

NEWSLETTER
Representing Nassau & Suffolk Counties

Vol. 41, No 2
ISSN 1079-2198
Spring 2015

SCAA Annual Meeting

Hoyt Farm Park, Commack

Friday June 19th, 2015

6 PM - Pot Luck Dinner

7:30 PM - Business Meeting

8 PM - Film
"Gardner's Island Manor"

One segment of the SCAA series,
"The Manors of Long Island"

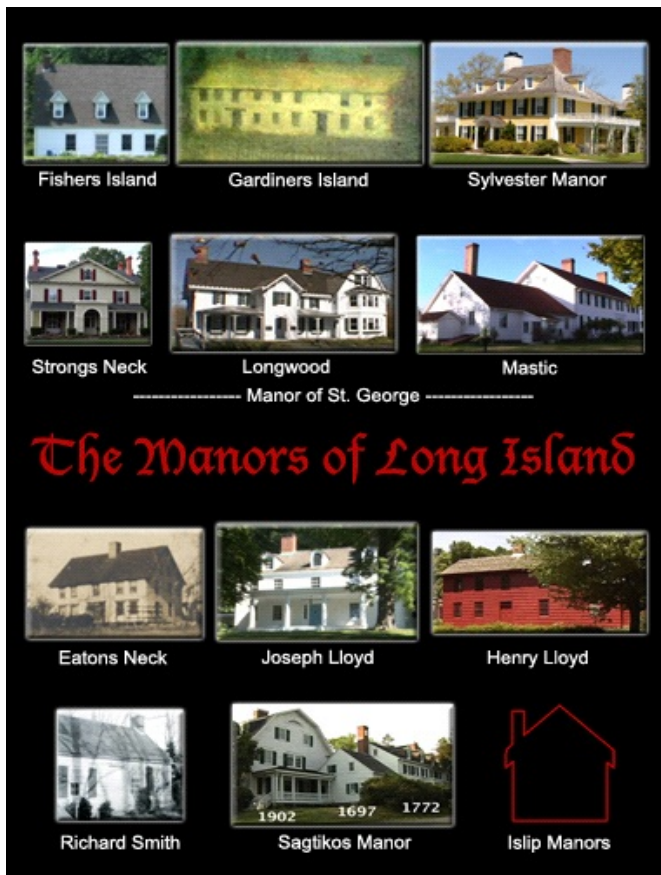
The Rise and Fall of Long Island Archaeology at Stony Brook University

The Anthropology Department at SBU in the 1970s was very social anthropology oriented and had no interest in archaeology except Dr. Ed Lanning as a Peruvian specialist and Dr. Phil Weigand as a Mesoamerican specialist. Archaeological sites on Long Island were rapidly disappearing through an economic boom and burst in building. A number of mature grad students interested in regional archaeology were appalled at the destruction and coalesced to found the Suffolk County Archaeological Association, allied with the staff at Nassau County's Garvies Point Museum as the Nassau County Archaeological Committee, in 1973.

The group was supported by department faculty members Dr. Margaret Wheeler, who participated in a similar activity in Toronto as faculty there, and Dr. Phil Weigand, who had always worked with local people to help them learn about and value their archaeological heritage when teaching in Illinois, etc. *There would be no S.C.A.A. without Phil's interest and support.* After becoming departmental chair, he coordinated local excavations with staff from Brookhaven National Laboratory and other volunteers. S.C.A.A. received State certification and 501(c)3 status in 1975 and began an active campaign to educate local governments about their responsibility to require archaeological testing before issuing building permits for sensitive areas. For decades, archaeological workshops and programs were held annually in coordination with the Long Island Studies Council.

S.C.A.A. received grants to develop an archaeological sensitivity map of Long Island, still in use, and to sponsor a conference, "Archaeology, Public Policy, and Planning, featuring Suffolk County Planner Lee Koppelman and lawyers from the Hofstra Law School pointing out the need for better preservation policy. Another conference reunited the early archaeologists of Long Island, including Dr. Carlyle Smith, the first published scientific archaeologist of Long Island. He marveled that SBU did not have a strong local archaeology presence, as the land grant colleges of the mid-west (he was at the University of Kansas) always hired a regional archaeologist first to relate the department's work to the local public.

