



NEWSLETTER

Representing Nassau & Suffolk Counties

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Lost Archaeological Information

The Indians Lived Here - Ralph Solecki, Committee on American Anthropology, Flushing Historical Society, So *This is Flushing*, October 1941

Once again the Indians are retreating before the advance of the white man's civilization. Village sites and burial grounds of the Long Island Indians are rapidly being obliterated by the construction of modern homes and public improvements.

The Committee on American Anthropology of the Flushing Historical Society, which has been conducting its research since 1938, is running a race against the steam shovel to rescue the remaining vestiges of once flourishing villages from the onrush of progress. Already more than half of the sites have vanished.

The Committee is composed of four young men who received training with archaeological surveys in upper New York State, Nebraska, North Dakota and Louisiana. Carlyle Smith of Great Neck is chairman of the committee and his aides are Herbert Pretzat of Whitestone, Matt Schreiner of College Point, and the writer.

Each of the members had for years prior to the formal organization of the committee collected artifacts cumulative evidence numbering in the thousands of items. Realizing the futility of gaining any knowledge or recognition in their chose field singly, the committee pooled their collections and these, now integrated in a comprehensive cataloging system, are stored in the basement laboratory of Mr. Schreiner's house

In the collection is material from over eighty Indian sites on Long Island, and several in the Bronx and northern Manhattan. A good share of the material is kept at the Flushing Historical Society's headquarters in the Flushing Library. A small exhibit collection is open to the public on Wednesday afternoons.

To date the major part of the committee's work has been done in Queens County, with Nassau, Suffolk, and Kings Counties following in order. Work was also done at Inwood Park and on the northern tip of Manhattan and in the Bronx along the East River and Long Island Sound. Vacant lots and unused real estate are the treasure troves of these urban archaeologists.

Indian sites, evidenced on the surface by quantities of shell deposits or 'kitchen middens,' shell pits, charcoal, flint chips, broken animal bones, and bit of pottery, once extended over much of our present shoreline. Needless to say, little original shoreline is left open to profitable exploration today. Comparatively little archaeological material is secured inland away from an outlet to the sea, because the native Long Islander, habitually dependent on sea food the year round, lived close to the source of his livelihood. Of course, hunting was practiced, but it is significant to note that the main village was always situated near a fair sized body of water, usually well sheltered.

The Indian remains found on the Island are probably not more than eight or nine hundred years old at the most. (*Carbon 14 dating recently shows 5,000 years at Wading River estuary and over 9,000 years in Bayside*).

Although the Long Island Indian was a peace loving individual, invasion by the mainland tribes, the Iroquois and Pequot, compelled him to raise palisade forts in the early part of the 17th century. The committee has surveyed two earthworks on Long (published by SCAA, Vol. VIII, *Native Forts of the Long Island Sound Area*, 2008).

There is ample evidence of the influence which these more aggressive people had on the Long Island Indians. The Iroquois, who came from the Hudson River Valley, left their impress in the form of their pottery culture, which was more advanced in technical and decorative treatment.

It was early apparent that the material specimens from the various sites explored were distinguished by a degree of similarity or difference. The material from two or more sites might be essentially similar in every respect, and then again a notable difference might be found in another site. Pottery is an excellent diagnostic trait indicator in this respect, and also makes possible a rough chronology.

Temporal sequence of pottery is dependent on stratigraphic evidence and interpretation in the field. Unfortunately on western Long Island, not enough virgin stratified deposits of Indian material were available for examination. However, workers elsewhere on the mainland have in come detail reconstructed the chronology of cultures similar to the cultures found on Long Island.

A site, as it is located by surface evidence, such as shells and burned stones, it first 'surface collected,' and the locale

is surveyed for likely deposits of refuse material and for the best place to make test excavations. Cross section profiles of shell middens and shell pits are plotted at regular intervals. Photographs and sketches supplement detailed descriptions of the finds exposed. The site and all excavations as opened are mapped for the record.

The material as discovered is put in labeled bags, and each item is labeled with a catalog number consisting of the county identification, site, and artifact designation in the laboratory.

