

## **UNEARTHING THE PAST AT KING MANOR**

King Manor Museum in Jamaica, Queens, is renowned as the elegant estate of Founding Father Rufus King. If you happened by King Manor last summer, however, you probably noticed that its yard was filled with people and sported sections of exposed earth. Last July and August, the Museum hosted Hofstra University's Undergraduate Field School, led by Professor Christopher Matthews, for an adventure in public archaeology.

Throughout its five-week tenure, the Field School team carefully excavated artifacts and features that will help shed light on aspects of daily life that are not part of the historical record. In particular, they looked closely for evidence that can be used to reconstruct the lifestyle of those whose history is the most obscured: the nine slaves of Christopher Smith (Rufus King's predecessor at the site) and the paid servants and laborers who worked for the anti-slavery Mr. King.

Through wide-ranging public programming, the Museum involved as many people as possible in learning about King Manor's past and the methods of historical archaeology. The young Time Travelers History Campers were thrilled at the opportunity to excavate and sift dirt for artifacts alongside the archaeologists.

A well-attended lecture series brought respected local archaeologists to King Manor. Visitors to the museum enjoyed a preview of the newly-developed *Unearthing the Past* exhibit, and passersby in King Park stopped to chat with and learn from the Field School students. In early August, many friends of King Manor gathered for iced tea and special tours of the excavation before it was backfilled for the season.

Professor Matthews and the Field School will return to King Manor this summer. They will continue their search for material evidence of slavery and freedom in the early American period from July 5<sup>th</sup> through August 5<sup>th</sup>.

Want to get down and dirty? Volunteers are welcome, but you must be at least 16 years of age, able to commit to a full day of work, and be prepared to undertake a high level of strenuous activity. Contact Prof. Matthews at [anthczm@hofstra.edu](mailto:anthczm@hofstra.edu) or 516-463-4093 now!  
*Mary Anne Mrozinski, Executive Director*



King Manor, Jamaica, L.I.

## **2004 HOFSTRA UNIVERSITY ARCHAEOLOGY FIELD SCHOOL AT KING MANOR**

The 2004 Hofstra Archaeology field school at King Manor ran from July 6 to August 6. Directed by Prof. Chris Matthews, the project team included Jenna Coplin, Adjunct Assistant Professor of Anthropology at Hofstra, nine field school students, and a handful of volunteers. The excavations were based on recovering data related to understanding the contrasts between slavery and freedom at the site. In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, the King Manor house was occupied by the Colgan-Smith family who were slave owners. In 1805 Rufus King purchased the property and instituted a system of free workers that materialized his own political beliefs -- which he later pronounced in his opposition to the expansion of slavery during the Missouri Compromise in 1820.

The excavations were focused on areas surrounding the standing King Manor House where outbuilding structures once stood. Specifically, we are investigating the privy pit in the northwest yard and working around the remains of an outbuilding on the east side of the house designated as a Building K in an earlier survey. Building K was most likely used as a dairy or stable, but may have been a residential location for household servants at some point.

We are working with the premise that slavery and freedom, as regimes of household labor, will produce distinct archaeological signatures related to the expression of master authority and ostentation in architecture and artifact types and the manner in which work areas were spatially organized in relationship to

the manor house and to each other. We also propose that the remains will reveal signs of worker resistance in terms of how laborers used their work routines as an opportunity to create spaces of independent activity by working outside the master's line of sight to claim work spaces as their own.

The results of the 2004 excavations are very suggestive thus far. The fieldwork included a shovel testing regimen in the west yard of the house and the complete and partial excavation of 13 1 x 1 meter units in four areas of the site. Shovel tests revealed intact archaeological deposits in the west yard productive of 18th-century materials, but in low quantities not warranting further investigation at this point. The unit excavations were determined by previous archaeological and archival research.

Two units were placed directly in front of the house where previous excavations abutting the house suggested a bluestone pathway that would predate the current circular drive would be found. Unfortunately, the area was significantly disturbed by the construction of a flagpole monument in the early 20th century. However, the lack of any 18th-century material amidst the disturbed deposits suggests that this is not a likely area for recovering early deposits associated with the house.

