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2013, Volume 23, Issue 2

Mapping African American History Across Long Island

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Abstract: This article offers an overview of recently completed and current archaeological and community history projects that are adding to our understanding of African American history on Long Island. These short vignettes, written by their respective researchers and edited by Jenna Coplin, intertwine discussion of specific places, past peoples, modern communities, and social memory. Sites included are located in Setauket, East Setauket, Lloyd Neck, Shelter Island, Eastville, and Westbury. One virtual site, entitled “Mapping the African American Past,” is included because it provides a valuable repository of relevant research and educational resources. The contributing authors are listed in the body of the article and contact information for each project is listed at the end.

Keywords: African American, Archaeology, Eastville, Lloyd Neck, Setauket, Shelter Island, Westbury

- 1 African American experiences on Long Island are tied to the earliest colonial period. They include struggles with slavery, quests for freedom and autonomy, and the building of long-lasting institutions and ways of life that have given the region its character. In addition to the in-depth case studies featured in this special issue of the *Long Island History Journal*, this article offers an overview of seven additional archaeological and community history projects—both recent and ongoing—that relate to various aspects of Long Island’s African American

history. These short vignettes, written by the researchers involved with each project, touch on many of the same emerging themes and issues addressed in the longer articles. This round-up is far from comprehensive, however, since there are many other equally worthwhile projects underway, planned, or awaiting funding that we hope to share with readers as work on them progresses. There are also many at-risk sites that will be forgotten or obliterated without increased public awareness of their historical importance. With an eye toward the future, this article highlights the inherent challenges as historic communities seek to learn about and preserve their rich heritages and to ask meaningful questions about Long Island's past. It also underscores the importance of continued investment in research, preservation, and public interpretation of a heretofore understudied aspect of American history.

- 2 All of the projects included in this article are viewed predominantly from an archaeological perspective by researchers seeking to uncover the multi-faceted layers of human experience. They also reflect a deep concern for preservation of material culture and a dedication to expanding our knowledge of the past in specific local contexts. While some are grounded directly in archaeological excavations and associated laboratory research, several rely on other methodologies, such as oral histories (although new, or additional, archaeological work may be future components). In many cases, these investigations address the complexities of negotiating interconnected histories, tracing convoluted family genealogies and social networks, and identifying Native and/or African American presences—sometimes all within single households.^[1] While some of the projects relate to specific time periods, others—especially those focused on historic places that continue to exist as dynamic communities today—involve multiple overlapping chronologies. In the face of intense development pressures on Long Island, these projects highlight the importance of remembering and documenting more recent pasts before they are erased from landscape and memory.
- 3 The sites featured here cover the length and breadth of Long Island—from Shelter Island, to Setauket, East Setauket, Lloyd Neck, Eastville, and Westbury. Extending variously from the colonial period to today, they are organized into two loosely chronological sections: Part I focuses on the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries and Part II focuses on the twentieth century to the present, concluding with a virtual site: “Mapping the African American Past” (MAAP), an educational website (hosted by Columbia University) that contains an interactive map of significant African American historic sites in New York City and Long Island. The MAAP website was developed with the assistance of historical societies, libraries, researchers, teachers, students, and community members who contributed historic materials and interpretive content. Specific contact information for each of the featured sites, including MAAP, is included at the end of this article.
- 4 The collaborative projects showcased here offer a template for the future by encouraging information sharing and making under-utilized historical resources more accessible to researchers, educators, and the

general public. We hope that the groundswell of new research—exemplified by the projects featured in this article—will generate further consideration of how these local histories of people and places illuminate our understanding of the region’s shared history.

I. Early History: Long Island as an Intercultural Nexus

- 5 The lives of people of African descent in early New York were intertwined with those who enslaved them as well as with the people who were native to the region. Understanding the history of this period thus requires looking at European, Native American and African lifeways both before and after their contact with each other. Since archival sources from seventeenth-century Long Island are fragmentary and in some cases non-existent, many people and places are hard to find in the documentary record. In the projects featured here, researchers have nonetheless found ways to distinguish African American spaces through careful consideration of the archaeological record and the available documentation. The process of interpreting this data can, however, be lengthy and the results as complex as the lives of the people that researchers seek to better understand.