Building activity and public improvements have been a deterrent to the committee's research activities in the field. Out of a total of 29 Indian sites in Queens, 17 within the past three years have become entirely obliterated. In the process of enlarging the airport at LaGuardia Field, several sites on Jackson's Creek and Bowery Bay were destroyed. The World's Fair obliterated a large site on Flushing Creek and another at Sanford and Fowler Avenues, Flushing.

Perhaps the most destructive large scale operation was the construction of the Belt Parkway, which covered 17 sites. The parkway cut directly across the small farms in southern Queens and Brooklyn, bisected an especially interesting ground one half mile west of the Aqueduct race track, where the committee, one jump ahead of the dump truck, unearthed two burials in 1939 (described in an issue of the *Geological Review* of City College).

The Belt Parkway swung to the north, cut through the heart of a large Indian site and several small ones in Alley Park. It also destroyed the remains of the Hicks house, dating from the 1640s. Fortunately, the remains were mapped and some extensive exploration brought to light colonial artifacts from around the foundation walls.

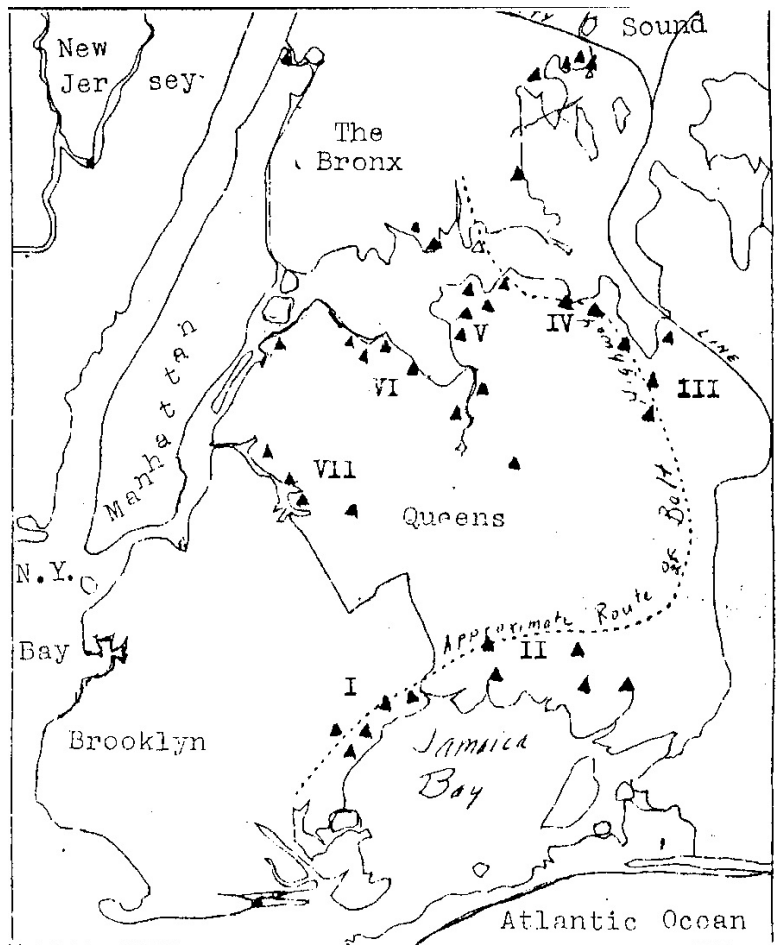
The parkway also cut through a small site on the Lawrence estate near Flushing Bay. It is not known what sites, if any, the parkway obliterated farther north along Flushing Bay, as this particular area was closed to exploration because it had been a private residential area. The parkway also put an end to a couple of sites at Fort Totten and Clearview.

As a grand finale, at the junction of the parkway with the Whitestone bridge, land grading and resurfacing destroyed an old house and a nearby Indian village site.

The committee had scarcely begun work on Tallman's Island, at College Point, when the surveying crew for the sewage disposal plant moved in. From then on it was a hectic race between the trowel and shovel of the archaeologist and the steam shovel and bulldozer of the engineer.

Sites Explored

Following is a description of the more interesting sites explored in Queens and southern Brooklyn:



INDIAN VILLAGE SITES: Triangles on diagram indicate sites explored by Committee on American Anthropology of the Flushing Historical Society. Important locations described in accompanying article are numbered.