Working in the east yard, three units were opened associated with Building K. One was placed where historic map overlays showed the southeast corner of the structure to have been located. Excavation revealed that the foundation of the building was robbed at the time of demolition and the builder's trench backfilled. Fortunately, this demolition only minimally disturbed the surrounding deposits, which indicate a likely buried surface associated with the use of this building.

Historic materials including creamware and pearlware ceramics and dark olive wine bottle fragments were recovered. One highly suggestive artifact is a wine bottle base that has an inscribed 'X' cut into it near the pontil mark on the kick-up. This sort of incised mark has been associated at other sites with artifacts of African religious belief; however, this particular artifact requires further analysis before any connection can be securely made between it and the enslaved Africans at King Manor.

After discovering that the remains of Building K were likely identifiable and productive, two additional units were placed on the north side of the Building. This would have been the side facing away from the street front of the property. This location would have been hidden from the public face of the house and equally would have been out of the line of sight of the manor house. Such out of the way locations are typically areas of high artifact counts, and potentially also areas where workers could have escaped the surveillance of the master, thus finding the space to act in ways challenging their subordinate status. Neither of the two units opened were completely excavated, yet the artifact counts were indeed very high and the materials indicative of the late 18th-century occupation. We will

be returning next summer to complete these excavations and likely open additional units in the area more to collect a large sample of materials to work with in our analysis.

The most exciting excavations were in the northwest yard where the remains of the household privy were identified. Rufus King declared in 1805 in a letter to his sons describing the new property in Jamaica that "the house is not fashionable, but convenient, the outhouse good, and the grounds consisting of about 50 acres . . ." Otherwise there is no record of the privy for the house in the documents. Historic maps do not show any structure on the property that likely would have served as a privy until the early 20th-century.

Post-1900 Hyde and Sanborn insurance maps suggestively show a roughly 10 foot square timber structure in the northwest yard. However, without being evident on earlier maps, the possibility exists that this structure was built by the Parks Department for tool storage after they acquired the property in 1900. Nevertheless, with King's letter we can see that the privy was in place before he purchased the property, suggesting that the privy shaft may be a productive record of the property in terms of artifacts that would have accumulated during its use.

The first archaeological investigation of the site in 1988 remains undocumented except in a later follow-up report by Grossman and Associates. Grossman records that the first shovel testing program identified the possible location of the privy in the northwest yard roughly where the 10-foot timber structure would have stood. What remains were recovered are not listed, thus our investigation was guided at first with hopes of recovering the evidence of this shovel testing to determined exactly where they believed the privy remains would be.

A 2 x 2 meter excavation area was laid out and initiated. In the process it was discovered that after 1991 a significant amount of fill (more than 6 inches) was deposited in a landscaping project that buried the ground surface at the time of the earlier excavations. Once we had this figured out we began to find the remains of an earlier chain link fence line and the initial shovel tests done in advance of its construction. These were the previously undocumented tests that suggested the presence of a privy, and they were right!



Figure 1 - Privy Pit

As we proceeded to expand the excavation from the original four units to open up a total of seven we defined the southwest quadrant of a dry-laid stone privy shaft (Figure 1). This was a very substantial round privy pit feature, probably 8 or more feet in diameter that has proven very rich in terms of artifact quantities, but to date has only revealed late 19th and early 20th-century materials (Figure 2). We were unable to complete any of the excavations in the privy pit interior due to its substantial depth and our limited field time. It is our first intention to return next summer to continue the suspended excavations in this area of the site by opening more of the surface area of the pit and digging deeper into it.

The privy was constructed by excavating a large hole, laying the stone perimeter wall within the hole, and backfilling the builder's trench on the exterior of the stones with relatively clean sand, likely brought into the site from off-site, though this could be the deeply buried subsoil. The artifacts recovered are presumably related to the occupation of the site by a caretaker in the early museum era and consist of consumer products like tin cans, liquor and water bottles, tableware ceramics, animal bones and even a purple glass bead.

