



Stanley Wisniewski as a young man excavating at Graham Court, Queens

Stanley Wisniewski, a long time Long Island avocational archaeologist, died January 8th at his winter home in Fort Pierce, FL. Funeral services were held at Miller Place, his summer home, with interment in Calverton National Cemetery January 14th. Born in Greenpoint, Brooklyn in 1918, Stan was a childhood friend of Dr. Ralph Solecki in Queens; the two spent most weekends of their youth in the 1930s and early 1940s surveying, surface collecting, and excavating throughout Long Island with Carlyle Smith, Matt Schreiner, and others. Stan also excavated at Fort Massapeag, recently reported by Ralph Solecki in *Native Forts of the Long Island Sound Area*, S.C.A.A., 2006. Their work is the major record of Western Long Island archaeology, especially as they followed Robert Moses' destructive construction projects across west end Long Island.

Stan, a draftsman by vocation, kept meticulous records of his findings, as did Ralph Solecki, who also photographed the sites in a Long Island landscape now long gone. Stan wrote a number of archaeological reports published in the *Bulletin & Journal of Archaeology for New York State*, including "The Tiger Lily Site, Mt. Sinai Harbor, Long Island, N.Y." with Gretchen Gwynne; "The Ryders Pond

Site, Kings County, N.Y., Part I" with Julius Lopez, and concluded Part II after Julius' death. These have been reprinted in SCAA's Vol. V, *The Second Coastal Archaeology Reader*, James Truex, ed., 1982.

Ralph and Stan published "A Natural Grooved Boulder on an Archaeological Site in Bayside, L.I." in the *Bulletin of the Archaeological Society of Connecticut*, No. 28:30-31, 1958. Stan published the "Bay Terrace Creek Site" in the N.Y.S. A.A. *Bulletin* No. 93:1-26, 1986. Stan and Ralph have written "The Archaeology of Maspeth, Long Island, N.Y. and Vicinity, in press, N.Y.S.A.A. Bulletin. Stan's most recent publication is "Mt. Sinai Harbor, Suffolk County, Long Island, N.Y.: An Overview of an Archaic Crossroads," *The Chesopiean*, Vol. 45, Nos. 1-2:13-32, Spring 2007, which is being reprinted as a series in this Newsletter, beginning with this issue.

Stan was a veteran of World War II, completing 65 missions as an armorer/gunner on B-26s flying out of Sardinia. As a Reservist, he served in Florida in the Korean War.

As an archaeologist, he was a member of an early 1950s group, The New York Archaeological Group, as well as a member of S.C.A.A. and the Metropolitan chapter of the N.Y.S. Archaeological Association, which awarded him a Certificate of Merit. S.C.A.A. is presenting his wife, Margaret, with the Golden Trowel award for his work.

Long Island Programs at New York State Museum – Algonquian Peoples Seminar, March 22, 2008. Ron Welborn presents "The Platos - a Long Island Extended Family and Its 19th Century New England Circles, and Daniel E. Mazeau, "Prehistoric Settlement Along the Nissequogue River System in Central Long Island, N.Y. Information: marimaantz@aol.com or 518-369-8116.

Long Island Historical Archaeology, as shown through the multi-component (Late Archaic through the twentieth century) Brewster House site in Setauket, N.Y, is being prepared as a Senior Honor Thesis on the 17th century component by Taylor Zanieri.

The materials recovered through two seasons of Stony Brook University field schools are being analyzed and interpreted by the Institute of Long Island Archaeology staff and Stony Brook students. The findings will provide interesting comparisons with the many other multi-component sites reported for the Island.

Mt. Sinai Harbor, Mt. Sinai, Suffolk County, Long Island, N.Y.: An Overview of an Archaic Crossroads

Stanley Wisniewski

Abstract Mt. Sinai Harbor has been a multicultural magnet through the millennia. It is one of the few sheltered tidal harbors on the north shore of Long Island that has kept its natural shoreline contours in their original state. The area offers a variety of shellfish, aquatic and marsh bird life, as well as a seasonal influx of various fish throughout the harbor and offshore Long Island Sound. The spectrum of archaeological typology researched through the years by excavation and surface finds indicates an extended occupation which covers Middle-Late to Late Woodland and Contact periods. A comparative analysis is made for the many sites that are situated along the harbor perimeter, as well as a statistical breakdown of surface finds from two beaches located on opposite sides of the harbor where endless tides and centuries of erosive elements have exposed the past to the eyes and touch of our historians.