I. Paerdegat Basin – just north of the Paerdegat Basin in Canarsie, Brooklyn, are several small truck farms. The ground is littered with flakes and chips of all varieties of stone. Shellfish remains also abound in this region. The committee on several trips excavated four shell pits and cursorily examined a large shell deposit 600 square feet in area. This shell deposit is on a tilled farm patch and more thorough examination was impossible. The site has been known since early days, and was the headquarters of the Canarsie Indians.

II. Aqueduct – the committee spent much time in research at this site, one half mile east of Aqueduct race track, and lying between Conduit Avenue and Sunrise Highway. It is at the head of Hawthorne Creek. The site consisted of an oval shell midden and several shell pits in a garden patch about 250 by 200 feet. An interesting burial was discovered here in 1939, consisting of a woman and child lying side-by-side in a bowl shaped pit. Around the edge of the pit was a row of dark spots which proved to be the remains of small posts set into the ground, probably to protect the grave from desecration by animals. Much interesting data were secured from this site before the dump truck and bulldozer put an end to it. The Belt Parkway now runs directly over the site.

III. Alley Pond – the area was the scene of activity since 1931. A fairly large site was located near the foundations of the Hicks house, south of Northern Blvd. and west of the creek feeding Little Neck Bay. A large excavation covering several acres obliterated much of the refuse midden and the colonial burial ground adjacent to the Hicks house. The parkway destroyed all remaining evidence of the site.

IV. Clearview and Whitestone – the bulldozer exposed several shell pits at Clearview on condemned property. The committee trenched a kitchen midden about two and a half feet deep on Willets Point Boulevard. The site was lost several weeks later. Excavation is still going on at a kitchen midden and shell pit site on 14th Ave., Whitestone. Several interesting features have been unearthed and more are expected.

V. Grantville, College Point – this site, on a wooded point on the east side of Flushing Bay, was primarily a fishing station and workshop for flint implements. Pebbles from the beach sufficed for this purpose. North of this area, in the vicinity of Graham Court, were found several burials.

VI. North Beach – the Jackson's Creek and Bowery Bay area was a very fertile field for exploration up to the time of the enlargement of the municipal airport. There was a site just south of Hanger No.3, off Ocean Avenue, and a large kitchen midden about 100 by 50 feet in area. Another kitchen midden lay behind the Riker house at Bowery Bay, and another near the Rapelye Cemetery. There is not a trace of these sites today.

VII. Maspeth – a large site was situated near the Furman burial plot on Maspeth Creek, an arm of Newtown Creek.

In all, the committee has listed five sites in Brooklyn, twenty-nine in Queens, seventeen in Nassau and thirty in Suffolk. The committee is spending much of its time at present in the laboratory arranging data in comprehensive form for study. Time spent in the laboratory equals, and often succeeds, that spent in research in the field.

Dr. Solecki is in the process of updating this information, which will be published in a future issue.

In Honor of Women's History Month –

Paleo Woman Lost to History – what part she played in the prehistory of the Americas has largely been ignored, replaced by our preoccupation with mighty mammoth hunters and other male-dominated images. Dr. James Adovasio of Mercyhurst College and Dr. Elizabeth Chilton of U. of Massachusetts-Amherst have suggestions how researchers might uncover women in the archaeological record. How has this happened? 1) our tendency to visualize Paleoamericans as adventurous explorers, 2) the undue and possibly inaccurate emphasis we place on hunting, 3) our fixation on stone tools to the exclusion of other cultural evidence, and 4) the unbalanced ratio of male to female researchers in the field.

Adovasio says the first Americans weren't explorers and adventurers, but bands of individuals and families carrying their baggage and dogs (who could haul goods). Even *National Geographic* and the *Smithsonian* have depicted the mighty hunter, with spear points among the "bone yards" of slaughtered animals, but *The Invisible Sex* (Adovasio, Olga Soffer and Jake Page) found that butchering marks were few and far between. The new research, to Chilton, depicts Paleoamericans as foragers who hunted and scavenged a variety of animals on an opportunistic basis. Net snaring of small animals, a kind of group hunting that could involve women, children and the elderly, was probable and is supported ethnographically and archaeologically.