With the need for archaeologists to carry out the increasingly required testing, Phil organized, with Ed Johannemann and Laurie Schroeder Billadello, the Long Island Archaeology Project in the Anthropology



Department. Scores of projects were tested and a great deal of archaeological information was gained. When Phil left the Department around 1980 for Arizona U.- Flagstaff and El Colegio Michoacan, near his ground-breaking World Heritage Site, Los Guachimontones, south of Guadalajara, the Anthropology Department required the LIAP to leave, taking the sizable collection of excavated artifacts. LIAP relocated to the Suffolk County Blydenburgh Park; when it disbanded in a few years due to lack of work, the artifacts were given to the entity which had required the work. The reports, most of them of county parks, were left with the Suffolk County Historic Services Division; duplicates of some of them are stored with SCAA at the Blydenburgh house.



Dr. Phil Weigand, 1937-2011,
Founder of LI's archaeological studies at SBU.

Meanwhile, the Department had hired Dr. Kent Lightfoot as the first regional -focus archaeologist. Kent did a lot of ground-breaking work in his field schools, especially at Mashomac Preserve on Shelter Island, and the Middle Island site which proved how Native people lived in the Winter. When Berkeley U. offered Kent the retiring Dr. James Deetz's position, SBU did not really try to keep him here. The SBU Anthropology Department hired a religion specialist for Kent's line.

The SCAA group was astonished there would be no more regional archaeology, so grad students Gaynell Stone, Gretchen Gwynne, and others sought help from County Historian Chris Vagts and Historical Society directors Wally Broegee and others to ask SBU President Marburger's help. Upon meeting with him, he informed the group that he had no real power, it was all in the hands of the faculty. When Chris Vagts asked Marburger if "we should take our case to the Sorbonne," he relented. When told that training was needed for students to participate in the demand for

archaeological work that was developing, Marburger decided to create the Institute for Long Island Archaeology, to be supported by the contracts performed and the director to teach the Long Island Archaeology course.

Dr. David Bernstein was hired to direct the Institute's CRM work, receive all NYS DOE work, and teach, which flourished for many years. One of the most interesting projects was resurrecting archaeologically and visually the 19th century use of Coram Pond as the "Venice of Long Island," complete with restaurants, gondolas, and gondoliers – an early 'Disney World' type destination. ILIA also housed the L.I. collections of the late Queens College archaeologist Dr. Lynn Ceci, when the Anthropology Department there refused it. However, work slowed during the 2008 and more recent recession, and Dr. Bernstein decided to retire. The disposition of the many artifacts excavated is described below.



NY State Museum

Allison Manfra McGovern and Mark Tweedie, both of whom worked for ILIA, have worked to move the SBU collections to safe havens. Dr. Bernstein initiated contact with the New York State Museum, who originally would only take the DOE project reports, but later accepted them all. It took Mark Tweedie, working with Jon Lothrop and Andrea Lain, over a year of correspondence and organization to get the artifact collections and records transferred to the NYSM. Mark estimates that more than 500 banker's boxes (rectangular heavy gauge cardboard boxes with perforated handles on the sides) of cultural materials and paperwork were transferred. The NYSM is gradually computer cataloging to place artifact information on-line, so presumably the Long Island materials will some day be easily accessible.



Dr. McGovern and Mark Tweedie, ILIA's collections manager/project supervisor, took the East Hampton Town and Southampton Town artifacts (before it was known the NYSM would take the Long Island artifacts and reports) to

the Eastville Community Historical Society in Sag Harbor, where she and director Dr. Georgette Grier Key are establishing an Archaeology Learning Center and keeping the materials close to their origins for further research.

A Conversation about "Excavations at the Thompson House Site, Setauket, NY"

Local scholars Laurie Billadello and Gary Hammond commented on the article by Brad Phillippi in the last SCAA newsletter, Vol. 41, No. 1. Their comments are printed below. A reply by Brad may appear in the next issue of the newsletter.

Laurie Billadello, archaeologist and Museum Education Coordinator Manager for SCAA, comments –

When attempting to date the construction of the latest kitchen wing (noted as "K" on Figure 3), the author states "...diagnostic artifacts narrow the date of construction to sometime between 1790 and 1820".

