

NEWSLETTER

Representing Nassau & Suffolk Counties

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**BLYDENBURGH BARN SAVED**

One of Long Island's and Suffolk County's most historic structures is being saved by the Smithtown Historical Society. The Widow Blydenburgh's barn is noteworthy as the spot where George Washington's horse was 'baited' (fed and watered) on Washington's 1790 tour of Long Island. It is doubly notable as one of only three known Dutch-framed farm structures or barns in Suffolk County -- one in Huntington Town, a younger one in St. James (the BB&GG Farmstand) and the Blydenburgh barn, now on New Mill Road. It was moved there in the 1960s (?) from its original site in 'downtown' Smithtown, where the Library now stands. The barn was not adequately kept up by the property owners, who let the roof deteriorate so that there is much moisture damage. Moving the barn was agreed to by the Town Board and the developer as a prelude to development of the site.

The barn will be recorded by an architectural historian, disassembled, and moved to the Historical Society's grounds (fairly close to where it originally was), and rebuilt (at great cost) to house some of the Society's transportation vehicles. Those who were concerned about and active on behalf of the barn's survival included Councilwoman Joan Conway for the Town Board, Charla Bolton of the Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities, James Warren of the State Historic Preservation Office, and Gaynell Stone of the Suffolk County Archaeological Association. Leading the salvage effort is Brad Harris, Town Historian and President of the Smithtown Historical Society.

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD SCHOOLS**

The S.C. Community College/Dowling College summer field school will be held **May 28 - June 13** at the historic Davis house in Coram, under the direction of Dr. Linda Barber and Dr. Toni Silver. Fieldwork, class, and laboratory sessions are held Monday through Thursday, 8 AM to noon for 3 credits; non-matriculated and non-majors are welcome. Information: Barber - 631-451-4336, [barberl@sunysuffolk.edu](mailto:barberl@sunysuffolk.edu); Silver - 516-295-0250, [tasarcho@msn.com](mailto:tasarcho@msn.com).

The Long Island Archeology Institute at the University at Stony Brook will conduct a field school at a prehistoric site near Port Jefferson from May 28 to June 28, 8 hours/day for 5 weeks. SUNY registration begins April 22, non-SUNY May 14. The 6 credit course is directed by Dr. David Bernstein. Information: 631-632-7615.

SCAA's Summer Field Schools for students will be held again full day July 1 - 5 for Nassau County gifted students (through Nassau BOCES G&T program), and July 22-25, 29-Aug. 1, half days (through Eastern Suffolk BOCES Enrichment Program). For Nassau information: 516-608-6443; for Suffolk information: 631-244-4269.

Last summer's students at Blydenburgh County Park conducted test-pitting along several transects; excavated squares where



the corner of a 19<sup>th</sup> century barn or farm building was found, mapped the Blydenburgh house into a surveyor's grid; washed all artifacts found and did some flotation for organic remains; categorized artifacts from each test hole to create percentages. Advanced students used these pie charts to derive a sense of what was found and what farm activities might have been taking place. Surface survey located the mostly-buried foundation of a farm building.



Daily journals were kept; research materials studied; a field trip was made to the Smithtown Historical Society site with a remaining farm, information about the Blydenburghs, and to the Smithtown cemetery for biographical information from the gravestones. Each

afternoon a colonial craft or skill—which created the artifacts being unearthed—was experienced: carpentry, black smithing, textiles, colonial cookery.

### WHY 'CACHES'?

Archaeologists sometimes find a group of artifacts or blanks or stone tools clustered together in one spot or sometimes arranged in a specific pattern. No one knows for sure why, but ancient peoples throughout the world secreted lithic tools. A recent dissertation by Steve Kohntopp of Twin Falls, Idaho, which is surrounded by a number of noted caches, gathered the current theories. Archaeologists Dennis Stanford and Bruce Bradley call biface caching "a strategy for optimizing raw materials." It is well known that tool makers would travel (or trade) long distances for finest quality or special color materials. When untouched caches are found, Kohntopp feels they were forgotten or abandoned because the people were forced to migrate; perhaps the craftsman even forgot when he had hidden them. Archaeologists George Frison and Bruce Bradley believe caches at burial sites were tributes to the dead; M.G. Pavesic finds most burial sites are located on a rise or crest of a hill and are associated with red ochre and grave offerings (Long Island's Orient Burial Cult, for example). Pavesic and G.R. Muto suggest semi-finished tools were intended for use in the afterlife, with finished tools as examples how to do it.