The problem with stone tools is that they make up the majority of artifacts from the Ice Age, and stone tools last forever, while perishable artifacts – baskets, cordage, fur, other organic materials – seldom do, the materials it is assumed were mostly used by women. Until recently, most archaeologists were not trained to look for much beyond stone or bone tools. Nor were humble endscrapers and blade flakes studied like the all important points. Chilton also argues that there is no compelling reason to argue against women making and using all kinds of stone tools.

The paucity of female archaeologists is the result of centuries of male dominance; the discovery of "Clovis Man" came in the 1930s and early Americans were viewed through the lens of 1950s America – Clovis Man headed out to bring home the bacon, Clovis Woman stayed home to cook and mind the children. Adovasio feels it was more an unconscious bias than a deliberate plot against women. Despite dozens of publications stressing the role of perishables and women, it has not resonated with Paleo-indian scholars.



Researchers gravitate to what fascinates them. A study by the Society of American Archaeology found that a higher percentage of men are interested in lithics as an analytical tool, while a higher percentage of women are interested in ceramics. Men prefer Paleolithic or Neolithic periods; women prefer state societies and historic and proto-historic periods. Scientists are now more aware of the danger that our own cultural

predisposition introduces prejudgments when interpreting the past. How can we use this information to seek Paleo Women? Some answers will be offered in Part II of this story in the next issue. K. Hill, *Mammoth Trumpet*, Vol. 25, No. 1, January 2010.

Digital US Topo. Maps are the next generation of topographic maps from the U.S. Geological Survey. (<http://nationalmap.usgs.gov/ustopo>) The maps are designed to look, feel, and perform like the traditional paper

topographic maps for which the USGS (<http://www.usgs.gov/>) is known. In contrast to paper-based maps, US digital topo maps provide technical advantages that support faster, wider public distribution and enable basic, on-screen geographic analysis for all users.

Arranged in the familiar 7.5-minute quadrangle format, US Topo maps are free on the Web. Each map quadrangle is constructed in GeoPDF® format from key layers of geographic data – orthoimagery, roads, geographic names, topographic contours, and hydrographic features – found in The National Map (<http://nationalmap.gov/>), a nationwide collection of integrated data from local, state, federal, and other sources.

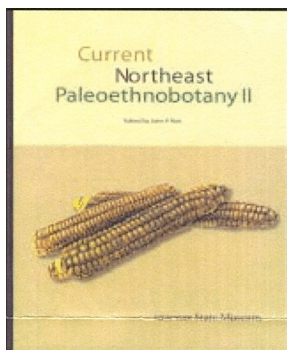
The Archaeology Channel hosts many video archaeology features on the nonprofit streaming-media Web site (<http://www.archaeologychannel.org>). The latest program, “Mayas Saving Maya Culture” shows an association of Tz’utujil Maya people from Santiago Atitlan, Guatemala, struggling to establish a cultural center and archaeological site museum at the lakeside site of Chuitinamit, once home to the pre-Hispanic Maya King Tepepul, now badly looted.

Publications

Plan B 4.0: Mobilizing to Save Civilization, Lester R. Brown. Widely praised by scientists and the media. Paper, \$17.; 2-4 books, \$14. Each; 5-10, \$10. Each, etc. Earth Policy Institute, epi@earthpolicy.org.

New York City Neighborhoods: the 18th Century, Nan A. Rothschild, 2008. A volume in the series **Foundations of Archaeology**. Paper \$42.50 plus \$5. shipping. Eliot Werner Publications, eliotwerner@optonline.net, www.eliotwerner.com.

The Encyclopedia of Archaeology, Deborah Pearsall, ed. In chief, Elsevier. \$895. for 3 vol. set. Available online via ScienceDirect.



Current Northeast Paleoethnobotany II, John P. Hart, ed., N.Y.S. Museum Bulletin 512, 2008. \$29.95. **S=convertCurrent Northeast Paleoethnobotany** now on sale, \$17.48. Two volume set, \$58.78, including shipping and tax for N.Y.S. residents.

Archaeologist’s Toolkit, Larry J. Zimmerman and William Green, eds., 2003. 7 vols. On Design, Survey, Excavation, Artifacts, Archaeobiology, Curating, Presenting the Past. One vol., \$22.95; 7 vols., \$96.39. 15% discount for web orders. AltaMira Press, 800-462-6420.

