NEWSLETTER

Representing Nassau & Suffolk Counties

BLYDENBURGH 19th CENTURY FAIR
Blydenburgh Park, New Mill Rd., Smithtown

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24  1 - 4 PM

Civil War Military Encampment

North & South Cavalry & Foot Units
Parading * Drilling * Shooting
Ladies Aid Society Encampment
19th Century Music and Dance
Antique Tool Sales
Pony Rides
Craft Demonstrations
   Blacksmithing
   Carpentry
   Spinning & Weaving
Period Cooking & Foods
Children’s Activities
Portraitist
Guided Hikes
Historic House Tours
Archaeology Exhibits
Period Gift Shop

Sponsored by:

L.I. Greenbelt Trail Conference
Suffolk Co. Archaeological Assn
88th New York Infantry
57th Virginia Regt., Co. B
Nassau/Suffolk Horseman’s Assn.
Boots & Saddles
Franklin Co. Ladies Aid Society
L.I. Tool Collectors Assn.
Forestwood Civic Association
Smithtown Pines Civic Assn.
Doing the Right Thing: Ethics in (American) Archaeology

ANTHROPOLOGY NEWSLETTER/SEPTEMBER 1995

By Nathalie F S Woodbury

Inasmuch as the buying and selling of artifacts usually results in the loss of context and cultural association, the practice is censured.

An archaeological site presents problems which must be handled by the excavator according to a plan. Therefore, members of the Society for American Archaeology do not undertake excavations on any site being studied by someone without the prior knowledge and consent of that person.

Willful destruction, distortion, or concealment of the data of archaeology is censured, and provides grounds for expulsion from the Society for American Archaeology, at the discretion of the Executive Committee.

A decade and a half later, with the increase in cultural resource management, a perceived need for more stringent regulation of behavior and for professional certification resulted by 1976 in the founding of the Society of Professional Archaeologists. Its very explicit Code of Ethics covers the Archaeologist’s Responsibility to the Public, to Colleagues, to Employers and Clients, together with what an archaeologist shall not do. Not all practicing archaeologists are members and thereby certified by SOPA, but its standards together with the less stringent guidelines and codes of such organizations as the SAA, the Society for Historical Archaeology, the American Society for Conservation Archaeology and the Archaeological Institute of America have brought the profession along the paths it should follow to function responsibly.

The SAA’s Ethics in Archaeology Committee proposes six “Principles of Archaeological Ethics” in its Special Report (pp 23-24), each discussed in an essay, followed by a section of commentary. These are: Stewardship (the Central Principle of Archaeological Ethics), Accountability (the Responsibilities of Archaeologists to Other Interest Groups), Commercialization (Ethics and the Selling of the Archaeological Record), Public Education and Outreach (the Obligation to Educate), Intellectual Property (Ethics, Knowledge and Publication) and Records and Preservation (An Ethical Obligation).

Janet E Levy, in her commenting essay (Special Report pp 86-93), draws on the published report of the AAA Committee on Ethics, of which she was chair (Feb 1994 AN, p 1). She states that the grievance procedures of the AAA’s Principles of Professional
Responsibility do not work. Sanctions against those archaeologists who ignore the codes of ethics are so far only implicit; Levy recommends on the basis of her AAA experience that any code adopted by the SAA should be "a relatively generalized statement of goals and ideals rather than a detailed code of daily behavior" (p 90). She warns (p 91) that it is important to be aware of the historical setting of ethical codes because contemporary circum-
stances both inspire and shape the result: Vietnam gave rise to the AAA’s PPR; contract archaeology in the 1970s led to the founding of SOPA; repatriation and looting crises in the 1990s have brought the SAA to consider and elaborate the ethical code presented in its Special Report.

Looting or just random surface collecting—projectile points, parts of pots, pieces of shell gorget or whatever picked up on the farm or on a walk—has threatened the archaeological record since earliest time. As prehistoric objects acquired art status and cash value they have been subject to mining operations by hand or by machinery. Even when money is not an incentive, the lure of finding “treasure” to keep is powerful. Selling sites to play on this human trait is another challenge archaeologists must meet. Last autumn a Pagosa Springs, CO, real estate handout offered acreage with archaeological sites explicitly described. Keep your finds or sell them was implied—your investment at least returned and probably exceeded. A more responsible approach to site selling is that of the Indian Camp Ranch development (31 housing lots on 1200 acres), also in southwestern Colorado. Two hundred Anasazi sites have been identified. Property owners can excavate on their own land but only under the supervision of a “certified archaeologist.” Excavated material will belong to a museum to be built in the development; owners can exhibit artifacts in their residences but must assign them to the museum at their deaths. Peer pressure and penalties such as quadrupling members’ dues are expected to keep the residents in line together with their initial interest and understanding of the value of the archaeological record. Burials will be treated with respect and in consultation with Native Americans concerned. Indian Camp Ranch first came to national attention in the news media; Archaeology (Mar-Apr 1995), published by the AIA, carried a column on the development captioned “Building on the Past.”