Another theory is that a cache was the analog of today's bank: tools could be currency in trade, could be collateral for a trade debt, or could be used for status or prestige, such as spectacular examples. South African archaeologist Chris Henshilwood suggests seeking exotic material was necessary to produce projectile points of a standard necessary for effective hunting. Archaeologists C.G. Yeager and J.L. Gibson find that quartz, found in some caches, was prized by shamans as an ornament and for ceremonies. The Simon Cache, recovered from a boggy spring 7' deep (once a Pleistocene lake), may have been a water sacrifice, practiced in much of the ancient world, much as we toss coins in fountains today. Abstracted from "Lithic Caches: the Puzzling Legacy from Early Knappers," *Mammoth Trumpet*, 2001:17,1:4-9.

Small type

There have been a number of cache sites found on Long Island; how do they relate to the theories outlined above? The published record (there may yet be others in the 'gray literature'—contract archaeology—not yet known) follows. In chronological order of reporting, Foster Saville of the Museum of the American Indian in 1926 described caches known to him. The first was by William Brower who, plowing a field by a creek flowing to Rockaway Landing (near Rockville Center) in 1863,



discovered a cache of two copper and two stone axes surrounded by a hundred chipped blades of black chert set upright in a circle. The second was found by John Messenger at Indian Neck, Peconic in 1924, consisting of 151 specimens of brown and black chert, 109 of which are leaf-shaped blades, with 41 flakes and one minute projectile point. Others not described are in a private collection in Baldwin, 1 found at Mattituck, and 2 in Southold (Booth, in P. Bailey, 1949).

Roy Latham wrote in 1956 that approximately 1 bushel of graphite (not found locally) was found 2' deep on Orchard Point, East Quogue. Smaller pieces were found in grave caches, peaking in the Orient focus (Burial Cult) communal grave pits. In 1959 he reported that from a site in Noyac, where considerable Niantic remains were mixed in, a cache was uncovered which contained several perfect antler flakers, two damaged harpoon points, several pieces of unworked antler, four worn quartz blanks, and a small sharp celt.

William Ritchie, N.Y. State Archaeologist, reported on the Stony Brook and related sites in 1959. He notes that Latham and the L.I. Chapter of the N.Y.S. Archaeological Association had excavated the Sugar Loaf Hill Orient Burial site earlier and found caches of artifacts with the crematory hearths. One contained celts, pestles, paintstones, a gorget and over 30 projectile points. Ritchie also found artifacts and 'killed' steatite (amphibole-talc); pots, more grave offerings than caches?

In 1961 Latham describes at the Hands Creek site of Three Mile Harbor "Two large celts were found cached together six inches below the bottom of a deep pit in which a Niantic pot was found with a small tubular bird-bone bead inside. It was a trait here for the Niantics to cache objects in the bottom of pits and cover them with sand, where they were lost or forgotten in the filling of the pits."

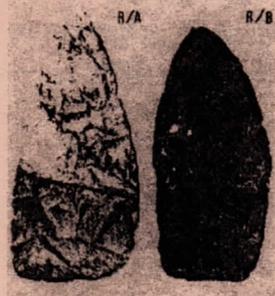
Before 1965 Latham found at the Jagger site (the largest remaining Native village site in Orient) 80 split quartz pebbles averaging 1 1/2x2 1/2", about 6 quarts. The artifact blanks (one was an almost completed Levanna triangular point, another a scraper) were found 24" outside an 8' in diameter pit, 4' deep, accompanied by pottery sherds, 2 large fish vertebrae, a portion of an awl, and 4 small mammal bones, including a small dog jaw bone.

