

ANNUAL MEETING

Wednesday, June 16

Hoyt Farm Park, New Hwy., Commack

6:00 PM - Pot luck dinner

7:00 PM - Meeting & election of proposed officers

President - Douglas DeRenzo
V-President - David Thompson
V-President - Elena Eritta
Rec. Sec. - Dr. Gaynell Stone
Corresp. Sec. - Laurie Billadello
Treasurer - Randi Vogt

7:30 PM - Dessert and showing of SCAA film,

**"The Sugar Connection: Holland, Barbados,
Shelter Island" -- the documentary that
rewrites Long Island history**



Dr. Chris Matthews and Jennifer Coplin laying out transect at Manor of St. George, Strong's Neck, NY.

Currently standing is the 1845 home of Judge Selah Strong, and fortunately a 19th century picture exists of the original c.1690 Dutch H-frame cottage, the second home, a center hall structure with end chimneys, a Dutch barn, and outbuildings. Family lore and analysis of the picture led to the surmise that the earlier structures would be to the west of the current building. N-S transects were laid out and test holes were flagged each 5 meters.



Sylvester Manor, Shelter Island, New York

Archaeological Testing at the Manor of St. George

On May 24 and 25 Dr. Chris Matthews and Jenna Coplin, archaeologists in the Anthropology Department, Hofstra University, led a group of volunteers from S.C.A.A. in excavating test holes at the original Manor site on Strong's Neck.

About twenty test holes revealed an array of ceramics from slip ware and red ware to porcelain, feather edge, white ware, transfer pattern ware, etc., as well as bricks, coal, and square cut and wire nails. Many of the items pre-date the current 1845 structure, so would probably be remains from the earlier house.

A silver hand wrought pin, an embossed decorative clay pipe stem, and a pewter button were interesting, as well as a stone foundation. Further work will determine if it is one of the homes or one of the outbuildings.

Archaeology at this site, as well as Matthews and Coplin's excavations at the Joseph Lloyd Manor, will be part of the sequel to **The Sugar Connection: Holland, Barbados, Shelter Island**, which focused on only one of the six manors in Suffolk County – Sylvester Manor. **The Manors of Long Island** documentary will explore Lloyd Manor, Manor of St. George, Fisher's Island, Gardiner's Island, and Sagtikos Manor.

Archaeology done at the Henry Lloyd Manor by Dr. Toni Silver, Dr. John Vetter, and Dr. David Bernstein will be included in the film – giving the public the first look at this unknown information.

Fire Record Undercuts Clovis Comet Theory?

Richard Firestone of the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and numerous co-authors announced in 2001, based on extensive chemical evidence, that a thin layer of sediment overlying Clovis-age sites across North America resulted from a devastating extra-terrestrial impact which triggered “extreme wildfires” across the continent 12,900 years ago. This destroyed the food of Pleistocene mammals which Clovis culture people depended upon, which obliterated them. They were replaced by groups with a more generalized way of life. The PBS program NOVA produced a segment on it call the “Last Extinction.”

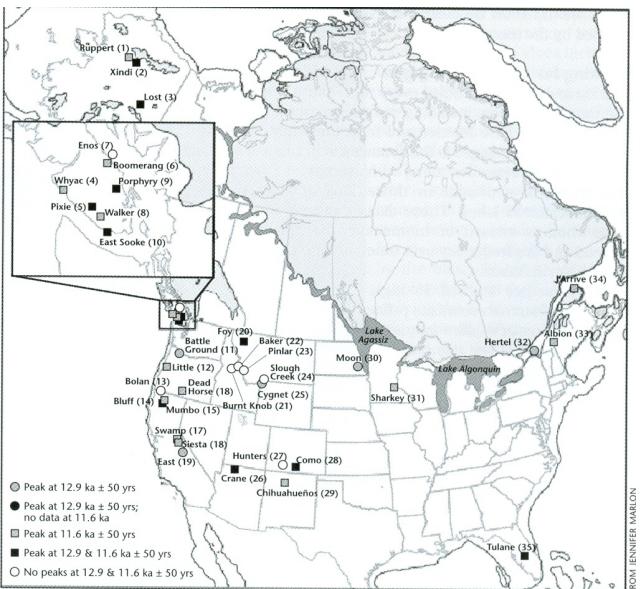
Jennifer Marlon, a doctoral student in the Dept. Of Geography, U. Of Oregon and an international team of 22 researchers examined data from 35 lake-sediment cores from Alaska to New Mexico and from California to Quebec. Their paper, published in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, showed that the environmental changes of 12,900 - 11,700 CALYBP “were larger than at any subsequent time.” They also compared the record of environmental change revealed in their sediment cores with the well established environmental changes documented in ice cores, as well as charcoal records, pollen records, etc.