The land uses proposed by Indian Camp Ranch and even by the “sites for sale” realtors are quite legal, as antiquities on private property are not protected in the US by federal or state laws. Brian Fagan, in his foreword to another book on archaeological ethics (The Ethics of Collecting Cultural Property: Whose Culture? Whose Property?), addresses this situation:

Who owns the archaeological record? An individual landowner, the descendants of those who created it, the nation, or does it form part of the heritage of all humankind? Do people have the right to collect artifacts, even from privately owned land, and to excavate for personal profit and gratification? Or should all artifacts be deposited in museums for the common enjoyment of everyone? [p xvii]

STUDENT SUMMER ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD SCHOOLS

Nassau BOCES Gifted & Talented Program sponsored a full day Archaeological Field School for over 20 Nassau students the week of June 26th, and a teachers’ Field School July 5-7th. Channel 12 reported on the students’ program and NEWSDAY also wrote about it. The last two weeks of July Eastern Suffolk BOCES sponsored a half day Field School for Suffolk students, greatly enjoyed by all. The students carried out test pitting, excavation, cataloging, mapping, flotation, and other archaeological tasks as well as doing blacksmithing, spinning and weaving, 19th century carpentry and cooking. Nassau BOCES plans to double the length of the Field School and the number of students attending this coming Summer.

S.C.A.A. AN AFFILIATE OF S.A.A.

The Society for American Archaeology, after investigating SCAA’s activities, has approved SCAA for membership in their Council of Affiliated Societies. The Council is composed of State and regional archaeological groups which subscribe to the ethics and goals of SAA, the major national archaeological association.

STATE BOARD RECOMMENDS USE OF N.Y.A.C. STANDARDS

The State Historic Preservation Review Board recommended March 9th that the State adopt the Professional Standards developed by the N.Y. Archaeological Council. Their adoption should greatly enhance historic preservation efforts in the State. Adoption of the Standards must be approved by new Commissioner Bernadette Castro.

IMPORTANT FLINT MINE PROTECTED BY S.I.M.

The Southold Indian Museum recently was able to purchase a 17 acre plot which separated their two holdings totaling 46 acres at the site of the Coxsackie flint mine. In use by Native Americans for over 8,000 years, the flint was traded widely as well as to Long Island. The SIM’s consolidation of the Flint Mine Hill property will preserve this important State historic site.

N.M.A.I. COLLECTIONS BEGIN MOVE

The packing and moving of over 45,000 artifacts from the National Museum of the American Indian Broadway museum site to the Bronx Research Branch is underway, where the objects will join the more than 1 million objects there. Helping with this move, is Shinnecock David Martine, who has graduate training in art and art education. In a few years another move will be made to the NMAI Cultural Resources Center being built in Suitland, MD, preparatory to the completion of the new Smithsonian-National Museum of the American Indian building on the Mall in Washington.
CONFERENCES

Native American Film & Video Festival will be held September 22-25 at the National Museum of the American Indian at its museum in New York City; admission is free. Information: 212-825-6914.


Long Island Archives Conference Local & Family History Fair is being held October 7 in Nassau County. Information: 516-271-3140

Pioneer America Society annual meeting will be October 12-14 at Fredericksburg, Virginia, with field trips to the surrounding area. Information: 703-899-4329.

Northeast Document Conservation Center presents "Preservation Microfilming" October 23-25, New York City; call 508-470-1010.

Eastern States Archaeological Federation annual meeting will be held in Wilmington, Delaware October 26-29. Information: 302-368-5777. A number of archaeologists from Long Island will present papers.

Society for Historical Archaeology will meet January 9-14, 1996 at Cincinnati, Ohio. Information: 606-257-1944.

The Long Island Society, Archaeological Institute of America, has monthly lectures by archaeologists, largely classical scholars, at the Great Neck South Middle School, Great Neck, NY. Information: 627-4694.

PUBLICATIONS OF THE SUFFOLK COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

Readings in LI Archaeology & Ethnohistory: All volumes are $35. except Vol. III which is $75. + tax and shipping. Vol.s I & 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 Edition
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: Coastal Native Americans - $7.50
Wall Chart: Native Technology (26X39" 3 colors) $13.00
Map: Native Long Island (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 10% reduction in workshop and publication costs. All contributions are tax deductible.

Student (To age 18) $10
Family $30
Contributing $100
Life $400

Date: ____________
Name: _______________
Address: _______________
City/State/Zip: ___________
Phone No: _______ Willing to Volunteer? ___
Occupation: _______________

Send Check to: Suffolk County Archaeological Association, P.O. Drawer 1542 Stony Brook, NY 11790