

Long Island Traditions

NEWSLETTER

www.longislandtraditions.org

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Architecture Curriculum Released

As we write this issue our 200-page “Long Island Traditional Architecture: A Teacher Resource Guide” is at the printer and ready for use by area social studies teachers. This graphic publication is the culmination of a 4-year long project that explored the building practices of area settlers and indigenous peoples from the pre-contact period to the late 1800s. In the last issue we included a chapter from the publication, and will continue to do so in the forthcoming issues. This newsletter’s subject is Native American architecture on Long Island. If you are a teacher you can order this publication from our web site or by using the enclosed order form. If you’re not a teacher please pass this on to someone who is. And if you’re interested in learning more about traditional architecture, order one for yourself. Funding for this project came from the National Endowment for the Arts, the NY State Council on the Arts and the Gilder Foundation. ■

Long Island Native American Architecture

The history of Native Americans on Long Island is a long and complex one that has received attention from historians, cultural geographers, archaeologists, anthropologists and folklorists. Much has been documented through archaeological studies in various places on Long Island including Rock Hall Museum in Lawrence, Garvies Point in Glen Cove, Sag Harbor, the Shinnecock Reservation in Southampton and the Lloyd Manor House in Huntington. While these studies have yielded important information about traditional lifestyles, there is still a great deal that needs to be learned about the architecture of Long Island’s native peoples. Relying on the archaeological and historical evidence, we can formulate simple hypotheses about the design and construction of their homes and work places.

There have been many Native American tribes on Long Island including the Shinnecocks, Montauks, Massapequans and Matinecocks. While some scholars have determined that the tribes had specific geographical locations on Long Island, in fact most Native peoples moved from one area to another depending on the climate and availability of food. There is also evidence that there were more than the 13 “tribes” that had extended family relationships which crossed community boundaries. Most Native American communities have been on Long Island for hundreds of years according to historical archaeology studies.

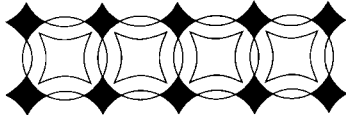
In order to survive they harvested shellfish and finfish, grew corn, hunted deer and harvested berries. Like other tribes, families lived together in *longhouses*, a type of house found in Algonquin communities in New York and New England, or in small groups of individual *wigwams*. The longhouse served multiple functions under one roof. The house was approximately 60 to 80-feet long and 15-feet wide. Families shared the chores such as hunting, cooking, making clothes and other necessary activities. With its high roof (over 15 feet high) families could cook without endangering themselves from the fire. The longhouse was large enough to have separate areas for each activity.

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Photo 2004 by Nancy Solomon.

The Ganondogan Longhouse is located in upstate New York. This replica was made based on architectural and archaeological research.



Long Island Traditions Inc.

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

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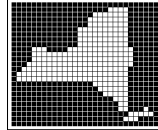
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State of the Arts



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In Memoriam: Little Buster

Ed Forehand, better known as Little Buster, was born in Hereford, North Carolina in 1942. From his earliest years Buster sang gospel music in local churches and played the piano. Buster had serious vision difficulties that required medical attention, something that was not available in North Carolina. Although his father took him to Philadelphia for medical treatments, Buster's vision deteriorated. By age 13 Buster was placed in the North Carolina School for the Deaf and Blind, almost 150 miles from his home. During the summer he stayed with his Aunt Queen Williams, who regularly entertained visiting musicians. *"I came home one summer from school. My Aunt had a six-string guitar but it only had three strings working. I started messing around with it. I started singing and people were coming from everywhere just to listen to me."*

Buster learned to pick from Pumpkin Jones and B.L. Thatch, practicing what he learned at Hertford's Baptist and Methodist churches. As a result "Everything that I do has a little gospel in it - I'm spiritually inclined." Like other traditional musicians, Buster earned his modest wages through donations. *"You've got to love what you're doing because there's not a lot of money involved. I used to get my money by donations. It wasn't easy."*

At age 16 Buster and his friend Melvin Taylor went to Philadelphia for a record deal which did not materialize. They hitched a ride to Westbury, New York, where Buster's sister lived. In 1959 they began playing in local clubs such as The New Cassel Inn, the Prospect Haven and the Bar-b-Q Inn in Westbury. In 1961 Buster composed his first original song "Looking for a home" while living in Glen Cove.

Buster was married to Mary Forehand in 1969. When they were first married Buster played at the Celebrity Club in Freeport and the Highway Inn in Roosevelt, where Wilson Pickett and Gladys Knight and the Pips also performed. It was during the late 1960s and early 1970s that "white" clubs began hiring African American musicians. Buster played at the Hotel James in Manhasset, the Right Track Inn in Freeport and the Oak Beach Inn in Babylon.

During the past 30 years Buster played and taught many musicians the heart and soul of blues music. He passed away in May 2006. He is missed by many blues fans around Long Island and elsewhere. His spirit lives on among those who studied with him and admired him over the years. ■

Gospel concert at Heckscher Museum

Come join us for a traditional African American Gospel concert featuring the Elder Statesmen on Sunday, September 10th at the Heckscher Museum in Huntington. The group will be part of a family celebration taking place during 1-5 pm. Several members of the Gospel Elders are now part of the Elder Statesmen including bass singer Joe Warren. This spirited ensemble sings traditional acapella and accompanied spirituals that originated during slavery and have been passed down through their families. This free event is open to young and old alike. For directions and schedule information, call the Heckscher Museum at (631) 351-3214. ■

Native American Architecture

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The design of the longhouse was appropriate to Long Island as well as other regions including the upstate Iroquois. Made of wood and sheathed in tree bark, the arched round roof prevented snow from accumulating on top. As a result the house was kept dry during the winter. According to Jaspas Danckaerts, an early 17th -century Dutch missionary, "Their house was low and long, about sixty feet long and fourteen or fifteen feet wide. The bottom was earth, the sides and roof were made of reed and the bark of chestnut trees; the posts, or columns, were limbs of trees stuck in the ground, and all fastened together." Inside the longhouse were designated areas for sleeping, cooking, food storage, work activities, play areas and ceremonies. Small holes in the roof allowed smoke from cooking and heating to escape easily.