Archaeology of the Plantation at Sylvester Manor

Katherine Hayes, Ph.D., University of Minnesota
Stephen Mrozowski, Ph.D., Principal Investigator,
University of Massachusetts Boston

- 6 One of New York’s most significant sites from the early colonial period is Sylvester Manor, part of which is still extant and now preserved as the Sylvester Manor Educational Farm. In 1652, Nathaniel Sylvester and three business partners bought and began to transform Shelter Island (located between the north and south forks of East Long Island) into a provisioning plantation. They sought to support two sugar plantations on Barbados with food, lumber, and other commodities. For Nathaniel, the only one of the partners who resided on Shelter Island with his family, it was also a place to stake his independence. Leery of large companies and colonies alike, especially those run by Puritans, Sylvester tried to establish his own vision of an orderly society. According to archival materials, this society included one of the largest single holdings of enslaved African people (twenty-three) in the colonial Northeast at the time of his death in 1680. Archaeological investigations of the site have also revealed that the plantation community incorporated the indigenous Manhasset. The historical archaeology of Sylvester Manor thus stands as a critical challenge to popular historical narratives of the colonial period which have tended to “erase” the presence of Africans, African Americans, and Native Americans by discounting the integral role and complexity of plantation slavery in the Northern colonies.
- 7 Excavations at Sylvester Manor were conducted between 1998 and 2005, through field schools led by researchers affiliated with the University of Massachusetts Boston, with Stephen Mrozowski as the principal investigator. At this time, Sylvester Manor encompasses approximately 250 acres of the entire 8,000-acre island that Sylvester and his partners initially acquired. Since the

establishment of the plantation, eleven generations of Sylvester family descendants have been in possession of this core property, leaving it relatively protected. Within this core, and adjacent to an inlet from Dering Harbor, stands a Georgian-style mansion built in the 1730s which, along with its surrounding grounds, replaced a central part of the original plantation landscape. Despite a broad sampling survey strategy of large portions of the current estate, the only significant archaeological deposits dating to the seventeenth century were found within the few acres surrounding this extant Manor house, suggesting that the Sylvesters pursued a strategy of control through a tightly centralized plantation.

- 8 To date, we have located evidence in this core of an intensely used and restructured working yard, including: fence lines and trenches; a robbed builders' trench corner of an early post-in-ground structure with interior plaster walls; a very large multi-layered waste pit containing butchery waste, architectural debris (such as mortar and plaster); residential cast-offs (such as food remains, pottery, tobacco pipes, stone tools, and reworked copper); and an extensive re-deposited midden layer. These features, and the assemblages of material culture found in them, show that the labor of the plantation, including livestock butchery and barreling, building, and wampum (shell bead) production, took place in close proximity to residential activities. There is no evidence of spatially distinct living areas for the Sylvesters and their laborers, though documentary records suggest that the Manhanset may have resided only intermittently at the plantation core. Slightly further afield, remote sensing and excavation showed the creek-side landing was extensively built up with shoreline filling and several possible large structures, which we speculate may have been warehouses. A peninsula to the north extending into the creek revealed a possible planting field as well as Manhanset pottery, stone tools, and shell middens, the latter dating to as many as 2,000 years ago. Our comparisons of earlier Manhanset materials to an array of plantation-period artifacts, such as locally produced pottery, stone tools, and shell fragments, show that indigenous materials and technologies contributed significantly to the work of the plantation, and in some cases appear to have been blended or shared with the work of other non-native laborers.
- 9 While the work of the plantation (including herding, planting, and marine resource extraction) likely extended to other areas on the island, the concentration of materials at the core of the plantation suggests a high degree of interaction and exchange between the Manhanset and enslaved Africans. As this presumably was occurring within the Sylvester's immediate arena of control, we think it likely that ties of affiliation and commonality were forged among their workers across the broader landscape. These kinds of relationships are of particular interest in light of the convoluted local histories that downplayed or denied the roles of indigenous and enslaved people, as well as the commemorative landscapes created during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries at Sylvester Manor which served to keep their histories mutually distinct.
- 10 Though excavations have been on hold for several years while analyses

of the finds were completed and published, we hope to resume work in the years to come. In the meantime, the property has been established as a private non-profit educational institution open to the public and dedicated to historic preservation and organic agriculture, which hopefully will encourage further research and interpretation. Several new publications offer detailed information about the site's history and the archaeological project's results.[2]