DVDs on Archaeology include – “This is Archaeology: Unearthing the Past” \$109.; “The Origins of Civilization” 3 - \$159.; “This is Archaeology! \$189.; “Archaeology: Evidence

of the Past” \$199.; “Virtual Dig: A Simulated Archaeological Excavation of a Middle Paleolithic Site in France” CD-ROM \$129.; “Archaeological Dating: Retracing Time” \$109. Custserv@insight-media.com, 800-233-9910.

Resources for Teachers

With **AnthroNotes** now on-line(anthrooutreach@SI.edu), you can post the link on Blackboard.com for use by students. Google Images can show students the latest fossil or primate finds, among many other things.

Useful searchable databases, such as EBSCOHost Research, JSTOR, ProQuest Direct, and eHRAF (Human Relations Area Files) support student research. Among the many articles students may find are – “Cooking Up Bigger Brains,” “The Evolution of Human Skin and Skin Color,” “What Finnish Grandmothers Reveal About Human Evolution,” “Natural Selection and the elusiveness of happiness,” “The role of climate in human mitochondrial DNA evolution: a reappraisal.

The human and environmental impacts of the changing Arctic are explored in a 2007 exhibit at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of Natural History called *Arctic: A Friend Acting Strangely*. It can be viewed on the web at www.forces.si.edu/arctic.

Lessons from these northern studies show that: 1) change is inevitable - but we can influence its outcome; 2) Listen to elders; 3) Adapt, because we probably can’t force the system; 4) Understand the science, because it’s more important than ever before; 5) Learn lessons from the past – like the danger of over-exploiting resources.

Project Archaeology begins offering online courses nationally January 18, 2010. To register for a course, contact Madlyn Runburg at mrunburg@umnh.utah.edu. It is a joint program of the U.S. Bureau of Land Management and Montana State U.

Its new curriculum, *Investigating Shelter*, lets children discover how people lived in North America long ago and is suitable for grades 3 - 5. The new curriculum contains a complete archaeological investigation of a Pawnee earthlodge. There are 8 other shelter investigations: Plains tipi, Northwest Coast plank house, Slave cabin, Ute rock shelter, Historic homestead, Earthfast house, Pueblo, Great Basin wickiup. Professional development opportunities are also available through 27 regional programs. Visit www.projectarchaeology.org/contacts.html for the site nearest you.

Anthropology Explored, Revised and Expanded, Ruth O. Selig, Marilyn R. London, P. Ann Kaupp, eds. 496 pp, paper, \$21.95. 13 new chapters on current topics; 23 chapter updates on new technologies, DNA & genetics, global warming & the environment; a new Introduction; and 36 chapter abstracts. Free *Instructor’s Guide* is available at http://anthropology.si.edu/outreach/Teaching_Packets.html.

