

NEWSLETTER
Representing Nassau & Suffolk Counties

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New Identification of 19th and Early 20th Century Carvers of Long Island Decoys

A Symposium, *The Re-emergence of Charles Bunn – America's Greatest Shore Bird Carver & The Bennett/Cuffee Reattribution*, was held Saturday, October 30th at the Shinnecock Nation Cultural Center & Museum for a large audience. The painstaking research of Jamie Reason (of Cherokee & Anglo descent) and Dave Bennett (descended from the Bennetts of Gardiner's Island from 1639) pinpoints who actually carved the decoys, both water and shore birds, that formerly have been attributed to 'Chief' Eugene Cuffee, Obadiah Verity, Will Southern, Elmer Crowell, Bowman, and others.

Their research, aided by many collectors and the descendants of 19th century hunters who used the decoys, utilized oral history, documentary research, pictorial analysis, material culture analysis, and the dissection of a Bunn decoy to determine his technique of carving.

Since some of these decoys, as American folk art, bring up to \$800,000. at auction, there is an emphasis on the attribution to a carver. It is an arena, according to Jamie Reason, which has lacked solid scholarship. The two researchers feel the carvers they have identified – Charles Bunn of the Shinnecock Reservation and William Henry Bennett of East Hampton – are first class, the finest of their time. *Decoy Magazine* has published a small portion of their research. Up-coming issues of this Newsletter will contain articles detailing their findings. Stay tuned.



Jamie Reason (L) holding a Bunn decoy and
Dave Bennett (R) holding a William Henry Bennett decoy

Dutch Marine Architect Re-creates the Boat That Enabled the Exploration of the New World

Gerald de Weerd, marine architect and archaeologist and director of the 'Terschelling Museum, on an island off the coast of Holland, has recreated the small (16') boat that enabled explorers (such as Henry Hudson, William Barents, etc.) to leave their ships in deep water and come ashore. The details of this boat have been unknown for 350 years, but de Weerd has excavated a number of those which sank. This, plus the visual evidence in paintings of the 'Golden Age' in Holland, have enabled him to re-create the boat and its technique of building.

Chip Reynolds, skipper of the replica ship of Henry Hudson's, the *Half Moon*, and director of the New Netherland Museum in Albany, organized the project to build a replica of the boat to complement the *Half Moon*, which had one.



Gerald de Weerd and volunteer
(in baseball cap) pegging first
plank to bottom of boat

According to de Weerd, every ship had one on deck or trailing behind in good weather, and kits on board to build one or more in case the first was lost (which happened to Henry Hudson). Last Fall and this Fall de Weerd has been in Albany using 17th century techniques to build the boat, the only exception being the use of power tools as needed. Part of the process of building the boat was filmed by cameraman Jon Bonci and Dr. Gaynell Stone of SCAA.

Obtaining the live oak wood for the keel and bow was difficult and expensive, as was the white oak for the planking. No screws are used; the boat is fastened together with wood pegs, therefore cannot come apart.

Replicas of this essential work boat are tied next to the *Batavia*, a replica of the Dutch merchant vessel which foundered off Australia in the 17th century (and the same type which came to the New Amsterdam harbor). The *Batavia* is docked at a marine park site in Lelystad, Holland, where a sister ship, *The Seven Provinces*, is under construction. The country's marine archaeology

museum and laboratories are also there, as well as the largest collection of historic ship cannon in the world.



Replica small boats next to the *Batavia*

SCAA Continues Filming L. I. Manor's Dutch 'Roots'

In August English cameraman Sean Caveille and SCAA's Dr. Gaynell Stone spent 10 days in Holland filming the 17th century Dutch landscape of Nathaniel Sylvester, founder of Sylvester Manor on Shelter Island. The Manor was established in 1652 to provision the Sylvester family's sugar plantations on Barbados.



Sean Caveille filming the Dutch traditional barn and home under one thatched roof used from the Middle Ages to today

The English Sylvester family had gone to Amsterdam in the early 1600s for freedom of conscience, and perhaps to profit in the world's hot spot for international trade. Due to being in an economic doldrum during the late 19th century industrialization of the world, Holland's 17th century buildings and landscape have been preserved. That, plus the 17th century being their Golden Age of painting, enables the visual re-creation of Nathaniel Sylvester's world in Holland.

Several knowledgeable scholars on Holland and its role in 17th century global trade were also interviewed for the SCAA film, *The Sugar Connection: Holland, Barbados, Shelter Island*.

Correction

In the last edition (Winter) of the Newsletter, a story, *Long Island Archaeological History*, was illustrated by a photo of four of L.I.'s earliest archaeologists. The man second from R was identified as Ed Kaeser (who also is an early Island archaeologist); the person should have been identified as Matt Schreiner, who worked on many excavations with Ralph Solecki and Stan Wisniewski.