Archaeological Excavations at the Thompson House: A Preliminary Report

Bradley D. Phillippi, Northwestern University

- 11 The Thompson House in East Setauket, New York, has a rich and storied past. Built in the early eighteenth century, the house was home to multiple generations of the Thompson family, many of whom found their way into the annals of local history. Though the Thompson family's contributions to local history are significant and meaningful, current research at the site is interested as well in people whose everyday practices are often overlooked, the enslaved Africans who lived and labored at the Thompson house.
- 12 Surviving documents, including a journal kept by Dr. Samuel Thompson in the early nineteenth century, indicate that the family owned many "servants for life."^[3] In his writing, Samuel details the daily rounds and routines necessary to maintain a farm in post-revolutionary Suffolk County. Enslaved Africans, indentured Native Americans, and short-term laborers performed many of the myriad tasks, though it was common for Samuel and his family to work alongside them. While the Thompsons undoubtedly occupied the house, it is unclear where on the farm the enslaved and indentured servants lived. Unlike in the South where enslaved populations laboring on plantations lived in spatially and socially segregated quarters, in the North slaves often shared the homes of their owners.^[4] The majority of slaveholders—yeomen farmers, artisans, and other ordinary residents—on average owned between one and three enslaved Africans, which typically made separate slave quarters both unnecessary and uneconomical, though that does not preclude the possibility of segregated cabins for African laborers.^[5]
- 13 Determining how the landscape and constructed spaces were organized, demarcated, navigated, and shared illuminates race relations in the past. At the Thompson site, however, it remains uncertain whether enslaved laborers lived in the main house or separately in a segregated dwelling. This is a significant distinction because how social boundaries shift to accommodate, maintain, or challenge perceptions of race often is influenced by where different groups lived in relation to one another. The ongoing archaeological investigations will hopefully shed light on this and other questions.
- 14 One season of survey and excavation has been conducted at the Thompson House to date. First the property was examined for any culturally significant material not depicted on more recent maps of the site. At this time a retaining wall was discovered in a wooded part of the property behind the home. The wall supports a small, relatively level

piece of land in an otherwise sloped landscape. When the wall was constructed, however, is unclear. Two electronic survey devices were used to augment the survey. First a Sokkia 630r Total Station was used to produce a highly detailed and accurate topographic map of the site by recording changes in the distance and angle between the machine and a stadia rod. Second, a fluxgate magnetic gradiometer—an instrument calibrated to read minute differences in the soils' magnetic field—mapped the location of subsurface features and other areas of cultural activity. The latter remote sensing survey guided the location of the initial test excavations.

- 15 Shovel test pits (STPs) and trench units were used to determine the extent, archaeological integrity, and the stratigraphic sequence of the Thompson House site. A total of twenty-one STPs were excavated systematically on a ten-by-ten meter grid in the area that was unsuitable for our remote sensing survey. Two additional units (50 centimeter by 3 meter trenches) were placed preferentially using the subsurface image produced by the survey equipment. One trench was oriented on a north-south axis and placed approximately fifteen meters behind the house (i.e., east of the house), while the other was placed on an east-west axis and positioned five meters from the side of the house (i.e., south of the house). All of the artifacts recovered from the test excavations came in the form of fragmented, broken, and discarded items.
- 16 The survey and test excavations conducted at the Thompson House justify the next stage of research. The material recovered from the shovel test pit located behind the retaining wall indicates a structure of indeterminate size and function was once supported by the wall. It is premature to state definitively the purpose of the outbuilding, but a servants' quarter is within the realm of possibility. The area behind the house is also of primary interest because the archaeology confirms it was a midden for materials used and broken inside the house, as well as the final resting place for lost or misplaced items. The documentary record, specifically Dr. Samuel Thompson's journal, suggests that this area was a multi-cultural setting of daily interaction, commercial production, and domestic tasks necessary for maintaining the Thompson farm. Because Native Americans, Africans, and Europeans were working side-by-side in the many activity areas, it is unlikely that the artifacts, in this case, will be attributable to a specific group or gender. Rather than search for discrete cultural markers, research will focus on how transcultural interaction and unequal power relations were a fundamental strategy in eighteenth and nineteenth century farming on Long Island. The Thompson House is an ideal site to better understand how enslaved Africans and Native Americans were integrated into the daily rounds of the farm while simultaneously being segregated socially and spatially in the broader community.

