

Long Island Traditions

NEWSLETTER

www.longislandtraditions.org

Vol. 10 No. 3 Summer 2003

Lake Success Through The Years

by Dr. Jack Binder, *Village Historian*

Editor's note: One of Long Island Traditions' missions is to document and preserve the region's traditional and vernacular architecture. Our current projects include preserving the summer cottages at West Meadow Beach, our annual bay house tour in Freeport, and working with the Village of Great Neck Plaza. In this issue we welcome Jack Binder who is the village historian for the Village of Lake Success. In this profile Binder takes us on a trip that reminds us of how communities change yet retain their historic sites. We welcome other submissions. If you have a special place like the Maple cottage, drop us a line.

Sculptured by glaciers, the area we know today as Lake Success has had a long history of human settlement. Native Americans were the first inhabitants, attracted to the area's plentiful fish and abundant timber. Beginning in the 1600s the Dutch settled, shortly followed by the English. In the nineteenth century, farming was the principle occupation, supplying mainly potatoes and onions to New York City.

see **Lake Success** on page 3



Maple Cottage at 42 Farm Lane, Lake Success

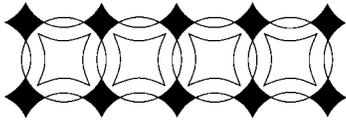
Photo by Jack Binder, 2000

Remembering Ora Kirkland

By Nancy Solomon

On March 24, 2003 Long Island Traditions lost one of its stars: quilter Ora Kirkland of Hemsstead. Ora was a long time friend and master quilter, teaching dozens of quilters throughout her long life. Ora learned to quilt from her mother and grandmother, but she also developed a style that was all her own. Ora attended college and received her bachelor's degree in social work. She moved to New York where she worked until her retirement in 1981. She moved to Hempstead in 1976. During her adult years she did not quilt, due to workplace demands and in order to devote time to raising her family. After she retired Ora took up quilting again. She made several well known quilts including "The MusAfrica Quilt" which profiles several African American musicians that Ora personally researched. The "Impeachment" quilt is based on her high regard for President Clinton and her anger at the 1999 impeachment proceedings against Clinton. At the same time Ora also used various traditional patterns as seen in "Akilah's Quilt", assisted by such conveniences as a sewing machine.

Ora's quilts have been exhibited at various Long Island museums, libraries, churches, and quilt competitions. She was active in the Long Island Quilters Society and the Long Island Embroiderers Guild of America. She was also an advisor to the Long Island Black Crafters Guild. Her last project with Long Island Traditions was the making of a radio show sponsored by the NY Folklore Society. We shall miss her dearly. ■



Long Island Traditions Inc.

Dedicated to the documentation and preservation of Long Island's living cultural heritage.

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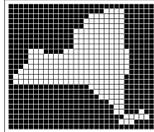
Newsletter Designer: Barbara Koelbel Bange

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West Meadow Beach Update and Tour

As many of you know, Long Island Traditions has submitted a national register nomination in order to protect the summer cottages at West Meadow Beach. On June 6th the state advisory board for historic preservation voted to recommend its listing by a vote of 6-2. However 7 votes were needed so that recommendation is not official. As of June 23 we are still deciding whether to resubmit the nomination to the state for its September meeting or to ask Commissioner Bernadette Castro to make her ruling. In the meantime we are asking all our members to send letters asking Assemblyman Steve Englebright to reconsider his position and to preserve the cottages. Send your letters to 149 Main Street, East Setauket, NY 11733 indicating your support for preserving the cottages and the reversal of the law.

On Sunday, September 14th we will be hosting our annual cottage tour. The tour visits approximately 6 cottages built in the 1920 - 30s by local residents of Stony Brook and neighboring communities so that residents could escape the flu epidemic that threatened thousands of east coast residents. The cottages retain many of their original design features including open floor plans, cobblestone fireplaces, partitioned walls and exposed framing. This year's 1-mile walking tour will include some new sites as well as old favorites. Trips are at 10:30am and 1pm. Tickets are \$15/person and \$25/couple. To order send coupon from enclosed flyer and call for reservations. As always we expect the trip to fill up quickly. For more information call LI Traditions at 516-767-8803. ■

Islamic Traditions Program in Jericho

Long Island Traditions & the Islamic Center of Long Island will present a lecture-demonstration program on Islamic traditional arts and recitation on Sunday, September 21 at the Jericho Library, 1 Merry Lane, Jericho, Long Island at 2:30 PM. There will also be an exhibition of Islamic calligraphy and paintings by Reem Hussein. Participating in the event will be calligrapher Reem Hussein of Hicksville, devotional singer and percussion player Ahmed Morsi of Astoria and Wisam Sharieff of Hempstead who is an accomplished Koranic reciter. This free event will explore the history and culture of Islamic traditions from those who have learned them within their communities. ■



Reem Hussein

Five farmhouses survive today in Lake Success. They were built from 1750 to 1878. On Round Hill Road is the Willets House. It was part of a large horse farm that in the 1930s conducted horse shows called "Oakes Hunt". On Old Lakeville Road, the Woolley House was in the family from 1814 to 1949 when Daniel Woolley died. He was the first Trustee of the newly incorporated Village of Lake Success. Maple Cottage, on Farm Lane, was once part of a large farm.