I would assume that the Thompsons didn't run out and purchase a new dinner service, utensils and cookware after constructing the new wing and propose that the artifact assemblage reflects what was already in use at the farmstead. The kitchen wing could, therefore, be later than the actual artifact assemblage.

The "K" wing's distance from the main house may indicate that it was a summer kitchen, not that "...food preparation and cooking were removed from the original service wing and relocated to the attached kitchen..." permanently.

The refuse midden documented outside the back door of the "K" wing is well represented in other eighteenth and nineteenth century houses. I've even seen such middens under floorboards that were replaced (i.e. Second House, Montauk and Miller House, Miller Place). I've always found this practice inconsistent with the usual attempts to carry refuse away from the house resulting in large historical middens. My best guess is that during frigid spells with accumulated snow and ice (as we had this past winter) sometimes forced people to throw their refuse out the back door (which would, however, negate my proposition that this was exclusively a summer kitchen).

The presence of the quartz flakes and finished tools can also be explained by the Thompsons' excavation of Native American shell middens for fertilizer use. Their deposit on the property may have been coincidental or they may have been recognized and plucked from the midden material as souvenirs. I sincerely doubt that the slaves and laborers were trying their hand at prehistoric technology.

The inference that enslaved workers were initially housed in the main house to minimize "unwanted impediments such as work slowdowns, overt sabotage, theft, or absconding" is a transplantation of Southern attitudes of masters for their slaves. The paintings of William Sidney Mount reflect a kinder, although certainly not equitable, view of master and slave locally. It simply may have been

more convenient to house their slaves at hand, especially those that were domestic slaves. Their placement in the lean-to attic is, certainly, a reflection of their lesser status.

Thank you for the opportunity of commenting on the Thompson House archaeological investigation.

Gary Hammond, former Curator, Nassau County Museum

However, after reading Bradley Phillippi's article on the "Excavations at the Thompson House" I felt the need to comment.

As someone who spent 38 years working in museums I must comment on Mr. Phillippi's statement of "Throwing trash out the backdoor could be interpreted as an act of resistance as it occurred during the same period the Thompsons attempted to transform the utilitarian yard by removing signs of labor. However, laborers may have simply used the practice as a way to cope with the material conditions of existence and to ease their heavy workload." Although some might want to interpret throwing kitchen waste out the kitchen doorway or window an act of resistance, it most definitely is an act of convenience. Finding waste deposits outside of kitchen doorways or under kitchen windows is not uncommon, and was used the same way as filling up old wells, or outhouses, or other refuse piles discovered around historic properties. How many times have we discovered refuse thrown under porches, or "buried" under floorboards of historic buildings (I remember Huntington Town Historian Rufus Langhans showing me the excavation done under the floorboards of the Arsenal in Huntington, or the ceramic and other remains found under the floor of the Suydam Homestead in Centerport – including Huntington Pottery redware fragments).

Over twenty years ago Old Sturbridge Village recreated a typical refuse pile just outside the kitchen doorway/window of the Pliny Freeman farmhouse – broken redware, chicken bones, etc. I remember saying at the time that if we tried to recreate this at Old Bethpage Village Restoration (OBVR) everything would be gone within the day – picked up as souvenirs by school groups. Right adjacent to the "pile" was the entrance to the root cellar – stone steps, low clearance – something I wished we could have recreated at OBVR, but it also shouted out "lawsuit waiting to happen" here on Long Island.