Joseph Lloyd Manor: Open Dialogs

Jenna Wallace Coplin, Graduate Center, CUNY

- 17 Joseph Lloyd Manor, located on the north shore of Long Island, is a Georgian style home completed in 1766. It originally rested on less than a quarter of the manorial patent granted to Joseph's grandfather, James,

in 1665. Married to Grizell Sylvester, daughter of Nathaniel Sylvester, James never lived on Lloyd Neck but beginning in 1711, the family of merchant-planters used Lloyd Neck as base for both home and business. In 1790, census records indicate that they collectively owned up to fifteen people, held in slavery for their labor on Lloyd Neck. Joseph Lloyd Manor has been the subject of archaeological research several times in the past.^[6] Most of this work focused on the Manor house and its immediate landscape. Excavations begun in 2005 sought to better understand another component of the site's history, the remains of a structure visible on the ground's surface. Preliminary documentary research and site survey both suggested that this was a small house not previously investigated, possibly occupied during the period when slavery was legal in New York. Deposits below the surface told a different story.

- 18 Initial excavations of the approximately ten-foot square structure defined the surviving foundation. Made of a single course of dry laid stones, the remaining foundation was in good condition and, although of lesser quality, resembled that of the Manor. The interior of the structure was sampled starting with a few exploratory excavations. The deposits were initially interpreted as materials related to house demolition. In other words, it appeared the house structure that once rested on the foundation had been wood frame and had either collapsed over time or been pushed into the cellar. The following year, larger excavations expanded these units. They quickly revealed that the interior was filled instead with historic materials of a later date, possibly related to a modernization of the Manor. It appears the open foundation pit, or cellar, was used to contain trash sometime in the past. This may have served the dual purpose of filling in an open hole on the landscape. For archaeologists this meant the interior did not provide deposits clearly related to the occupants of the home.
- 19 Fortunately, excavations identified and documented other deposits associated with the structure and its occupants. A sheet midden tightly surrounding the structure was comprised of the detritus of every day activities of the past. Evidence of a porch added to the house also was recovered and the cellar entrance was identified in 2007, the project's final season. Other modifications to the house were also evident such as repairs made to the foundation. These deposits indicated an early- to mid-nineteenth century occupation of the structure. Additional documentary research supported this date range. Maps depicting the structure date to 1814 and 1836. During the nineteenth century, the land still belonged to the Lloyd family, now a fading elite, who hired wage laborers for agricultural and other work. This small building was likely home to the Lloyds' workers. The Lloyds were known to employ people of both African and European descent and continued to hold at least one person in slavery as late as 1820. A study of later census records (1830-1860) identified a free black household headed by Seasor Brush. It is possible that Brush, along with a woman close to him in age and several children (all boys under the age of ten), were the occupants of the structure in 1830. By the 1840 census, the Brush family had moved to Huntington and no subsequent occupants of the structure have yet been identified. It is possible, however, that both black and white wage

laborers lived in the house at different points thus leaving their histories intertwined in the archaeological record.

- 20 Research on the site seeks to understand the interpersonal relationships emerging in the nineteenth century that connected people with employment opportunities, which were essential to maintaining independent households. These social networks, in turn, influenced the choices available to working class families, a growing number of whom were African American. Specifically from the 1830s to the 1860s, African American households in some parts of Long Island were able to take advantage of new wage-based opportunities, such as within the burgeoning whaling industry in Oyster Bay.^[7] Lloyd Neck was so geographically isolated, however, that workers who moved there for jobs may have had a difficult time participating in their previous social networks or contributing to the households they left behind. Assisting their families with essential work, such as agricultural tasks, necessary for economic independence, would be impractical, but they could contribute wages earned at the Manor.
- 21 The materials recovered from the site are a result of tradeoffs and choices made by the occupants. Analysis of these artifacts in context helps inform our understanding of the shifting landscapes of both wage laborers and their households in the mid-nineteenth century. It may not be possible to connect the Brush household definitively to this structure. However, placed in dialog with the material remains present, this work will hopefully contribute to our understanding of African American households emerging in the post-emancipation New Republic as it took shape on Long Island.
- 22 Joseph Lloyd Manor's landscape was home to people of African descent throughout the history of enslavement and into the nineteenth century. The histories of the Lloyds and those who labored for them, by force or by choice, both African and European descendants, remained entwined at the site and are connected to the modern communities of Huntington, Huntington Station, Cold Spring Harbor, and Oyster Bay.