To test whether regional wildfires of the Younger Dryas period were caused by rapid climate change or the proposed comet impact, Marlon and team compared fires at 12,900 and 11,700 CALYBP. If more occurred at 12,900, then a special explanation, such as a comet impact, might be necessary to explain it. When they examined the data, they found no evidence for increased burning at 12,900 or for continent-wide burning during the last 5,000 years.

Dr. Firestone replied, in a BBC interview, that the reported fire increase at the onset of the Younger Dryas was in complete agreement with his team’s findings. Wallace Broecker of the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory at Columbia University stated that the new results hit “right at the heart” of the Firestone team’s argument.

Marlon and team did observe a “particularly steep increase in charcoal influx” at 13,200 CALYBP, which they described as “the largest and most rapid change in biomass burning during deglaciation – widespread but not continent-wide.” This was 300 years too early for the comet impact, but coincides with the arrival of the Clovis culture in North America. This single “fire peak,” is most simply explained by a change in climate only coincidentally related to the appearance of the Clovis culture and the departure of the megafauna. Marlon states that what they saw was a “general increase in biomass burning whenever the climate warmed” – which has implications for future climate change. *Mammoth Trumpet*, Vol. 24, No. 4, Oct. 2009, 4-7.

Banjo Making Class by Master Jeff Menzies - June 7-12, 2010 - info: sylvestermanor@gmail.com



Sites investigated by Marlon’s team. Peak charcoal layers vary from site to site with no clear pattern.

Archaeology and Changing Perceptions of Connecticut’s [and Long Island’s] 18th-Century Architecture.

Ross K. Harper, Ph.D, with *Long Island* information by Gaynell Stone, Ph.D.

Yale president and early Connecticut historian Timothy Dwight wrote while traveling through Branford in 1800 that it is “destitute of beauty...and the houses are chiefly ancient and ordinary.” He said similar acerbic things about East Hampton, complaining of the unpainted houses. The houses that Dwight saw are now gone, a few encased in later expansions. Archaeological excavations are discovering that the center chimney capes and saltboxes thought to be typical 18th century dwellings are not an accurate representation of the period’s architectural landscape.

Excavation of the c.1737-c.1797 Goodsell home site in North Branford revealed remains of the “new house” mentioned in Samuel Goodsell’s 1752 probate record. A filled in stone-lined cellar and mortared stone fireplace base indicated the house to be about 16'x28'; references to “the chamber” in his probate make the house likely a one-over-one, termed the “one-room-end-chimney type” by architectural historians Norman Isham and Albert Brown. Such small houses, with a single first-floor room (the “hall”) and perhaps a smaller room with stairs next to the fireplace (the “porch”), were usually abandoned for better houses or added onto as more space was needed.

The Smithtown and Huntington area, in particular, but scattered throughout Nassau and Suffolk Counties, contains many of these structures, all with an interior end chimney and H-frame, some with a gambrel roof, espoused by the Dutch because it gave more usable living space. They usually appear as a wing on a larger, often center-hall house. An example of this is the original c.1690 Manor of St. George first house, with the second center-hall structure attached to it.



