthropological Institute, "The Early Archaic Site at  
Little Neck Bay.

### AN INDIAN BURIAL SITE AT AQUEDUCT, L.I.

By Ralph Solecki

The site of an Indian village was found by the field survey party of the Committee on Anthropology, Flushing Historical Society, Flushing, Long Island, of which the author is a member, during the spring of 1939 at Aqueduct, Long Island.

The site, now obliterated by the Belt Parkway, was situated on ground gently sloping to the head of Hawtree Creek, and arm of Jamaica Bay. This is part of the outwash plain of the Wisconsin terminal moraine.

An area of about 200 by 250 feet consisting of a small patch of farmland was examined intensively by the survey party. There were shells, brought up by plowing, scattered over the surface, and a concentration of shells or Kitchen midden near a small marsh to the south of the examined area. The field party excavated this refuse midden and trenched the area for specimens and data.

Of particular interest were the several shell pits, usually

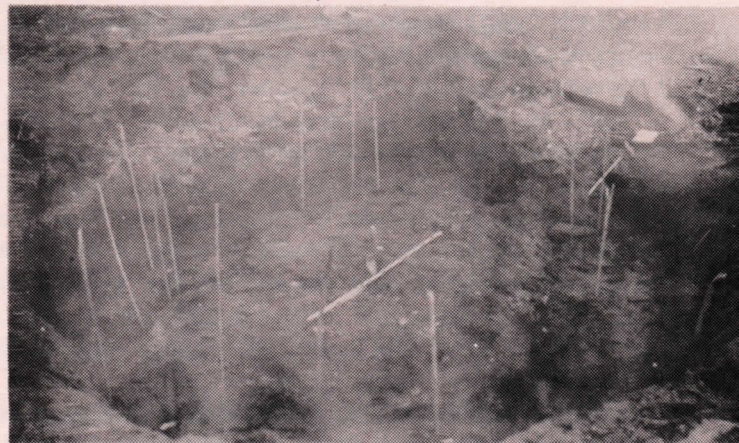
basin shaped holes about three feet deep and five feet in diameter filled with refuse material. These pits yielded artifacts in comparatively greater abundance than the midden.

Such a feature was Pit 3. This pit was discovered in the course of testing the area with shovels, which struck the shells of the top-most layer in the pit. The overlying burden of topsoil, averaging about fifteen inches in depth, was removed to expose the outline of the pit. The latter was roughly oval in horizontal section (5'8" X 4'3"), the longer axis lying in a NE-SW direction (see diagram). In clearing away the topsoil from around the edge of the pit outline, several small dark circular patches consisting of mixed earth were noted in the yellow sand. The earth was removed to a distance of two feet from the outline, and the yellow sand was carefully troweled for the features. These patches numbered fourteen in all, and were on the average two inches in diameter, varying from an inch and three quarters to two and one quarter inches in width, and on an average about six and three quarter inches deep, the depths in toto ranging from five inches to nine inches.

The pit was basin shaped in vertical section, and contained the usual layers of refuse material and black organic dirt encountered in the rest of the pits (see diagram). The skeletons were uncovered in the pit at a depth of one foot four inches, resting on a thin layer of greasy black dirt intermingled with shells. There was a layer more heavy in wigwam refuse containing cracked bones, flint and quartz flakes, a few potsherds and oyster (*Ostrea virginica*), quahog (*Venus mercenaria*) and scallop (*Pecten iradians*) shells above the skeletons. A concentration of shells one half foot thick lay five inches above the female skeleton.

There were two skeletons present, a female and an infant, of which the female was presumably the mother. The adult

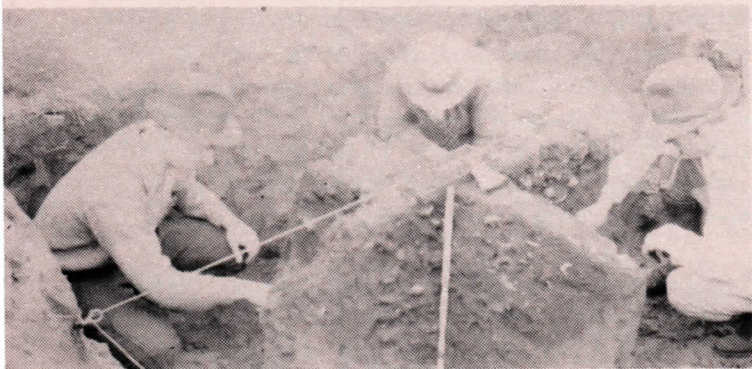
Reed stakes used to mark the burial structure post molds,



skeleton was partially flexed to the left, the knees drawn together up to the body (see diagram), the right hand across the thorax, and the left hand at the chin. The head faced to the south. A study of the cranium of the adult was made (1) and the sex was ascertained as female, senile (56-75 years), and dolichocephalic, or long headed. A fuller analysis is not necessary here. The infant (4 months) lay to the south of the adult at the knees, lying in the same axis (E - W). At the feet of the infant was the base of an undecorated pottery vessel.