Regional Archaeology News

New York Unearthed, the archaeology museum holding thousands of artifacts from the Stadt Huis and other excavations in lower Manhattan, has been closed by the South Street Seaport Museum, of which it was a part. South Street Seaport maintains that an operating deficit required cutting staff, including the curator of the museum. Attendance at the museum dropped sharply after 9/11, but is now recovering. While closed to the public, apparently *New York Unearthed* is open to school groups by appointment. Regional archaeologists have protested strongly about this lack of oversight for the important collections housed there.

The Hofstra University Archaeology Field School was held July 6 - August 6 at the King Manor Museum in Jamaica, Queens. It was conducted by Dr. Christopher Matthews, Assistant Professor of Anthropology and 11 students. Several contract archaeology excavations have taken place in the past when the site was disturbed for water, sewer, etc. lines, producing 4,000 artifacts. This is the first time research-oriented excavation has been done.

An 1842 map of the site shows numerous outbuildings the excavators are seeking to locate. They are trying to find evidence of the workers on the farm. Christopher Smith, original owner of the farm, had nine slaves, but Rufus King was anti-slavery, so he hired workers. How might that be revealed in the archaeological record?

Since the site is located in the larger park, park goers could observe the progress of the excavation, as well as local government officials who visited. Visiting hours for the public were held the last two Thursdays and Fridays, and an Open House, to which regional archaeologists and officials were invited, was held near the end. A lecture series relating to the project - Dr. David Bernstein on prehistoric archaeology, Drs. Diana Wall and Nan Rothschild on N.Y. City historical archaeology, and Nadezha Williams on the formation of the museum -- was held at noon on Wednesdays.

The project generated a great deal of interest by the public, and was widely covered by all local and regional newspapers. Lab work processing the artifacts will be done over the winter in preparation for next year's excavation, which Dr. Matthews plans to continue for three years. The next Newsletter will contain an overview of the site discoveries by Dr. Matthews.

The 2004 Stony Brook University Archaeological Field School was an underwater field school held in the Hudson River off Croton Point Park in Westchester County for the first half of the six week course. It is directed by adjunct professor/graduate student Daria Merwin, who has had wide previous underwater experience, most recently on shipwrecks in the Hudson.

The students (in wetsuits and snorkels) dig test holes with scoops every 15 feet along a tape line (transect) for about 150 feet. They have retrieved more than 100 stone cores, flakes, and a few projectile points (probably c. 2,000 years old) from the site, which would have been a habitation zone rich with natural resources before being inundated by rising sea levels.

SCAA's archaeological field schools for Nassau and for Suffolk County students and were held at Blydenburgh County Park in July, where they experience all aspects of archaeology. The students finished excavating the feature behind the 1860 wing of the house, probably the family's well. How to interpret it for the public is under discussion.

State Archaeology News

Collections at the New York State Museum had traditionally focused on prehistoric archaeology (the work of State Archaeologists William Ritchie and Robert Funk). Beginning in the 1970s and accelerating in the 1990s with the excavation of many sites of Fort Orange (Albany), the historical archeology collections have grown, resulting in the need for a curator. Dr. Charles Fisher, formerly director of the Cultural Resources Survey Program of the State Museum, began serving as Curator of Historical Archaeology in April 2004. The Museum plans to develop an Albany Archaeology Center and install a long-term exhibit on Albany archaeology, which had many early Dutch remains.

The N.Y. Archaeological Council Human Remains Committee is querying the NYAC membership about ways to reach out to local planners and administrators on human remains issues. An example from Orange County has resulted in a local human remains ordinance being enacted. Last year's finding of Native American skeletons on Shelter Island has resulted in a Shinnecock committee meeting with Shelter Island government to develop such an ordinance, presumably not finalized yet.

Community Archaeology Certificate at Schenectady County Community College

This non-credit certificate offers archaeology students an educational opportunity to learn about regional archaeology and provides the knowledge and skills needed to volunteer in community archaeology. Students complete 6 courses and 60 volunteer hours (30 lab and 30 fieldwork). This Certificate of Proficiency is recognized by NYAC.

This Community Archaeology Program is supported by staff from the SCCC, the Schenectady County Historical Society, Union College, SUNY Utica, the Hartgen Associates, and others. There are extensive on-going

excavations at a local school and historic sites throughout the county. Why not in Suffolk County?

Cultural Resource Historic Structure Survey Underway

Since 2003 the N.Y. District (Corps), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, has been studying Fire Island to Montauk Point for storm damage reduction, from Montauk Highway to the coastline. Community and historical society groups have participated in the attempt to locate structures, landscapes, and archaeological sites that may be eligible for the National Register. Dr. Christopher Ricciardi, archaeologist, is contact person for suggestions. Contact him at 212-264-0204.