Excavations at the 1712-c.1770s Thomas Daniels house in Waterford found the remains of a stone-lined cellar, stone fireplace base, and a dense refuse midden. The foundation stones were laid directly on the ground surface, and had long since been removed. Measuring approximately 16'x24', it appeared to have started as a small one-room end-chimney type like Goodsell's house, but was expanded after 1744. An approximately 16'x19' addition off the west end made the house a basic hall and parlor house plan. A blacksmith shop lean-to was attached to the back of the house. The addition and lean-to were built using earthfast or post-in-ground construction, in which the framing members of the house were set into holes directly in the ground. Because the posts would eventually rot, earthfast houses were by their very nature impermanent. Archaeological evidence for earthfast architecture has been found in northern New England (at *Plimoth Plantation* by James Deetz, for example) and throughout the Chesapeake region, but so far as can be determined, it previously had been undocumented for Connecticut.

The original, c. 1652 house at the Sylvester Manor on Shelter Island, has not been found despite an extensive eight year excavation by U-Mass-Boston. Perhaps it was an earthfast house, which leaves sparse architectural remains, until replaced by another structure, possibly even before the current Manor house of 1734.

Archaeological investigations at the c.1705 Ephraim Sprague home in Andover also found a house plan that is quite different from standing colonial-period houses. Sprague was from Duxbury, Massachusetts, and rose to distinction as a militia captain, deacon, town selectman, and member of the Connecticut General Assembly. Based on the distribution of datable artifacts such as ceramics and tobacco pipes, the first phase of the Sprague house likely started as a basic one-room end-chimney-type plan with a dug cellar underneath measuring 16'x16'. The fireplace was built into the extreme northwest corner of the house.

This configuration has been found in houses of Quaker and Dutch families in western Suffolk, such as a house in Huntington built by Walt Whitman's Quaker father, and one side of the Caleb Smith house of two one room houses attached, now the Smithtown Historical Society

headquarters, in Smithtown. It was also found in the Miss Amelia's cottage in Amagansett as it was renovated for a larger public library. There are probably other examples yet unknown.

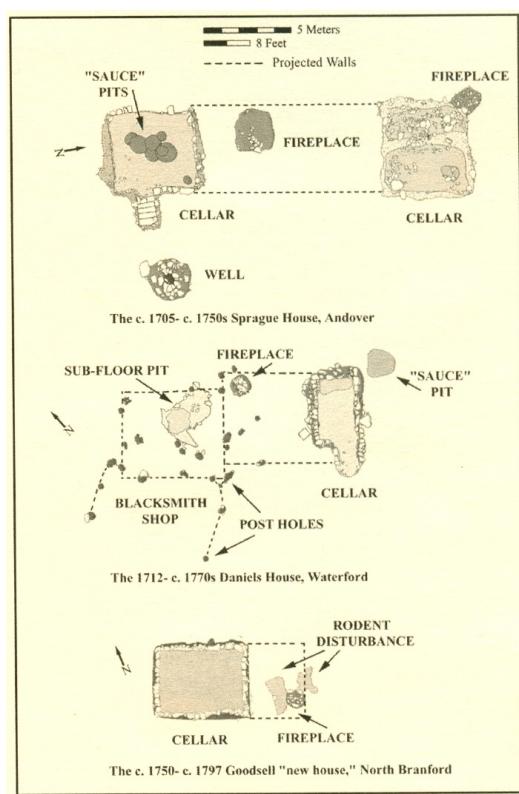
Soon after the Sprague house was expanded to 64'x16', with a stone-lined cellar at the opposite end of the house and a large central in the middle. A series of "sauce" or root vegetable storage pits were found in the floor of the earlier cellar. Again, the foundation stones had been laid directly on the ground surface and had been removed after the house burned down in the 1750s and the homelot converted to an agricultural field.