Introduction

Mt. Sinai was originally called "Old Man's." In the seventeenth century, John Scott, forged a deed to a large tract which included a village site. He later sold it to a trusting friend in England, who was always referred to as "the old man." One hundred years later, the Post Office department wanted a more dignified name. An employee opened her Bible and laid down her knitting needle on the page. It pointed to "Mt. Sinai." The Indian name for Mt. Sinai was "Nonowantuck." (Bayles 1962)

Mt. Sinai Harbor, a natural tidal basin on Long Island's north shore, located in Suffolk, County, is one of the better sheltered harbors in the eastern Island area. Presently a sandy barrier strip (Cedar Beach) locks in the harbor, except for a channel along the western end which allows the life supporting daily tidal flow to the inner harbor environment. A range of contoured hills, some as much as 140 feet high, protect the area on the west, east and southern boundaries. The harbor is about 1.2 miles (2k) wide and extends roughly 3/4 mile (1.2k) south behind the Cedar Beach barrier. Marshland meadow bog islands still cover about 25% of the harbor area. Years of sand and gravel dredging operations by five companies resulted in a 35 to 40 foot channel behind Cedar Beach. The permit conditions called for a minimum depth of 15 feet at low tide. This occurred between 1955 and 1968. The present entrance to Mt. Sinai Harbor was built by Seaboard Sand and Gravel Corp. in 1927.

In the prehistoric period, the now dredged harbor was a rich marshland into which at least three freshwater streams emptied, as well as numerous fresh groundwater run-offs. All of these provided the marsh area with the saline balance necessary for the proliferation of clams, oysters and other shellfish. These ideal habitational conditions made the area a prime settlement focus for Native Americans. Numerous shell middens and remains are present throughout the harbor area - providing fertile

research opportunities to many investigators through the years.

I first became acquainted with the Mt. Sinai Harbor area in the summer of 1958 when I acquired a summer house at Miller Place, a few miles from the harbor area. Since that time countless visits have been made to the various sites mentioned in this article. Many individuals and groups have made studies and surveys of this area - both statistical and stratigraphical. My focus is to provide an overview of these efforts.

Mooring Beach (MB)

My first collecting area was a stretch of beach designated Mooring Beach, inasmuch as it faced an ideal anchorage for small boats. This was located at the western side of the harbor and was about 590 yds (539m) long. A terraced slope about 20ft (6.0m), starting at the tidal high water mark overlooks the harbor. At mean low water, the gently sloping, exposed beach averages about 98ft (30m) in width. At low tide, a fresh water stream percolates under a clay layer and feeds into the harbor about 390yds (357m) north of the parking area.

With a few exceptions, all of the Mooring Beach artifacts were surface finds. Through the years, seasonal rains and daily tidal scrubbing has eroded the steep bluffs that front the harbor creating a random sampling of the various types originally deposited as cultural layers on the heights above the beach. The collection is quite diversified as can be noted on Table 1. Of the 310 projectile points collected to date, 281 were diagnostic types and the other 29 were untyped. Late Archaic narrow stem and side-notched forms classified as Lamoka, Wading River, Squibnocket, and Bare Island were lumped together (a total of 78), forming the largest cultural group (26%).

One distinct projectile point type, surface collected over the years, has been classified by the author as "Tapered Stem series." This group consists of 65 specimens, all of which are made of quartz. These are similar to Morrow Mountain as identified by Joffre Coe in North Carolina and placed in the Mid-Archaic Period. Several of these were found on a clay layer beneath the eroded beach sand. Only two tapered stem types were located at Chandler Beach on the east side of the harbor.

A cover illustration on the Archaeological Society of Connecticut Bulletin (No. 53-1990) shows 11 blades similar to the Mooring Beach series. These are identified as Susquehanna Tradition came from a cache on Shelter Island, Long Island. This cache contained a total of 20 preforms all made of basalt material and were excavated by John Witek in 1989. Shelter Island is located 12 miles (19k) south of the mouth of the Connecticut River and is separated from Long Island Sound to the north and from the Atlantic Ocean to the south by the North and South fork of Long Island. Mt. Sinai Harbor is located about 34 miles (55k) west of Shelter Island.



Figure 1. Overall plan view of Mt. Sinai Harbor showing the locations of major excavated sites and the two main beaches covered in this report. Site designations and names are as follows: MB - Mooring Beach. CB - Chandler Beach. RB - Rudge-Breyer. CBH II - Crystal Brook Hollow II. TL - Tiger Lily. CS - Church Site. HL - Hopkins Landing. RH - Remsen Hill. POP - Popolizio Site. EN - Eagles Nest. AD - Adler House. LC - Lecroy. VO - Vosburg.