Resources

Nineteenth & Early Twentieth Century Domestic Site Archaeology in N.Y. State, John Hart & Charles Fisher, eds., 2000. Bulletin 495, NYSM Publication Sales, Room 3140, CEC, Albany, NY 12230. \$34.95. This volume includes "The Betsy Prince Site: An Early Freed Black Domestic Site on Long Island," Mark LoRusso.

The University of Rhode Island is now offering a 5-year master's degree program in archaeological oceanography - targeting deep water archaeology using unmanned submersibles and robotic excavators. Next summer's expedition will be with noted explorer Robert Ballard (of Titanic fame) in the Mediterranean. Details are available at www.uri.edu/news/ballard/institute.htm.

Residential development to include an archaeological preserve: the new Waters Edge/Woodlands development at Saratoga Springs will include the 26 acre Arrowhead Casino site, with remains from 10,500 years ago to a nightclub which burned in 1969. The homeowners association, the NYS OPR&HP, the Archaeological Conservancy, and local archaeologists are working to create educational materials and a long-term management plan for the preserve.

"High Tech and High Stakes: Naval Power in the Hellenistic Age," Dr. William Murray at Breslin Hall, Hofstra U., November 14th at 2:00 PM. Sponsored by the L.I. Society, Archaeological Institute of America. Info: 516-466-0560.

The Society for Historical Archaeology meets with the Society for Post Medieval Archaeology and the Society for Underwater Archaeology at the University of York in York, England, January 5 - 10, 2005 with the theme, "Continuity and Change." "Interpreting the Early Modern World" is the topic of major symposiums, which is related to the Sylvester Manor archaeological excavation and the SCAA film *The Sugar Connection: Holland, Barbados, Shelter Island*.

The Island at the Center of the World: the Epic Story of Dutch Manhattan and the Forgotten Colony That Shaped America, by Russell Shorto, 2004. Doubleday, \$27.50. Based on the translations of early New Netherland records by Charles Gehring. Russell Shorto has "created a book that will permanently alter the way we regard our collective past," says Janet Maslin of the *New York Times*. He uncovers the fact that the Dutch presence was more vital and enduring than has been acknowledged. Dr. Stone of SCAA has used this evidence for years in her presentations on "Evidence of Dutch Culture in Coastal New York" for the N.Y. Council for the Humanities.

The National Museum of the American Indian opened its new building on the Mall in Washington, DC with a Grand Procession of Native peoples from throughout the Western Hemisphere on September 21st. There was a 6 day festival of performances and cultural programs, plus Native foods and crafts. For museum members, the new publication is the glossy color magazine, *American Indian: Celebrating Native Traditions & Communities*. Memberships start at \$20.

"Sweet Toths in the Stone Age: Did Civilization Begin with Malted Milk?" An article by Doug Alexander in the November 2003 *Odyssey* outlines the archaeological evidence that at least by 6,000 years ago there is chemical evidence of malting grains, one of the steps of making beer. Scholar Merryn Dineley suggests that if archaeologists find grain in association with a smooth level floor and vessels that these aren't the tools needed to make bread.

Societies in Eclipse: Archaeology of the Eastern Woodlands Indians, AD 1400-1700, David Brose, C.W. Cowan, R.C. Mainfort, eds. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, 2001. \$29.95 paper. This 13 chapter overview give a long perspective that shows there was not always cultural extinction, thus belying the title.

The Archaeology of Colonial Encounters: Comparative Perspectives, Gil J. Stein, ed., SAR Press, 2004. \$24.95 paper.

Archaeological Dialogues, a leading journal for debating innovative issues in contemporary archaeology. Free samples online at: www.journals.cambridge.org/jid-ARD

Archaeology: The Comic, Johannes H.N. Loubster. Alta Mira Press, 2003. \$24.95 paper. A very original approach to introducing the science of archaeology... ideal for school classroom curriculums. .

Native Americans and Archaeologists: Stepping Stones to Common Ground, Nina Swidler, K. Dongoske, R. Anyon, A. Downer, eds. SAA and Alta Mira Press, 1997. \$26.95 paper.

Indigenous Archaeology: American Indian Values and Scientific Practice, Joe Watkins. 2001, Alta Mira Press, \$26.95 paper.

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. + \$6. Shipping, both plus 8.50% sales tax in N.Y. State for individuals. Vol. I is out of print; a few copies of Cols. 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.		

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Willing to volunteer?

Occupation:

Send check to: Suffolk County Archaeological Association,
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