The cranial bones of both adult and infant were somewhat crushed and displaced by the superincumbent earth, but on the whole, the bones of the skeletons were fairly well preserved and in articulation.

After the photographs, sketches and data were obtained, the remains were lifted and packed in grass-line boxes and taken to the laboratory for examination. Photographs were made of the work as it progressed from the finding of the pit outline, the post moulds, cross sections of the pit to the final burial disinterment. Ralph Solecki, Stan Wisniewski and friends excavating a shell midden by quadrants, unaware that there was also a burial.



**Conclusion:** Burials in refuse pits are not uncommon (2). Burials were much easier to make in pits containing loose earth and shells, especially in the wintertime, when frozen ground forbade any sort of digging with what crude means the aborigines possessed (2). Similar pit burials were found by the field survey party on western Long Island, and other workers have found similar burials within the Long Island tidewater area (3). The flexing of the adult is not unusual also, as this position was universal among primitive peoples, and the Indian, perhaps, may have been concerned with space economy, lacking equipment for a fully extended burial. The latter type burials have been found on Long Island associated with trade goods, indicating contact with white man (4). Such a double burial is not unusual.

The most singular feature of this burial are the post molds surrounding the pit. The occurrence of post molds would indicate either a barricade or palisades or an arched canopy of some sort over the burial. An early observer on western Long Island noted that the Indians "fence their graves with a hedge, and cover the tops with mats, to shelter them from the rain" (5). Other observers corroborate. (6)

Parker (2) mentions finding postholes about graves in northern New York. Early explorers noted fences or posts

about Iroquois graves (7).

On this authority, therefore, and on the basis of the evidence here presented, this is the first example of the mortuary custom above described on Long Island.

**References cited:**

- 1.) Robert R. Cummings, Columbia University.
- 2.) Parker, A.C. - Archaeological History of New York, Vol. 1, Albany, 1920.
- 3.) Skinner, Alson - Indians of Manhattan Island and Vicinity, American Museum of Natural History, Vol. III, New York 1909.  
Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History, Vol. III, New York, 1909.  
Explorations of Aboriginal sites at Throgs Necks and Clasons Point, New York City, Museum of the American Indian, New York, 1919.
- 4.) Saville, Foster, H. - A Montauk Cemetery at Easthampton, L.I., Museum of the American Indian, New York, 1920.
- 5.) Denton, Daniel - A Brief Description of New York; London, 1670
- 6.) Narratives of New Netherlands (1609 - 1664), edited by J. Franklin, Jameson Scribner, 1909. From the notes of David Pietersz de Vries, 1633-1643 (1645).
- 7.) Journals of the military expedition of Gen. John Sullivan against the Six Nations of Indians in 1799. Auburn, 1877. Records of New York State Department of State.