There were many benefits to the communal houses. These included the sharing of food, parents and relatives could look after each other's children and their elders, thereby preserving extended family relationships. This was particularly important to teaching younger members of the tribes their history and skills necessary for survival.

However there were drawbacks. When the Europeans came they introduced new diseases that spread easily inside the longhouse. In addition the size of the house made it easy to see and attack. As a result of these drawbacks another type of house was also used: the *wigwam*. It was most common in Nova Scotia and north of New England, however they were also found on Long Island. The wigwam was ten to fifteen feet across, also made of bark. They housed two to three families and were used for food preparation, making clothes and sleeping. Separate structures were made for food storage and cooking. In some cases wigwams and longhouses were located side by side in settlements. During the summer some families built wigwams closer to the shoreline.

When European settlers arrived on Long Island, most Native peoples were able to co-exist with them. However attacks and land treaties meant that Native tribes lost significant amounts of land. By the late 1700s they lived in confined areas. Towns like



Drawing by David Bunn Martine

Huntington restricted the use of tree bark, a necessary material in traditional Native houses. Many Native Americans died either through exposure or by disease. Those that survived lived in houses owned by the Europeans. These included frame structures made of local lumber, built for individual families. Missionaries built churches on Native lands, similar to the current Presbyterian Church on the Shinnecock reservation.

As a result of these changes communal living vanished from Long Island's native communities. Traditional "Cape Cod" style homes were built on the reservations. However other traditions have continued including storytelling, drumming, traditional recipes and various legends and beliefs. Today over 60 families live on the Shinnecock Reservation in Southampton, making it the largest reservation on Long Island. Some of the frame houses are over 100 years old including a Presbyterian church. ■

East Indian Programs

Long Island Traditions has received a National Endowment for the Arts grant to support a series of programs on artists of Indian and Pakistani heritage. Working with the Young Indian Culture Group, the grant will help support an artists gathering this November, a heritage workshop day and a concert at Landmark on Main Street in March 2007. Participants in the project will include musicians, classical dancers and singers and visual artists. The goal of the project is to bring greater awareness of area residents of the wealth of tradition bearers from India and Pakistan who now reside on Long Island. The first event will be an artist gathering on November 18 at the Young Indian Culture Group offices in Herricks. A group of master traditional artists will discuss the creation of a formal network on Long Island, and how to raise public awareness of their traditions.

If you would like more information about this project please call us at (516) 767-8803. ■

Long Island Scottish Games

The Long Island Scottish Clan Mac Duff will sponsor its annual Long Island Scottish Games at Old Westbury Gardens, 71 Old Westbury Road in Old Westbury. The event will take place from 8am to 5pm. This fun event features music, sports and foods for all ages, ranging from saber throwing, bagpipe competitions, and other traditional customs from Scotland. Participating in the event are the Clan Gordon Highlanders. For information call Old Westbury Gardens at (516) 333-0048. ■

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 June, September, December and March.

- July 10:** Dave Sear Concert. 7:30pm. Mary Jane Davies Green Bandstand, Plandome Rd. Manhasset. For information call Mary Mahaffey at 516-327-3110.
- July 12:** Arno & The Clog Dancers, at the Northport Public Library. 7:30 pm. Free admission. For information call 631-261-6930.
- July 29:** Om Kara Indian dance performance at LI Children's Museum. 1: 30 pm. 11 Davis Avenue, Garden City. For information call (516) 224-5800.
- August 1:** Dave Sear Concert with Tom Chapin. 7 pm. Clark Botanic Garden. 93 I.U. Willets Road, Albertson. For Information call John Darcy at 516-263-5752 or Mary Mahaffey at 516-327-3110
- August 13:** Henna art demonstration sponsored by the Young Indian Culture Group. 7 - 8:30pm. Shelter Rock Library. For further information call 516-739-1575
- August 26:** Long Island Scottish Games. Old Westbury Gardens in Old Westbury. 8am to 5pm. For information call Old Westbury Gardens at (516) 333-0048.
- September 10:** Gospel performance at Heckscher Museum featuring the Elder Statesmen. 1-5 pm. Heckscher Town Park in Huntington. Free admission. For information call (631) 351-3250.
- September 15:** Lecture-demonstration on Bharatanatyam classical dance. 7:30pm. Herricks Community Center, 999 Herricks Road, New Hyde Park For more information contact Malini Srinivasan at maliniks@yahoo.com.
- September 16:** "Great Gurus of Bharatanatyam". 8 pm. Wang Center Theatre, Stony Brook University. For more information contact Malini Srinivasan at maliniks@yahoo.com
- September 16:** Young Indian Culture Group open house from 12 - 2pm. Classes in Indian Heritage, Languages, Music, Dance & yoga at the Herricks Middle School 7, Hilldale Road, Albertson. For further information call 516-739-1575

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