The Orient Focus is represented by 10 fishtail specimens. On the opposite side of the Harbor, Chandler Beach produced 10 Orient types. Thirty-seven Orient Fishtails and 14 Susquehanna Broad points were recovered at the Rudge-Breyer Site, indications of the transitional period (Gwynne 1985). Only one Susquehanna Broad type appeared at Mooring Beach.

A total of 35 triangular points surfaced at Mooring Beach, of which 26 (9% of the total, comprising nine Levannas and seventeen Madison) are representative of the Late Woodland period. The balance of six Beekman and two Hunterbrook types belong to the Middle-Late Archaic period along with two classic Vosburgs that were found on the higher ground above the beach area.

Table 1. Mt. Sinai Harbor Projectile Point Analysis

Type	MB	CB	CS	TL	RB	AREA	TOTAL
Fluted						1	1
Levanna Tri		9	16	3	3	9	40
Beekman Tri		6	12	1	2	64	85
Madison Tri			17		1	6	25
Hunterbrook Tri	2		1		1		4
Adena		1		1		31	33
Atlantic Broad Stem	1						1
Barbed Tang		1					1
Bifurcate				1	5		6
Brewerton C. Notch					4		4
Brewerton Eared Notch		1			4		5
Brewerton Eared Tri	1			1	11		13
Corner Notched				1			1
Lamoka	1						1
Le Croy							11
Lozenge	3						3
Lanceolate		13	4	1			18
Narrow Stemmed	54	16		30	373		473
Narrow Side Notched		25	17		20		62
Orient Fishtail		10	10	2	1	37	60
Pentagonal		2				10	12
Stemmed Broad	10	4	1	4			19
Side Notched Broad	23	4	1	5	9		143
Susquehanna Broad		1				14	15
Sylvan Side Notch	3			3	23		29
Otter Creek						2	2
Ovate		30	3	6	4		43
Tapered Stem		65	2			8	75
Snook Kill	1				11		12
Vosburg	1			1	18		323
Untyped	29	14	6		293		341
TOTAL	310	103	24	78	932	5	1452

MB - Mooring Beach CS - Church Site RB - Rudge-Breyer Site
 CB - Chandler Beach TL - Tiger Lily Site AREA - no site designated

Table 2 shows the inventory of miscellaneous items such as knives, scrapers, drills, and other chipped artifacts as well as some of the rough stone objects that were found on the beach. A comparative tabulation of Chandler Beach and three other sites is shown on the same table. The numbers show that Mooring Beach was the dominant

summer workshop area along the harbor. The sheltered Rudge-Breyer site, just to the south, was favored during the fall and winter months as shown by Gwynne's excavation (1985).

Table 2. Miscellaneous Artifact Inventory.

Type	MB	CB	CS	TL	RB
Knives	68	21	15	46	65
Scrapers	148	67	44	45	*
Drills/reamers	76	21	10	12	*
Gravers	41	23	11		*
Spokeshave	28	13			
Hand axe	5	2		1	*
Wedge	12	5			
Adze/hoe	7	3	1	2	
Bannerstone	2			1	2
Celt	6	1	1	1	*
Muller	1				*
Abrading stone	6	5	4	1	*
Hammerstone	3	11		1	*
Pestle					5
Mortar					8
Sinker		1	1		2
Axe	5			1	6
Geode	80	40	6	1	*
Gorget					2
Worked bone				1	2
Antler tine				3	
Steatite		*	*		2
Ceramics			*	6	*

* Present at site - quantity unknown.

MB - Mooring Beach CS - Church Site RB - Rudge-Breyer
 CB - Chandler Beach TL - Tiger Lily

Chandler Beach Site (CB)

Chandler Beach is located at the eastern side of Mt. Sinai Harbor. It is a tidal beach about 333 yds long (304m) underlying a steep bluff some ten to fifteen feet high (3m to 4.5m) presently topped by an area laid out in lots for single family homes on the western side of Waters Edge Lane. This and other streets to the east formerly comprised the Church Site. A high-steeped church (Mt. Sinai Congregational Church) still stands at the eastern boundary of the site. A dirt road, Chandler Place, runs northeast of this area, terminating at an open field overlooking the Harbor. The north end of the beach ends at a tidal inlet off Pipe Stave Hollow Road at Hopkins Landing. The south boundary is a deep gully near Shore Road East, a former stream bed that emptied into the present marsh. The beach is about 4/5 of a mile (1.3k) east of Mooring Beach.



Figure 2. Chandler beach, Mt. Sinai Harbor. D 1-3 graters; D 4 spokeshaves; D 5-6 scrapers; C drills; B knives; A scrapers.