II. Later History: African American Communities as Living Legacies

- 23 In recent decades archaeological work has taken on new shapes. These involve a variety of collaborations, some of which include little or no actual excavation. Archaeology, as a part of anthropology, engages in research across disciplinary boundaries to include history, genealogy, geography, and other fields. These scholarly approaches, in turn, inform, and are informed by, local community members' priorities, concerns, and preservation goals. The following projects exemplify collaborative efforts to explore and document African American history on Long Island, bringing together people with diverse interests, organizational affiliations, and perspectives.

The Eastville Community: A Hidden Jewel in Sag Harbor

Georgette Grier-Key, Ed.D., Eastville Community Historical Society

**Allison Manfra McGovern, Graduate School and University Center,
CUNY**

- 24 The Eastville community was a working-class neighborhood in Sag Harbor, New York, comprised of African Americans, Native Americans, and European immigrants in the nineteenth century. Today, the Sag Harbor National Historic District includes Eastville's St. David AME Zion Church and Cemetery, the Heritage House, and a number of homes from the nineteenth century. These properties possess a unique value for African American archaeology because they hold material histories of free black labor, land ownership, and religious practice, and their stories connect the local community to its past. The working-class roots of this multi-ethnic neighborhood makes this area even more significant, as research here will contribute to our understanding of how ordinary people's experiences of race, gender, and labor shaped broader social and economic patterns in Long Island history.
- 25 Although enslaved African Americans were present on eastern Long Island from the early colonial period, Sag Harbor saw an influx of free African Americans in the early nineteenth century who came in search of employment in the profitable whaling industry. They joined skilled whalers of Montaukett and Shinnecock ancestry who already lived and worked in the area. These men and women settled along Hempstead Street and Liberty Street, the earliest roads in the settlement. Many of them initially attended service at the Methodist Church in downtown Sag Harbor, where African Americans and Native Americans were segregated to the balconies and areas to the rear of the sanctuary. Around 1840, David Hempstead, Lewis Cuffee, Charles Plato, and William Prime organized the St. David AME Zion Church and constructed a building for it on Eastville Avenue. The new church played a central role in their everyday lives, bringing people of different backgrounds together.
- 26 In the late 20th century, due to a diminishing congregation, the trustees of the St. David AME Zion Church deeded the cemetery to the Eastville Community Historical Society (ECHS). Since its inception, the ECHS, formed in 1981 by a group of Eastville residents, has worked to save and maintain at-risk properties. Today, the Society is engaged in preserving and researching Eastville's past through public engagement and discourse, bringing together academics, advocates, and residents to promote new investigations of this integral, yet often-forgotten part of the American past.
- 27 Georgette Lovette Grier-Key, is the first Director and Chief Curator of the ECHS. Her current research, which focuses on the sustainability of multi-ethnic material culture, provides a forum to maintain the cultural vitality of the Eastville area in the past, present, and future. Under her direction, an organizational charette for the ECHS was begun in November 2012.^[8] This was the first of a multi-step planning process, wherein various stakeholders (students, clergy, municipal officials, architects, archaeologists, and residents) are brought together to develop a master plan for how space, facilities, and research at the cemetery and the Heritage House will be utilized by the greater public. This planning process will continue through 2013.