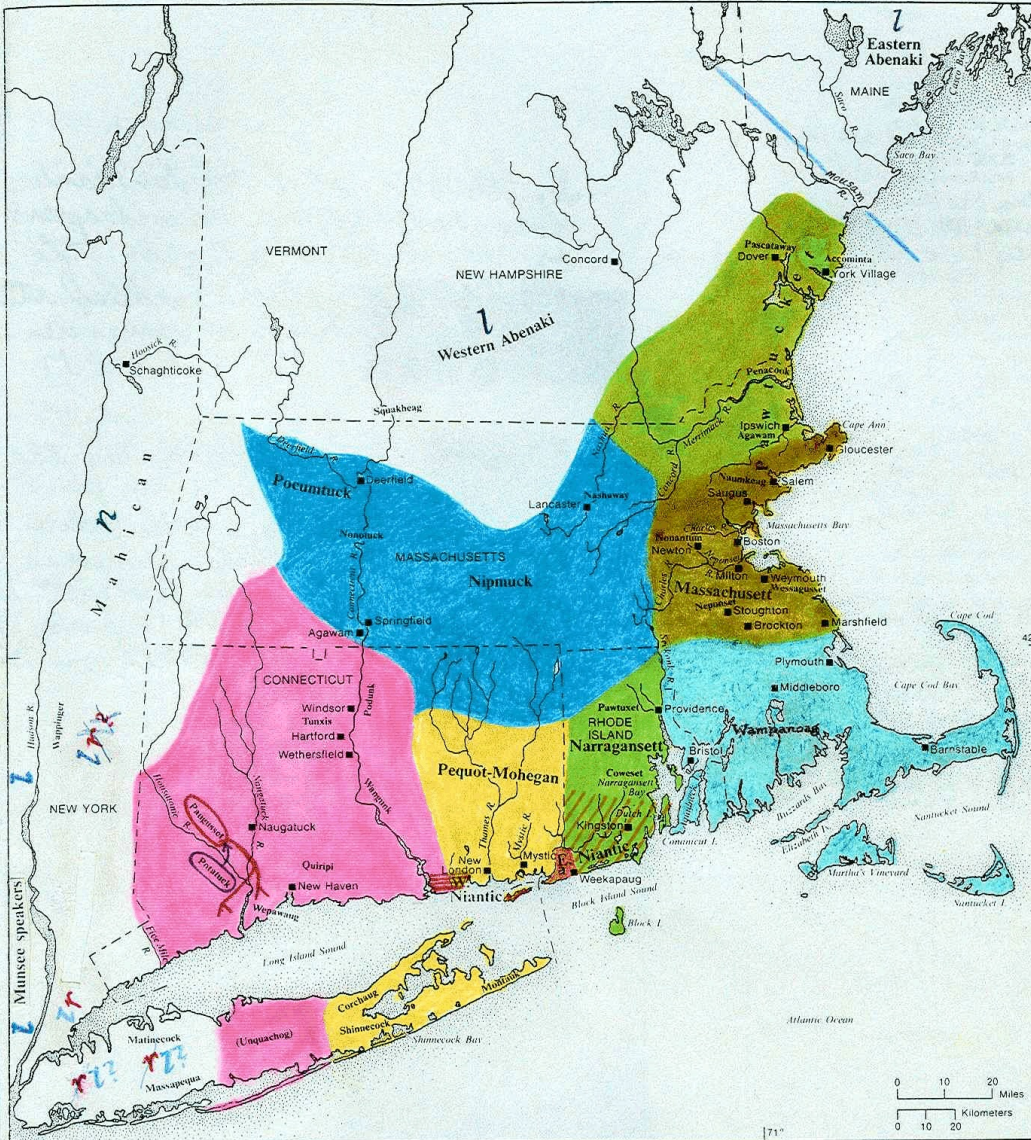
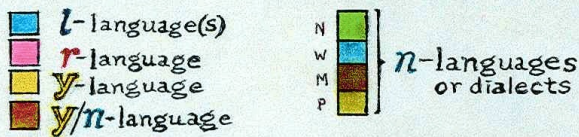


Fig. 1. Tribal territories about 1630. a. Part of Pequot territory before 1617; Pequot territory extended west to the Connecticut River after 1620. The location of the Unquachog in the 17th century is uncertain; if they belonged to the same linguistic subgroup as the Matinecock and Massapequa the boundaries would be different from those shown here. Most of the modern towns were established after 1630.

LANGUAGE AREA APPROXIMATELY EQUALS TRIBAL TERRITORY, THE TWO SOURCES VARY. NOTICE ERRORS IN POSITIONS OF PAUGUSSETT AND POTATUCK.



Map by Bert Salwen: INDIANS OF SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND AND LONG ISLAND: EARLY PERIOD. In B.G. Trigger, editor: *Northeast*, vol. 15 in W.C. Sturtevant, general editor: *Handbook of North American Indians*, Washington, D.C., 1978, Smithsonian Institution.

Combined by Carl Masthay, St. Louis, Mo., 21 March 1997; corrected by Frank T. Siebert, Old Town, Maine, 7 April 1997, but further improved by Ives Goddard, 2009.

l/r/y/n language-variety identification based mostly on classification by J.R. Swanton and T. Michelson (28th Ann Rep BAE, 1913), appearing as Plate 20 in F.G. Speck: NATIVE TRIBES AND DIALECTS OF CONNECTICUT, 43rd Ann Rep BAE [1925-1926], 1928.

was printed in SCAA's Vol. IV, *Languages and Lore of the Long Island Indians*, 1980. It is published as "Some Helps for the Indians..." by Abraham Pierson, who was the Puritan minister in Southampton at the time. No doubt he used Shinnecock and/or Unquachog informants in gathering the language for this Catechism to use in converting the Native people to Christianity.