A total of 103 projectile points were collected at the beach, (see Table 1) fourteen of which fell into the untyped category. The ten Orient Fishtail points represent the Transitional Period. Some 40 limonite pieces were tallied from the beach area - most showing signs of being worked to produce the red pigments that are associated with the Orient Transitional Period.

Rudge-Breyer Site (RB)

An extensive, detailed report on this site was written by Gwynne (1985:1-12). The site is located along the southwest embayment of Mt. Sinai Harbor just southeast of the modern asphalt road connecting Crystal Brook Hollow Road and Winston Drive. This heavily wooded area still shows the meandering spoil piles of the Rudge-Breyer excavations.

William Rudge was a retired New York City fireman who came originally from Lake Ronkonkoma, Long Island. He was assisted in the excavations by his wife Adeline and from time to time by his friend William Breyer of Holtsville, Long Island. Rudge's field notes indicate over a hundred visits to the site between 1961 and 1968. His field techniques left much to be desired. Although he dug in measured five-foot squares, he made no overall map to show the location of the squares in reference to each other or to any permanent benchmark.

An area about 50x65 feet (15x20m) was excavated in 130 five foot squares and several features were discovered. These consisted of hearths, storage and refuse pits, and, in one instance, a cache of quartz bifaces. The bulk of the artifact inventory consisted of more than 900 projectile points. A large quantity of heavy, rough stones such as hammerstones, mullers, and large bifaces also came from the site (464 pieces). A collection of 8 mortars, anvil stones, and large pestles were photographed in Rudge's backyard. The total collection that was available for Gwynne's analysis consisted of some 1,500 items, not counting the faunal debris which was stored in 125 paper bags, which added up to approximately 2,570 pieces with a total weight of 21.47lbs (9.758 kilograms).

A portion of the collection was loaned to the Long Island State Park and Recreation Commission's Bayard Cutting Arboretum near Heckscher State Park in East Islip, New York. Five museum cases of projectile points and other small objects (averaging about 62 items per case) still remain on permanent display there in one of the rooms of the old manor house.

In 1972, while working at the nearby Tiger Lily Site, I made a test excavation under a thick shell layer exposed by Rudge just off the dirt road that ran between Winston Drive and Crystal Brook Hollow Road. At a depth of sixteen inches (40.64cm) below the surface, two classic, quartz Orient fishtail projectile points came to light along with a broken drill tip. This evidence shows that a Transitional Period underlays a thick layer of oyster and hard clam shells. I concur with Gwynne's conclusions that the site was a Late Archaic base camp for year round occupation. The lack of adequate provenience for most of the artifacts, along with sparse notes and records, make it difficult to reconstruct any solid time lines of cultural occupancy



Figure 3. Mooring Beach, Mt. Sinai Harbor. Projectile point types.

periods.

I have modified and expanded Gwynne's Table 1 (1985:9, Projectile Point Types). This shows my tallies for Mooring Beach, Chandler Beach, the Church Site and the Tiger Lily Site. (see Table 1).

Many projectile point types were found at the Rudge-Breyer Site, ranging from the Early to Late Archaic, as well as the Transitional to Early and Late Woodland. The narrow stemmed types with Squibnocket and Sylvan Side-notched (460 specimens) all belong to the Late Archaic Period on Long Island, and were dated at the Pipe Stave Hollow Site between 3440±175 and 3965±140 radio carbon years. (Gramly nd:13).

The artifact assemblage also included 17 ceramic fragments among which were nine incised, five net-impressed and three Vinette1 sherds. Two pieces of steatite and two drilled and notched bannerstone fragments of a hard non-native greenstone were also part of the collection. The relatively rare bone artifacts included four awls, an engraved bone object (14cm long), and a polished bone handle (17cm long) which the excavator fitted

together with a beaver tooth found nearby, to form a chisel like tool. Objects of exotic lithic materials were rare and were primarily of jasper or gray-black chert.

The Rudge-Breyer site is the largest excavated area in the Mt. Sinai Harbor region. Unfortunately, the actual size and the number of features it contained are unknown. Perhaps future excavators will profit from past transgressions by the knowledge that there is more to archaeology than moving dirt and collecting artifacts. Without painstaking notes, maps, and stratigraphical observations and the prompt publication of their endeavors, they in essence, become looters. Past history is better left buried for the future rather than desecrated with a pick and shovel, to be lost forever. *To be continued....*

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"Excavating" information with Librarian Cathy Ball at the Smithtown Library

Test pitting and sifting the soil at the east end of Blydenburgh house.



Excavating a trash midden behind the Carpenter's Shop.



Cleaning and organizing the excavated artifacts.



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← Summer 2007 Archaeological Field School at Blydenburgh County Park, Smithtown.