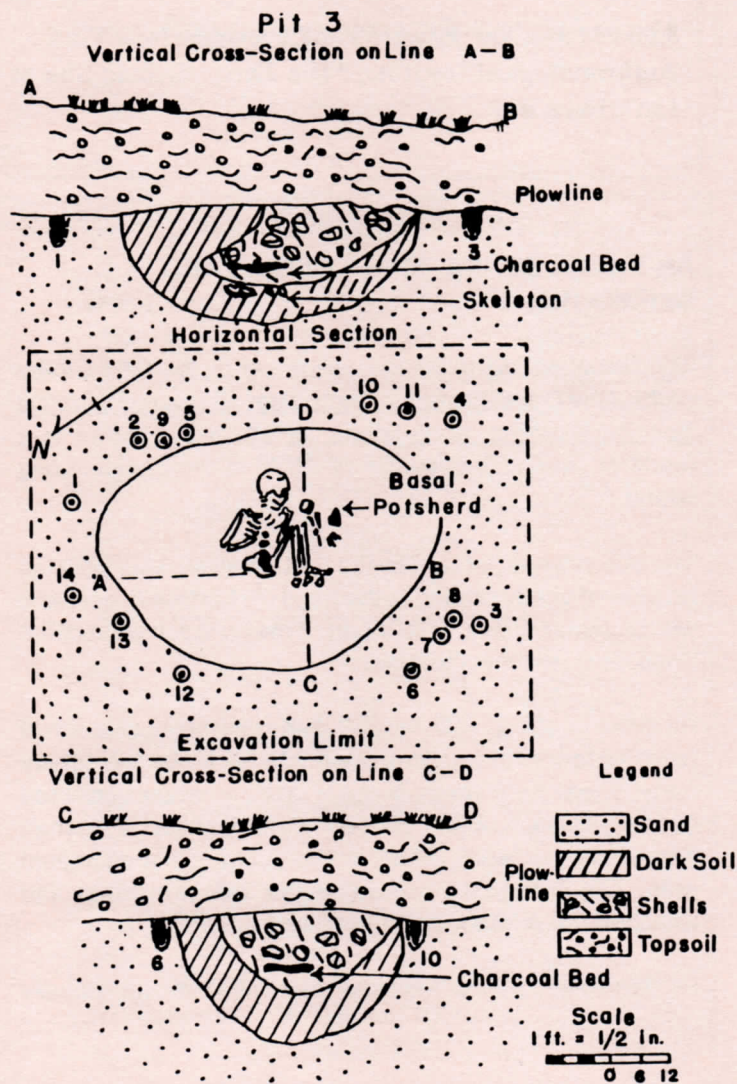


Fig. 11. Indian Burial at Aqueduct, Long Island.

## NEWS OF EARLY HUMANKIND

(Continued from Vol. 20, No.1)

Emory University scientist Antonio Torroni's team studied ancient mitochondrial DNA from seven groups of Chibcha language-speakers in Central America. Archaeological and linguistic evidence indicated that they had separated into two groups at c. 10-8,000 years ago. The team compared their presumed rate of genetic differentiation that could occur in that time period with 18 other Native groups; that amount of diversity would have taken at least 22,000 years.

Also, DNA studies by Dr. Jack Ward comparing the distance between Japanese and Chinese mtDNA with that of Vancouver Island Natives revealed 28 to 30 family trees (more than the expected 10), indicating a long time period; the trees fell into 4 clusters of c.40-70,000 years each, indicating early peopling of the Americas. Linguist Alan Taylor, analyzing the time depth of the 20 to 30 Algonquian languages in relation to the 1-2,000 Native languages spoken at Contact with Europeans, finds a time depth of c. 50,000 years of North American Native American settlement.

The controversial Pedra Furada site, 535 miles west of Recife, Brazil, and other local sites, were studied for 5 days in December by scientists at the International Meeting on the Peopling Process in the Americas. Fabio Parenti's 8 years of research there, resulting in a 4 volume dissertation, was discussed, with questions about the alignment of rocks, the question of geofacts vs. artifacts, the problem of rockfall, etc. Principal investigator Dr. Niède Guidon and her team presented a chronology, from the 1978-88 excavations, of 55 site dates ranging back to more than 48,000 years. The results of the conference will be published in English early in 1995.

The Animas region in southwestern New Mexico, about 150 miles from the controversial Pendejo Cave site, is being explored this winter and spring by archaeologist Richard S. MacNeish and team from the Andover Foundation for Archaeological Research. Earlier MacNeish's team found in the cave what appear to be human hand prints impressed in clay dating to 28,000 years ago and apparently butchered animal bones dating to 40,000 years ago.

Preliminary analysis of two mastodons from East Milford, Nova Scotia indicates they may date to c. 70,000 years ago. Specialists from many universities are analyzing the palynology, mycology, stratigraphy, and accompanying remains of mammals, reptiles, amphibians, arthropods, and mollusks, as well as conducting thermoluminescence dating for the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History in Halifax.

The Center for the Study of the First Americans and Oregon State University have launched a pilot study to perfect techniques for analyzing the mtDNA in human hair. The Mammoth Meadows Paleo site staff has extracted large amounts of hair from the site; the results of this type of information might reveal genetic characteristics of the local group and how the population changed through time. This

will add a new perspective to archaeological site analysis.

The much-studied "Midland Woman," found near Midland, Texas in 1953, has been reevaluated by Quaternary scientist Dr. Vance Holliday of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. His study of the strata in which the skull was found in Monahans Draw indicates it is no more than 10,000 years old and possibly younger--Folsom age rather than Clovis. This estimate is based on his field work in 10 draws (shallow normally dry valleys) on the High Plains of Texas and New Mexico.

## FIELD SCHOOLS

**Field School in Architectural History**, June 13-July 22, 1994, Saunderstown, Rhode Island. Myron O. Stachiw, Director Research, Education, and Interpretation, SPNEA, 141 Cambridge Street, Boston, MA 02114 (617)227-3956.

**Rogers Island and/or Lake George Archaeological Field School - Adirondack Community College** Fort Edward July 5-15, and July 18-29, and July 5-29. The class will meet at Lake George Aug. 1-12, and Aug. 15-26, and Aug. 1-26. ACC Archaeology Field School, c/o Dr. William Gehring, Bay Road, Queensbury, NY 12804, (518)793-4491, ext. 236.

**Oral History Field School**, University of Maryland, Annapolis, MD. July 18 - August 15, 1994. Professor Mark P. Leone, Anthropology Department, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland 20742 (301)405-1423/4.

**Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Field School, 1994 - African-American Archaeology**. Conducted on the site of the Rich Neck slave quarters in Williamsburg, Virginia. Ms. Ywone Edwards, Coordinator of African-American Archaeology, Department of Archaeological Research, ATTN.: Field School 1994, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, PO Box 1776, Williamsburg, Virginia, 23187-1776; (804)220-7328.

**Ethnographic Field School**, Northwestern University. June 20-August 13. Professor Oswald Werner, Department of Anthropology, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL 60208 (708)491-5402 or (708)328-4012 evenings.

The **Archaeological Institute of American (AIA)** offers a listing of state archaeologists as part of its yearly field school listing for the U.S. and abroad. \$11.50 members, \$13.50 non-members. (.50 each additional copy for shipping) Write: Kendall-Hunt Publishing Co., Order Dept., 2460 Kerper Blvd. Dubuque, IA 52001; (800)338-5578.

**Center for American Archeology, Kampsville Archeological Center**. Write: Admissions Office, Kampsville Archeological Center, Kampsville, IL 62053 (618)653-4316.

**Enthnographic Field School**, late July, Picuris Pueblo, in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, New Mexico. Sponsored

by Middlesex County College. Write: Dr. Diane Z. Wilhelm, Middlesex County College, 155 Mill Road, Box 3050, Edison, NJ 08818-3050 (908)548-6000 ext. 3099.

**University Research Expeditions Program**, University of California 2223 Fulton, 4th Floor, Berkely, CA 94720 (510)642-6586

**Earthwatch**, 680 Mount Auburn St., Box 403, Watertown, MA 02272 (617)926-8200 - Scholarships available for teachers.

**CEDAM International**, Fox Road, Croton-on-Hudson, NY 10520 (914)271-5365

**Foundation for Field Research** PO Box 2010 Apline, CA 91903 or Dept. P.; P.O. Box 771, St. Georges Grenada (WI) (809)440-8854

**PIT (Passport in Time)**, Misiano (McDougal Lake) site in the Superior National Forest. Passport in Time Clearinghouse, CHEP Inc., PO Box 18364, Washington, DC 20036 (202)293-0922.

#### BOOKS OF INTEREST

**Bottles of Old New York: A Pictorial Guide to Early New York City Bottles, 1680-1925**, by Robert Apuzzo, an invaluable reference work for archaeologists, bottle collectors, and the layman. these City bottles reached the rest of Long Island through the trade networks of each period; many correlate with the artifacts illustrated in SCAA's Vol. VII - **The Historical Archaeology of Long Island**, with the bulk of them being 19th century. The bottles are illustrated by a clear photo and concise identification; period etchings enhance the context of their manufacture and use. Paper: \$22.95, Hard cover: \$27.95 from R&L Publishing 28 Vesey St., Suite 2116, New York, NY 10007.

**Archaeological Investigations in the Upper Susquehanna Valley, New York State (Volume 1)** by Robert E. Funk. A major synthesis of northeastern North American prehistory based upon 25 years of fieldwork by professional and amateur archaeologists, biologists, and geologists. Persimmon Press., \$66.95

**The NYS Archaeological Association - Incorporated Long Island Chapter** is collecting reprints, letters and other information on Roy Latham (1881-1979) of Orient, NY for their museum. All of Mr. Latham's publications and materials will be published in an annotated bibliography. Please send any reprints or copies to:

The Incorporated Long Island Chapter  
NYS Archaeological Association  
PO Box 268  
Southold, NY 11971

## PUBLICATIONS OF THE SUFFOLK COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

**Readings in LI Archaeology & Ethnohistory:** All volumes are \$35. Vols. I and VI are out of print.

- I. Early Papers in Long Island Archaeology
- II. The Coastal Archaeology Reader
- III. The History & Archaeology of the Montauk, 2nd Ed.
- IV. Languages & Lore of the Long Island Indians
- V. The Second Coastal Archaeology Reader
- VI. The Shinnecock Indians: A Culture History
- VII. The Historical Archaeology of Long Island: Part I: The Sites

#### Student Series:

Booklet: A way of Life: Prehistoric Natives of LI	\$5.50
Study Pictures: Costal Native Americans	\$7.50
Wall Chart: Native Technology (26X39" 3 colors)	\$13.00
Map: Native Technology (26X39" 3 colors)	\$13.00

#### Exhibit Catalogs:

The Montauk: Native Americans of Eastern LI	\$3.50
Women's Work: Native & African Americans of LI	\$3.50

### MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Membership in SCAA includes 3 Newsletters per year and a 20% reduction in workshop and publication costs. All contributions are tax deductible.

Student (To age 18) \$10	Individual \$20
Family \$30	Sustaining \$50
Contributing \$100	Patron \$200
Life: \$400	

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