- 28 In 2013, the Archaeological Institute of America (AIA) awarded the ECHS a Site Preservation Grant for the St. David AME Zion Cemetery. The AIA grant will support fencing and signage to protect the cemetery, and public outreach programs offered through the ECHS. Scheduled outreach programs include a cemetery preservation workshop, an Adopt-a-Grave program, and a series of public lectures. The St. David AME Zion Cemetery is an important historical and archaeological resource that serves to increase our understanding of shared economic and religious experiences, and illuminates stories of the neighborhood's intertwined families. Archaeological investigations at Eastville are in the early stages of development. Under the direction of Dr. Grier-Key and cemetery chair Michael Butler, Eastville has assembled a team including Bill Chaleff (A.I.A., LEED, A.P.), Allison Manfra McGovern, and Emily Button Kambic.
- 29 Future archaeological investigations will include a geophysical survey of the cemetery for burial identification, site preservation, and interpretation. Geophysical remote-sensing techniques, in combination with historical research on individual burials, will clarify the numbers and orientations of burials, identify undocumented graves, and locate out-of-place headstones, without disturbing culturally and legally sensitive burials. This research will help demonstrate how the Eastville cemetery relates to other cemeteries on eastern Long Island, and perhaps how the Eastville residents understood their situation in relation to the larger, multicultural society. Furthermore, the geophysical survey will allow the ECHS to assess the property's state of preservation, plan for its future curation, and develop further outreach programs.
- 30 Presently, the historical and archaeological resources of the Eastville community are the subject of dissertation research for two archaeologists. Emily Button Kambic, a doctoral student in Anthropology at Brown University, is developing a research project centered on Native and African American whaling households in the Towns of East Hampton and Southampton. She is currently working to draw together neighborhood settlement histories with architecture, material culture, historic photographs, and demographic and genealogical research on Eastville families. Her dissertation in historical archaeology will explore these households as the building blocks of working-class communities during and beyond the whaling era. Allison Manfra McGovern, a doctoral candidate in Anthropology at the Graduate School and University Center of the City University of New York, is working with previously-excavated archaeological materials to investigate Montaukett labor and economics in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This research has led her to the diasporic Eastville community. Current research on family histories, labor patterns, and economic conditions for the nineteenth-century Eastville residents will be used for making economic comparisons, and for understanding the creation and maintenance of social networks between the Native residents of Eastville and Montauk.
- 31 Current and future research at Eastville will shed light on nineteenth-century social, economic, and cultural conditions, including the

emergence of the working class, community formation, the construction and maintenance of identity, and heritage preservation; yet the research program has a community-oriented design. The investigators have begun to develop an extensive consultation process with multiple stakeholders to enable the production of a research design that is mindful of the memories and research interests of the community.

The Jacob and Hannah Hart Home Site, Setauket, NY

Christopher Matthews, Ph.D., Montclair State University

- 32 Setauket, located on the north shore of the Town of Brookhaven, was founded in 1655 and is one of the oldest settlements in Suffolk County. The early residents of Setauket came from diverse backgrounds including English settlers as well as Native American Setalcott and African people and communities. Over time, these groups developed distinct places to live and created new lineages, including Setauket where a community of indigenous mixed heritage Native and African Americans has survived for more than 200 years. Descendants of those original inhabitants recently established a community-based cultural and historical preservation organization called Higher Ground Intercultural and Heritage Association. This group led the effort to create the Bethel-Christian Avenue-Laurel Hill Historic District in 2005 and has continued to serve the community through other landmark and community preservation projects.
- 33 One important Higher Ground initiative is the “A Long Time Coming” project that has brought together community-members and academic researchers to collect and document the history of Native and African Americans in Setauket. This project is explored in the photo essay included in this special issue of the *Long Island History Journal*.
- 34 As one component of the “A Long Time Coming” project, an archaeological study at the Jacob and Hannah Hart home site began in 2011. Jacob Hart was descended from one of Setauket’s early families of mixed Native American and African American heritage. He was born in Setauket in 1857, one of several children of William H. Hart and Lucretia Hart. Census and other documents show Jacob Hart was a seaman, farm laborer, mason, and rubber factory worker. He died in 1931. Hannah Hart was born in Virginia in 1856 and may have come to Long Island as a young woman to work for a white family in exchange for acquiring an education. She died in 1921. The Hart family lived at the site under study from 1888 to the 1930s. Elders in the community say that the house itself was demolished by 1950. Jacob and Hannah Hart had 12 children, many of whom remained in Setauket and had families of their own. Many direct descendants of the Harts still live in Setauket and other nearby towns and have contributed materials and stories to the “A Long Time Coming” project.
- 35 The archaeological study of the Hart site aims to collect historical and material culture data that will amplify our understanding of the Harts and their community during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Jacob and Hannah Hart and their family are relatively well documented in archival sources. They are present in several federal and

state censuses. They can also be found in local school records, the Tyler Store account books, and historic newspapers. There is also an oral history interview with the Hart's youngest daughter, Lucy Hart Keyes, collected by Dr. Glenda Dickerson, formerly of Stony Brook University and on file at the Three Village Historical Society in Setauket. We have also learned a great deal from other elders still living in the community who remember the Harts, and their home, and who have helped archaeologists understand the site.