Converting the Natives was a major undertaking in early colonial society. First, the minister in each town was paid a stipend to minister to them and convert them. Usually an interpreter was necessary. Probably the production of this Catechism was part of that role. Pierson found Southampton not pious enough and left for Branford, CT.

Azariah Horton of Southold, who became a minister in Connecticut, came back to Long Island apparently to minister mainly to the Native people. His Diary lists his pastoral round from Queens to Montauk. He was constantly moving on this round, sleeping in their wigwams, but had to have an interpreter. His Diary is an important ethnographic record of that time.

Cockenoe-d-Long Island was a major translator for most interactions between the Puritans and the Native people, and may have been involved in this catechising translation.

The first missionary to the Long Island Native people was the Rev. Samson Occom, a Mohegan who was asked by the Montaukett to stay with them, translate for them with the English, and educate their children. He did so, and married a Montaukett woman, the daughter of Lion Gardiner and a Montaukett woman.

Occom saw to it that her brothers went to Rev. Eleazer Wheelock's school in Connecticut, where they were educated in the English manner, and became missionaries in the Oneida Territory, New England, and Canada. Jacob Fowler served as a translator for the Americans in the various parleys of the Revolutionary War. This story is printed in SCAA's Vol. III, 2d ed., *The History & Archaeology of the Montauk*, 1993.

This New England/Long Island linguistic map was published in the last issue of the SCAA Newsletter, but it had been updated by Carl Mastay, the compiler, and Dr. Ives Goddard, who is the linguist at the Smithsonian Institution. Note there are more ? on the western Long Island language, as well as up the Hudson River. So this may be considered the best that is known about the Long Island Native languages. The Naugatuck-Quiripi language of southern western Connecticut was also spoken by the Unquachaug of Long Island. A vocabulary of this language

www.storiespast.com produces interactive archaeology modules that are available for free. Contact [mark@storiespast](mailto:mark@storiespast.com) for the URL addresses of the following modules:

“What Do Archaeologists Do?” - interactive module for Virginia Dept. Of Historic Resources; “Landscape and Memory” - interactive module examining landscape from multiple perspectives; “Robert Foster’s Gallely of homes” - building a 17th century house; “The paintings of John White” - Educational module exploring the images of Native Americans as comparative evidence; “Jamestown Archaeology” - two modules: reconstructing a building and working in an archaeology lab; Project Archaeology - see above Shelter series; “At Home in Appalachia” - Installation and web module featuring Appalachian work and crafts; “3 Cultures/3 Peoples” - web exhibit showcasing Native American cultures (in progress); “Lithics and Points” - interactive examples and maps (in progress).

Go Green Initiative is a non-profit providing training and resources for Go Green schools, and serves as a clearinghouse for information on environmental education programs throughout the country. Its programs unite parents, teachers, and students at every level helping schools evaluate environmental impact. The program is free to all schools. www.gogreeninitiative.org.

Collapse by Jared Diamond, 2005, increased knowledge about the relevance of archaeological data to understanding ancient human environmental relationships. Archaeologists have long known the importance of deep time perspectives for understanding plant and animal domestication, beginning of agriculture to the origin of states and political hierarchy. Yet archaeological contributions to contemporary environmental issues are far from mainstream. The tide is turning, as archaeologists publish in ecological scientific journals.

Can archaeologists provide the context for how environments function over millennia or more, which can help us project into the future? Three case studies – the Hawaiian Islands, France’s Rhone Valley, and California’s Channel Islands – illustrate archaeology’s many contributions to understanding the range of ancient human environmental interactions.

One lesson comes from the perils of unchecked population growth that resulted in famine, environmental degradation, and related social and political changes – relevant issues that are rarely addressed in today’s densely populated world. Each of the case studies illustrated how the environment was degraded through this and climatic factors. Torben C. Rick, “Towards a Greener Future: Archaeology and contemporary Environmental Issues,” *AnthroNotes*, Vol. 30, No. 2 , Fall 2009.

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*

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