We must eliminate all preconceived notions or expectations, and 21st century knowledge and place ourselves into the lives of those living in the time period – open hearth cooking, and later using wood burning cast iron stoves. I would recommend Mr. Phillippi and everyone else involved in archaeology to try to experience cooking this way. The heat, flies or bees (no screening on doors or windows), constant watching and feeding the fire, chopping vegetables, making bread dough, keeping the children out of the fire - in other words multi-tasking! There was no kitchen garbage can, maybe a slop bucket to feed carrot tops, etc. to the hogs. So the convenient way to dispose of refuse was out the door or window – this was long before our knowledge of sanitation and disease. We

must remember that kitchens, and if you were lucky enough to have one, an out kitchen was the place where all sorts of “domestic” activities took place. The Dutch on Long Island many times even had separate free standing kitchen buildings – the Schenck House now located at OBVR, when originally located in Manhasset probably had one. These rooms or buildings were where cooking, baking, washing & ironing clothes and bedding, plucking goose feathers, rendering lard, dipping candles, making soap, etc. all occurred. So I truly believe that convenience, and not any form of protest was exhibited at the Thompson House. Many years ago I remember the archeologists at Garvies Point asking the Museum’s History Curators to help identify the artifacts discovered at the Wolver Hollow site, thereby helping to interpret the use and placement within the context of the site. This is something we all need to remember – historians need the input of the archeologist, and at the same time the archeologist needs the input of the historian, craftsman or reenactor to realize the true potential of archeological finds.

Resources

New York State Archaeological Association’s *The Bulletin*’s back issues, beginning in 1954, are now available on-line at www.NYSAA Publications.

New Netherland Connections: Intimate Networks and Atlantic Ties in Seventeenth Century America, Susanah Shaw Romney. Info: <http://newamsterdamhistorycenter.org/support> .

Grant opportunities for Digital Preservation – [www:The Humanities Open Book Program](http://www.The Humanities Open Book Program); [www.The Legacy Resource Management Program \(DOD\)](http://www.The Legacy Resource Management Program (DOD)) www.Digitizing Hidden Special Collections and Archives info: www.laellison@digitalantiquity.org

Acclaimed author Russell Shorto’s talk, “From Amsterdam to Albany” may be viewed on-line: <http://vimeo.com/99862384>

Records of New Amsterdam, 7 vols. \$50. Including Shipping www.newnetherlandinstitute.org/shop/books/the-records-of-new-amsterdam-7-volume-set/

Amsterdam Slavery Heritage Guide, written in English and Dutch, 100 color images, New York and Amsterdam. \$15. Amsterdamheritageguide@gmail.com

The Archaeology of Race in the Northeast, Christopher N. Matthews & Allison Manfra McGovern, eds. U. Press of Florida, 2014. www.upf.com.

Schooldays in New England, 1650-1900, The Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife, will be held June 19-21 in Deerfield, MA – the 39th meeting of the Seminar. Info: www.dublinseminar@historic-deerfield.org.

Origins - Light on New York’s Founders, a visionary short video of the wide range of people who founded New Amsterdam. See at www.nyorigins.org.

Publications of the SC 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 8.625% sales tax in N.Y. State for individuals. Vol. I, Vol. IV, & VI are out of print.

- 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*
- DVD - *The Sugar Connection: Holland, Barbados, Shelter Island* - 2 hrs. \$50. + \$4.31 tax + \$6. Shipping = \$60.31

Student Series (Including shipping)

- Booklet: *A Way of Life: Prehistoric Natives of L.I.* \$6.
- Study Pictures: *Coastal Native Americans* 8.
- Wall Chart: *Native Technology* (26x39"-3 colors) 14.
- Map: *Native Long Island* (26x39"-3 colors) 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)	\$15.	Individual	\$25.
Family	35.	Sustaining	50.
Contributing	100.	Patron	100.
Life Member	400.		
Date:.....			
Name:.....			
Address:.....			
City/State/Zip:.....			
Phone No.			
Willing to volunteer?			
Occupation:			
Send check to: Suffolk County Archaeological Association, P.O. Box 1542, Stony Brook, NY 11790 - Tel: 631-929-8725			

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, The Phillips Foundation, The Gerry Charitable Trust, JP Morgan Chase, RDL Gardner Foundation, Virginia Barath, Harriet Gamper, Stanley Wisniewski, and County and State Legislators, especially Steve Englebright.

Douglas DeRenzo, President; Dave Thompson, Vice-President; Elena Eritta, VP Marine Archeology; Laurie Billadello, Corresponding Sec.; Gaynell Stone, Phd., Recording Sec.; Randi Vogt, Treasurer, Charles D. Miller III, Trustee.

WEB address: www.scaa-ny.org - scarchaeology@gmail.com