Before there was a Farm Lane in Lake Success, a house was built at the site by Sam Warren. It was a one story farmhouse and is known to have housed slaves in its basement. Expanded over the years to two stories, it came to be decorated in a Victorian manner. Betty Westrom, a granddaughter of long time owners of the property, the Dennellys, provided an account of her childhood at Maple Cottage in the 1930s. Her great grandfather John lived in Great Neck and had a landscape business. His company was retained by A.T. Stewart to lay out the model community of Garden City. John and Catherine Dennelly were married in 1877 in Great Neck's St. Aloysius Church. Their wedding was the first in the newly built church. Shortly after the wedding Dennelly bought the Warren farm. He gave the name Maple Cottage to his new home. Over the years, improvements were made to the property. The house was the first in Great Neck to have indoor plumbing and electric lights.

In 1905 William Vanderbilt ran his automobile races on local roads in Nassau County. This was several years before he built the Long Island Motor Parkway. Many members of the Automobile Club of America stayed in Maple Cottage. This included a Mr. Tracy and Mr. Poole who drove Locomobile racer #7. A vantage point to watch the races was Flaherty's corner. This location today is at the intersection of Lakeville Road and the Long Island Expressway. The Dennellys gave permission to horseback riders to cross their farm which was part of a hunt trail until about 1938. Riders were called "Pinks" and wore high hats as part of their uniform. The nearby Rice farm supplied the horses. The Dennelly farm, besides the main house, had a guest house, carriage house, stable with tack room and a barn. The caretaker, Felix, had his own cottage.

The entertainer Eddie Cantor had his estate just to the south of the Dennellys. William K. Vanderbilt had the greatest impact on present day Lake Success. At one time he owned about one half of what was to become the incorporated Village. The Village Green and golf course were developed by him. Also to be seen today are his home on Westcliff Drive and the South Gate cottage at the church of St. Philip and St. James. Off of Lake Road is a chicken coop from the Vanderbilt farm. It is used by the Nature Conservancy in its bird banding program. Other evidence of Vanderbilt's handiwork is the Long Island Motor Parkway that he completed in 1910. A half-mile section of the roadway and a remnant of the Toll House are on the Great Neck School grounds. The administration building of the Great Neck School

District was built by Henry Phipps in 1917. Phipps was a partner with Andrew Carnegie in the founding of the United States Steel Corporation. Donated to the school, the mansion looks very much as it did years ago.

The United Nations housed its Security Council in the Sperry Gyroscope plant from 1946 to 1951. The site can be visited on Marcus Avenue. There is an exhibit in the lobby of the building. In addition there is a display of historic photographs at the Lake Success Village office located at the golf course on Lakeville Road. It can be viewed during normal business hours, 9am to 4:30 pm. ■

Welcome New Staff and Board Members

At the LI Traditions board meeting held May 1st the following new members were added to the board of directors: Ken Maltz, Linda Scholl and Michael Scully. We welcome them and look forward to their creative ideas and enthusiasm. Ken Maltz is the managing agent and lead clarinetist for Kapleye as well as a music teacher in the Syosset School District; Linda Scholl is a special education teacher at Nassau Boces. Michael Scully is head of Century 21 Scully Realty in Island Park.

Joining the staff of Long Island Traditions is ethnic dance specialist Jill Gellerman Pandey. Jill is an expert on traditional Jewish music and is completing her Ph.D. at New York University. She will be responsible for our ethnic folk arts programs in the schools and at area cultural institutions.

We welcome all to LI Traditions! ■

BLACKBERRIES

By Suffolk County poet laureate George Wallace

we waved barefoot at men in gray suits riding the commuter trains
because we were able to

plucked by the fistful we choked blackberries, purple
to the jowl, let them drool

as car by car other people's fathers followed tracks
to city pay and better,

marvelous & well financed lives. o those grinning days,
dripping down!

o those bright, forever winking wise, unwhiskered days!
those summers

when we waved barefoot at men in suits o! for those
blackberry days

when never caring, we were able to

EVENTS OF INTEREST

PLEASE NOTE: If you have a Long Island concert or program that focuses on some aspect of traditional culture, drop us a line and we'll put it in our "Events of Interest" column. The deadline is the 1st of October, January and April.

- August 12:** Dave Sear at the Clark Botanic Garden at 7 PM. 193 IU Willets Road, Albertson. Rain Date Thursday August 14. For more information call (516) 327-3113. Admission Free.
- Aug. 29 – Sept. 1:** Shinnecock Annual Pow Wow, Shinnecock Reservation, Southampton. 56th annual event features traditional food, crafts, dancing and storytelling by the Thunderbird Sisters and dancers and other Native American performers. Admission is \$5. Located on West Gate Road, Southampton, just south of Route 27a. Hours are 11am – 6pm.
- September 14:** West Meadow Beach walking tour. Tickets are \$15/person and \$25/couple. (516) 767-8803. See accompanying article.
- September 21:** Islamic arts program sponsored by LI Traditions. 2:30pm at Jericho Public Library. 1 Merry Lane. Free admission. (516) 935-6790. See accompanying article.
- October 11:** Big Grey Concerts presents John Whelan at The Searing-Roslyn United Methodist Church. 8:00 P.M. 134 I.U. Willets Road (bet. Searingtown Rd. & Willis Ave.), Albertson. Tickets: \$15 general admission, \$12 seniors, \$5 children under 12. Information: (516) 599- 4749 www.biggrey.com e-mail: info@biggrey.com.

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