- 36 Archaeological testing in 2011 by a team of undergraduate interns from Hofstra University excavated a total of 15 one-meter square pits. A historic photo of the Hart home indicates they lived in a one and half story house with a brick chimney and a one-story rear addition, which oral testimony indicates was the kitchen. The excavation strategy was to identify any remains of this structure, test the surrounding yard areas and define activity areas that might produce artifacts that could tell us more about the Harts' everyday lives at the site.
- 37 Excavations uncovered a partial house foundation and chimney base as well as at least two wooden support posts and a buried brick walkway. These findings allow archaeologists to conceptualize where the house stood on the site. Within and adjacent to these features, several hundred ceramic, glass, metal, bone, and stone artifacts were also collected. The first observation is that the site itself was not disturbed after the house was torn down. Rather a natural overgrowth of vines and roots buried and preserved the site almost as it was on the last day that the Harts lived there. From these buried deposits and artifacts, project leaders are hopeful that a fuller story of the ways of life practiced by the members of the Native and African community in Setauket will emerge.
- 38 A few of the artifacts interpreted so far tell part of this story. In several different areas of the site, archaeologists recovered a thimble and more than 16 buttons, many of which are of different types. From the census records we know that Hannah Hart was a laundress and seamstress. We also know that this was a common occupation for women of color. We think these buttons and the thimble reflect her work at the site. A related find is a fragment of a sperm whale sewing oil bottle. This artifact may reflect both Hannah's sewing work as well as Jacob's connection to the sea as many Native and African American men on Long Island worked in the whaling and maritime trades in the nineteenth century. Finally, archaeologists also recovered a white quartz bifacial point or scraper and several small quartz fragments. Whether the Harts merely found these artifacts or manufactured them for use is uncertain. Since their daughter Lucy Keyes recalled that her father Jacob was considered by many to be an Indian, however, these stone artifacts may well reflect the continuation of an active Native American cultural tradition within the Hart family. Continued investigation of this possibility is imperative, especially in light of the current revival of the Setalcott Nation who were the original inhabitants of the Setauket area.
- 39 Excavations at the Hart home site will resume in 2013, when Dr. Matthews will bring a new set of interns from his new base at Montclair State University.[\[9\]](#)

A Place Remembered: The H. H. Garnet Memorial Fresh Air Home, Westbury, NY

Judith A. Burgess, Ph.D., Education Works, Co.

- 40 The study of the Henry Highland Garnet Memorial Home in Westbury, Long Island (Nassau County) is part of a larger on-going research project that seeks to identify *the place*, both as a physical and social construct, which African Americans have occupied over time in Westbury. The Garnet Memorial Home was one such physical site that belonged to African Americans and was established by them in the late nineteenth century. In a recent publication, this author reconstructs the history of the Home, which was demolished circa 2002. Her research sheds light on the meaning and importance this site may have had for its female organizers and beneficiaries, as well as the larger African American and Westbury communities.[10]
- 41 In the late nineteenth century, Fresh Air initiatives were an off-shoot of the Progressive Era. Social reformers, intent on alleviating the problems faced by the poor and working classes, particularly women and children living in congested city tenements, considered temporary summer visits away from the city, at a Fresh Air outing or home, as a critical relief measure. Although the Garnet Memorial Home reflected this larger progressive reform movement, it was a unique configuration that was conceived, built, and operated by African American women over a span of 62 years.
- 42 The Garnet Memorial Home was established in Westbury by an African American women's group called the National Women's African American Union (NWAAU) based in New York City. It was named for the Reverend Henry Highland Garnet (1815 – 1882), the renowned African American abolitionist leader and United States Consular Minister to Liberia.[11] The NWAAU (or Union) was founded in 1887 and was initially engaged in establishing a memorial to Reverend Garnet in the form of a local school for African girls in Liberia, West Africa. In 1891, after the death of one of the organization's leading members who had ties to the Liberian school, the women redirected their memorialization efforts to the United States. In 1892, they purchased the land in Westbury where they subsequently established a Fresh Air home named in honor of Reverend Garnet.
- 43 Maintained and operated by the Union until 1954, the Garnet Memorial Home served and nurtured hundreds of African American working women and girls, who faced not only poor environmental conditions in New York City, but also inequality and subordination in the workforce due to race and gender bias. The women who were the beneficiaries were provided with an opportunity to come to a beautiful place. When the Home opened its doors in 1895, Westbury was still a sparsely populated area known for its large old Quaker farms and natural scenic beauty; it had an abundance of fresh country air. Even into the 1940's, the Home was characterized as beautiful and was described as such by one former Westbury resident who lived next door.[12]
- 44 For the African American women who organized the Fresh Air Home in