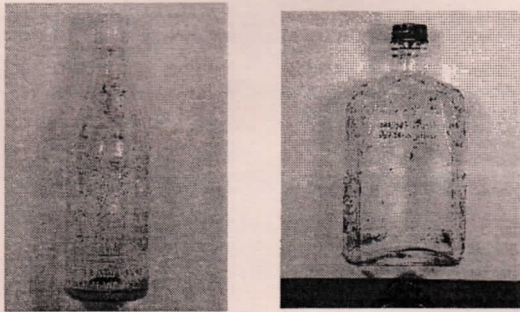


Figure 2 - wine bottle and whiskey bottle

Also recovered were household materials like door hardware and nails suggestive of possible renovations.

It may be that the pit was closed when the caretaker's quarters were renovated at some point, perhaps in the 1920s, making the privy closing part of such a renovation. Our excavations appeared to reach the end of this large artifact deposit but this seemed not to be the end of the privy fill itself, leaving open the likelihood that more will be found in next summer's work. It is our hope that this will be the case and that we will be fortunate enough to recover materials from the pit reaching back to the earliest occupations of the site in the 18th century.

*Dr. Chris Matthews*

### **Dr. GAYNELL STONE NAMED FIRST COUNTY LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 2005 WOMAN OF DISTINCTION**

County Legislator Michael Caracciolo has named SCAA's Museum Director, Gaynell Stone, Ph.D., as his nominee for the County's Woman of Distinction award "as an accomplished woman with a history of volunteerism." Each County legislator nominates a



Legislator Caracciolo and Dr. Stone

Bob Strovink Photo

candidate; these nominees will be reviewed by the Suffolk County Women's Advisory Commission and a Suffolk County Woman of Distinction will be chosen.

Dr. Stone was chosen for her history of participation with the Riverhead Preservation & Landmarks Committee, for the saving of Hallockville, the production of reference volumes and films for the S.C. Archaeological Assn., *pro bono* advice to government on behalf of Long Island archaeology, etc. She has received awards for distinguished publication of archival materials by the L.I. Archives Conference, a certificate of services to the social studies profession by the L.I. Council for the Social Studies, a N.Y. State certificate of achievement in historic preservation from Governor Carey, a Suffolk County Heritage Award, a founder's award from the Suffolk Early Childhood Education Council, and a National Science Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Research Grant.

### **DENDROCHRONOLOGY IN THE NORTHEAST: A RESEARCH TOOL COMES OF AGE**

This Symposium will be held **May 19 and 20** at Historic Deerfield, MA, co-sponsored by Historic New England. Scientists and scholars of various disciplines will gather to report on recent advances in dendrochronology (tree-ring dating) studies in the Northeast and the development of master chronologies for various species of trees.

Speakers' topics will include the composition of the region's historical forests, the history of dendrochronology studies in the Northeast, cultural impacts of historical climate variation, explanations of methodology, regional case studies, and how dating results are helping to elucidate the region's architectural and cultural history.

Through symposium presentations it will become clear that the science of dendrochronology has moved into the mainstream of analytical tools available for architectural research. The program will be of interest

to dendrochronologists, architectural and cultural historians, archaeologists, preservationists, restoration specialists, homeowners, and all those interested in the accurate interpretation of New England's (and Long Island's) buildings and the history they reflect.

Speakers will be – Edward Cook, Paul Krusic, William Wright - Lamont-Doherty Tree-Ring Laboratory; Daniel Miles, Michael Worthington - Oxford Dendrochronology Laboratory; David Stahle - U. of Arkansas Geoscience Dept.; Charles Cogbill - forest ecologist; Chris Baisan - U. of Arizona Tree-Ring Laboratory; Anne Grade - architectural historian; William Flynt - architectural conservator, Historic Deerfield. Info: Ann Grady at [781-862-9877](tel:781-862-9877)/[agrady@eonconnect.com](mailto:agrady@eonconnect.com) OR Bill Flynt at [413-775-7210](tel:413-775-7210)/[wflynt@historic-deerfield.org](mailto:wflynt@historic-deerfield.org).

Owners of the seven oldest structures on eastern L.I. which were cored last year by the Oxford Dendro Lab received a letter recently that the Lab had not been able to make a match with existing New England chronologies and thus date the houses now. However, the matching process continues as more structures are constantly being cored, and at some point there will be a match. Unexpectedly, they found a match of timbers at Washington's Mt. Vernon with sites 100 miles away.