The long and narrow plan resembles cross-passage houses of the British Isles, which had a narrow passage that cut through the house, separating work space (kitchen) from social space (parlor). Such hybrid house forms selected various aspects of lowland and highland architecture, and were once common throughout Britain. Is the Miller House in Miller Place of this type?

New evidence is suggesting that they were widespread in the American colonies as well. Archaeologists have found similar house plans in northern New England and in the Chesapeake region, but to our knowledge no standing cross-passage houses have survived in North America. The Sprague house is also similar to the c.1651 plan of the Samuel Desborough house of Guilford, which had a parlor-hall-kitchen-pantry plan with a cross-passage. A heated parlor at the "head" of the cross-passage houses would have provided a place for men of distinction, such as Captain Sprague, to meet privately with church elders, militia officers and other guests.

These examples demonstrate that Connecticut's (and Long Island's) architectural past is far more complex and dynamic than what we can see in standing houses today.

(See John Stevens's *Dutch Vernacular Architecture in North America, 1640-1830* and Greg Huber's report on the Medieval-framed out-building in Huntington reported in Hudson Valley Vernacular Architecture.)



Archaeological evidence adds a new dimension to architectural historian Abbott Lowell Cummings's observations on Connecticut architectural traditions when he wrote:

"...the surprising range and variety of framing alternatives in the early houses of Connecticut stand in marked contrast to the greater uniformity of forms in other regions of New England where strong respect for inherited customs is very much in evidence. The diversity found in Connecticut (*also Long Island*), as we have suggested, provides for the state a unique status among the thirteen colonies. The richness of texture is owing almost entirely to the contributory strains of different European vernacular building traditions, and their distinctive intermingling in this cohesive corner of the New World, poised significantly between two major urban axes of the colonial northeast."

Dr. Gaynell Stone's analysis of 4,300+ colonial L.I. gravestones shows the cultural diversity of Long Island, which combined the cultural choices of Puritan New England with those of the poly-cultural and Dutch New Netherland/New York. The research indicated that Long Island was more like the diverse Mid-Atlantic region than unidimensional New England.

Abbott Lowell Cummings decreed that East End Long Island early buildings should be dated by dendrochronology, as he was "tired of trying to date buildings by inspection and analysis only to find he was wrong when they were dendro-dated," and urged Dr. Gaynell Stone to get it done. Oxford Dendrochronology Lab of Oxfordshire, England cored seven houses – Terry-Mulford in Orient, the Old House in Cutchogue, Sylvester Manor on Shelter Island, the Halsey House in Southampton, and Home Sweet Home, Mulford Farm, and the Gardiner Brown house in East Hampton.

With great difficulty because the timbers were so distressed, four were dated – Terry-Mulford in Orient (1720), the Old House in Cutchogue (1696), Home Sweet Home (17-) and Gardiner Brown (17-) in East Hampton. These dates filled a void in the U.S. climate map maintained by the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory at Columbia University, and give important comparative data for the New England and Hudson Valley regions.

There is no doubt that many more examples of buried "lost" architecture lie hidden in farm fields and empty lots, and even on the immediate edges of early roads (a c.1713 house site on Route 7 in Wilton was recently found). It is noteworthy that each of the houses discussed here was found in archaeological surveys preceding Connecticut DOT road-improvement projects. The surveys were mandated under federal and state law; without such laws, important information about Connecticut's architectural history would never have been found.

Under the N.Y. State DOT regulations, the home site of Betsy Prince, a free black woman, was found on the side of Rt. 25A in Miller Place, giving much unknown information about the lives of freed blacks in the 1800s., as well as architectural knowledge.

Council for Northeast Historical Archaeology NEWSLETTER, No. 74, October 2009. Reprinted through the cooperation of the Connecticut Trust. Ross K. Harper, Ph.D. is a senior archaeologist with Archaeological and Historical Services, Inc. And Public Archaeology Survey Team, Inc. In Storrs, CT.

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