Stanley Wisniewski, utilizing Julius Lopez' notes, reported on the Brooklyn Ryder's Pond site in 1971. They cite Parker (1920:582) "that in 1837 a cache of stone and flint blades...was found at The Narrows." Furman (1972:31-32) who was Parker's source of information wrote: "on digging a few feet below the surface...more than a wagon-load of Indian stone arrow-heads were found lying together...to induce the belief that a large manufactory of those articles once existed at this place; they were of all sizes, from one to six inches long, some perfect, others partly finished...they had the appearance of ordinary flint..." The archaeologists identified excavated artifacts of

Helderberg Oriskany, and Onondaga flint, Normanskill colored shale, New Jersey and Pennsylvania argillite, jasper, rhyolite, and translucent chalcedonies from Pennsylvania., all exotic (imported) stone.

In 1976 Daniel Kaplan and Herbert Mills reported the Massapequa Lake Blade Cache, discovered accidentally when an earth dam was breached to drain the lake. A coffer dam and pumps were used to reach the site, excavated with great difficulty. The only scientifically excavated cache on Long Island, it consisted of 184 complete and fragmentary blades; 57 were found in situ, most of the others were donated by the County Parks workmen who uncovered the site, and 50+ were taken by looters from the site backfill. The artifacts, called blades because the term does not imply any function, were yellow and brown jasper, probably from Pennsylvania.. The majority were bifacially chipped by pressure flaking or by a wood baton.

The blades were below 1.5 ft of moist fresh water peat and could be C-14 dated to BC 435, or about 2400 years ago. Pollen and spore samples also indicated the beginning of the moist, cooler Subatlantic stage, which would have resulted in relatively rapid flooding of the area, and thus little chance to recover them. They were located near the intersection of a prominent stream (Massapequa Creek) and probably a major east-west Native trail, and may have been cached for a ceremonial purpose (or trade?). Their cultural affiliation may have its origins in an Adena-influenced manifestation, probably the Middlesex culture.



Although all of Long Island's caches were found *in situ*, most had no professional direction nor context. So much more information and positive dating was obtained for the Massapequa Lake cache because of professional excavation. All, except the Jagger quartz pebble cache in

Orient, consisted of exotic materials—usually jasper traded in from Pennsylvania or chert/flint from the Hudson Valley. So presumably the caches had trade or status connections, though tool-making with a superior material (compared to the local quartz), could have been just as important.

Stanford's thesis of biface cacheing to optimize storage of strategic materials could apply to the Ryder's Pond site, the Messenger find in Peconic, and the Massapequa Lake blades. The caches of various materials needed for the after-life in the Orient Burial complex (Sugar Loaf Hill, Orient 1 & 2) were obviously related to the burials. Those with a ceremonial rationale appear to be the purposeful placement of the Brower/Rockville Center artifacts and Latham's recounting of the large graphite cache in Quogue. The cacheing/storage of everyday items in the Noyac and

Hands Creek sites sound like the 'pack rats' among us today! So it appears Long Island caches exemplify most of the potential reasons for being, except the water sacrifice—possibly yet to be discovered by an underwater archaeologist.

Gaynell Stone, Ph.D.

References: Saville, *Indian Notes & Monographs*, Museum of the American Indian: Heye Foundation, 1926, 3,1:41-45; reprinted in SCAA's Vol. I, *Early Papers in Long Island Archaeology*. Latham, Lopez and Wisniewski, Kaplan and Mills published in the *Bulletin*, N.Y. State Archaeological Association, 1954-1976. All reprinted in SCAA's Vol. II, *The Coastal Archaeology Reader*, Gaynell Stone, ed.

## PUBLICATIONS

**Women of the Dawn** by Bunny McBride (U. Nebraska Press, 1999, \$25.) is a rare story of four Wabanaki women who "all dared to bridge the gap between their own worlds and that of the European strangers who invaded their continent." This ethnostory sees the European colonization of the Northeast from the cyclical, women's vantage point—the complexities and continuous changes that all had to deal with that are often not noticed. The cyclical seasonal story of each Molly (the Algonquian pronunciation of Mary, Marie, etc.) smashes the stereotype that all Native women are alike: each survives differently, yet faces the challenge "What of the past will be carried into the future?"

Abstracted from the *Northeast Anthropology*, No. 61, Spring 2001 review of Jean S. Forward, UMass-Amherst.

**Ancient Mesoamerica**, major journal of Mesoamerican research, William R. Fowler, ed. Cambridge Univ. Press, also available Online. Information:914-9379600.