Miles and Worthington of the Oxford Lab have turned their findings over to Ed Cook of the Lamont-Doherty Lab (who also lives on L.I.) who will continue the work, as he has the Joel Snodgrass corings and plans to review that analysis. Dr. Cook has stated that matches will come only with many more samples.

SCAA's Dr. Gaynell Stone contacted Dr. Frank Turano who also has a dozen or so corings made years ago. He is preparing them for Dr. Cook's Lab, so the coring database is growing. Bob Giffen, naturalist and board member of the Friends of Connetquot State Park, has received permission from State Parks to have the mill structure there cored.

## MEETINGS

**N.Y.S. Archaeological Association and 1000 Islands Chapter, May 6-8, Watertown, NY** Ramada Inn. Banquet speaker - Dr. Bruce Rippeteau, U. of S. Carolina. Tour to enigmatic Perch Lake Mounds in Jefferson County. Info: [t.abel.arch@att.net](mailto:t.abel.arch@att.net).

**Archaeological Institute of America, L.I. Chapter** hosts Dr. Marcello A. Canuto, Asst. Prof. Of Anthropology at Yale University, at Breslin Hall, Hofstra University, **March 6** at 2:00 PM. Dr. Canuto's topic is "Postcards from the Edge: Life, Politics and Identity in the Southeastern Maya Area."

**April 17** at 2:00 PM - Dr. Elaine Gazda, Professor of Classical Art & Archaeology and Curator of the Hellenistic and Roman Antiquities, Kelsey Museum of Archaeology, U. of Michigan, on the famous Bacchic frieze in the Villa of Mysteries in Pompeii. Info: 516-627-7225.

## RESOURCES

**Public Archaeology in the United States: A Timeline** is a website showing major events in public archaeology between 1784-2004. The years are split into 6 sections, each noting key events, links and bibliographies. [www.cr.nps.gov/aad/timeline/timeline.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/aad/timeline/timeline.htm)

**Archaeology for Kids: Uncovering the Mysteries of Our Past**, Richard Panchyk, Chicago Review Press/Independent Publishers Group, \$14.95. 25 activities, includes an archaeology timeline; heavy emphasis on the classical period of archaeology.

**The Bulletin of the N.Y.S. Archaeological Assn.**, 1954-2003 is now available on CD-ROM, full-word searchable, for \$50. plus \$3.50 shipping. Indicate whether MAC or PC. Order from William Englebrect, 16 Atlantic Ave., Buffalo, NY 14222.

**The Archaeologist's Tool Kit**, Larry Zimmerman and William Green, eds. AltaMira Press, 2003. \$96.39 for the set of 7 or \$22.95 each; 15% discount on web orders. This integrated set is designed to teach students the basics of doing archaeology in classrooms and field schools. [www.altamirapress.com](http://www.altamirapress.com)

## PUBLICATIONS OF THE SUFFOLK COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

### Readings in Long Island Archaeology & Ethnohistory

All volumes are \$40. + \$5. Shipping, except Vol. III, 2d ed., which is \$75. + \$8. Shipping, both plus 8.50% sales tax in N.Y. State for individuals. Vol. I is out of print; a few copies of Vols. IV and VI remain.

- I Early Paper in Long Island Archaeology
- II The Coastal Archaeology Reader
- III History & Archaeology of the Montauk, 2d 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 L.I.: Part 1 - The Sites
- VIII The Native Forts of L.I. Sound (in press).

### Student Series (Including shipping)

<i>Booklet: A Way of Life: Prehistoric Natives of L.I.</i>	\$6.
<i>Study Pictures: Coastal Native Americans</i>	8.
<i>Wall Chart: Native Technology (26x39"-3 colors)</i>	14.
<i>Map: Native Long Island (26x39"-3 colors)</i>	14.

## 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 18)	\$10.	Individual	\$20.
Family	30.	Sustaining	50.
Contributing	100.	Patron	100.
Life Member	400.		

Date: .....

Name: .....

Address: .....

City/State/Zip: .....

Phone No. ....

Willing to volunteer? .....

Occupation: .....

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Programs of the S.C. Archaeological Association are funded in part by public monies from the New York State Council on the Arts - Decentralization, the Suffolk County Office of Cultural Affairs, and County and State Legislators.