**Ice Age Peoples of North America: Environments, Origins, and Adaptations of the First Americans**, R. Bonnicksen and K. Turnmire, eds. (Oregon State U. Press, \$50.) is a 19 paper summary of new Northeast Asia and North American discoveries that are changing perceptions about the First Americans.

**Who Were the First Americans?**, Proceedings of the 58<sup>th</sup> Annual Biology Colloquium, Robson Bonnicksen, ed. (Oregon State U. Press, \$24.) contains 7 chapters of genetic and craniometric studies and what they mean in regard to the initial peopling of the Americas.

**Introduction to Remote Sensing**, 3d ed., James B. Campbell (Guilford Publications, 2002, \$73.) presents an overview of the most widely used forms of remote sensing (including GIS) and their applications in archaeology and many other disciplines.

**Northeast Anthropology**, No. 61, Spring 2001 is a topical volume on the effects of poverty, as can be seen archaeologically, biologically, and historically, from five poorhouses in New York State. In general, this evidence supports the claims of economic historians that almshouses were not successful in serving the needs of the poor.

The **Journal of the Society for Historical Archaeology**, Vols. 1-34 (1967-2000) is available in a CD-ROM set and searchable PDF format. \$100. For 2002 SHA members. For others, contact the SHA, P.O. Box 30446, Tucson, AZ 85751-0446.

**MEETINGS**

**March 17** - Dr. Sarah Morris, speaking at the C.W. Post Hillwood Cinema, 8 PM on **Isaac and Iphigenia: Human Sacrifice in the Ancient Mediterranean** for the L.I. Chapter, AIA. Information: 516-482-4066.

**March 24** - **Bacon to Bartram: Early American Inquiries into the Natural World**. A conference sponsored by the Omohundro Inst. Of Early American History & Culture at the American Museum of Natural History, New York City. Information: 757-221-1114.

**April 17** - **Museums and the Web 2002**, at the Boston Park Plaza Hotel, organized by Archives & Museum Informatics. Information: 412-422-8530.

**May 11** - 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting of the Conference on New England Archaeology, **Materializing Anthropology: in Memory of Barbara Luedtke**, at Umass-Boston. \$12. Pre-registration includes CNEA Newsletter. Information: 401-222-4140.

**May 16** - Annual meeting of the **Early American Industries Assn.** at the Rochester, N.Y. Holiday Inn. Information: 718-987-3418.

**NEW AND NOTEWORTHY**

**Otzi, the Copper Age Iceman** found in the Alps in 1994 did not die from hypothermia, a fall, etc. Computerized tomography located a less than 1" long flint arrow which entered the left side of the chest, tore through nerves and major blood vessels, paralyzing the left arm, shattering the shoulder blade, and ending about 3" under the shoulder near the left lung. There were signs of heavy internal bleeding and he probably did not live more than 3 (painful) hours. X-rays taken 7 years ago showed something in the area that scientists could not identify. The new results show that all the previous speculations about his death are wrong—maybe he was in a battle or combat. There is a whole series of new implications; the story needs to be rewritten, says Alex Susanna, Director of the South Tyrol Museum of Archaeology, Otzi's home. None of this information would be known if Otzi had been re-buried years ago.

ACPAC Newsletter

**Common Ground: Archeology and Ethnography in the Public Interest** is published by the National Park Service Center for Cultural Resources. The Summer/Fall 2001 issue features the raising of the 1864 Confederate submarine "Hunley" to a Charleston Navy Base lab for

'excavation' and stabilization. The techniques being used are high-tech—laser modeling, gamma ray technology, every step photographed, recorded, and entered into a special database; every photo and item can be tracked—the first tracking system of its kind used on an archaeological project. From Web cameras around the site, Internet users can observe the work in progress; to see it go to the Friends of the Hunley website at [www.hunley.org](http://www.hunley.org).

**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 Vols. IV and VI remain.

- I. Early Papers 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)

- 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)	\$ 10.	Individual	\$ 20.
Family	30.	Sustaining	50.
Contributing	100.	Patron	100.
Life Member	400.		

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Willing to volunteer? .....

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Send check to: Suffolk County Archaeological Association,  
P.O. Box 1542, Stony Brook, NY 11790

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