Westbury, their agenda went beyond giving women and children a wholesome break from New York City; they strived for more enduring remedies. Cognizant of the societal mores that sought to restrict or exclude African American women from certain recreational and work places, the NWAAU designed a two-pronged approach that targeted the needs of two classes of African American women. The Garnet Memorial Home recruited working class black women and their children as guests, offering them a retreat and restoration from the hardships and indignities of low status women's work—typically many jobs relegated to black female city dwellers were described as jobs that “white women did not want.”^[13] In addition, the Union sought out black women who were members or aspiring members of the middle class, especially credentialed teachers who were employed as professional trainers and industrial educators. These teachers, in turn, prepared the working class black female occupants of the Fresh Air Home for enhanced job opportunities.

- 45 The Garnet Memorial Home was part of a larger African American movement for racial uplift that started in the late nineteenth century. The Home and its organizers, the NWAAU, provide a view, in one local setting, of the organizational activities of African American women that were emerging simultaneously on local and national levels. This was a time when African American women across the United States organized various charitable and self-help programs and institutions to improve the conditions of their people, that is, “lifting [them] as they climbed.” The Garnet Memorial Home was a local manifestation of what grew to be a vibrant national women's movement – the National Association of Colored Women (NACW). Some of the Homes' female organizers visibly operated at both levels.
- 46 If memorial sites are a tribute to honor, celebrate, and remember significant past people and events, then the overt meaning the women of the Union ascribed to the Home they created in Westbury is clear. It was a place to honor Reverend Garnet, ordained Presbyterian minister, Chaplain to the 26th Regiment, U.S. Colored Troops, and well-known orator, invited by President Lincoln to speak to the House of Representatives. This outstanding African American leader, who himself escaped enslavement in Maryland, served as a U.S. diplomat in Liberia where he died while in service to his country and the people of Liberia. Garnet also was not a stranger to Westbury. In 1871, Reverend Garnet was a speaker at a voting rights victory celebration held in Westbury. This was a truly memorable event with black military men and a regimental band that marched through the streets of the town. Twenty years after Garnet's participation in this event, the NWAAU came to select a site, in this place, to memorialize him. The memorial they created was not static, however, but a living legacy that perpetuated what he stood for and how he had lived, in the service of African Americans. Garnet's name certainly added value to the site, helping to secure support from other prominent African American men, particularly the religious leaders of the day, for this all-female effort. Even after the Garnet Memorial Home discontinued operations in 1954, the building stood in place for another forty-eight years, a reminder of the efforts of the Union and the African American leader they sought to

honor.

- 47 On the whole, the Garnet Memorial Home is one of a number of African American sites on Long Island that helps to tell the story of the importance of *place* for African Americans. Given its physical proximity to New York City, Long Island is critical in any attempt to understand the shifting place of African Americans in the region's growth and development. Like Westbury, many Long Island areas may have served as a refuge and outlet for New York City-based African American activities. The Home actively promoted this interconnection as it brought African American female city dwellers to live in Westbury during the summer. Like many nationally organized African American churches, the Garnet Memorial Home was a bridge institution that brought people back and forth from different locations. This study also reveals aspects of the African American struggle to advance their place in American society, to secure places of beauty and honor for their own people, and to hold onto and preserve the places they built.

“Mapping the African American Past” (MAAP) on Long Island

Columbia Center for New Media Teaching and Learning

- 48 During the fall of 2007 Columbia Center for New Media Teaching and Learning (CCNMTL), in partnership with Columbia University's Teachers College and Curriculum Concepts International (a creator of education products), received a grant from the Chase Foundation for a project to highlight significant African American history sites in the greater New York City region. The resulting website, entitled “Mapping the African American Past,” while not comprehensive, offers a tremendous amount of useful information for teachers, students and online visitors.^[14] Although the project was geared toward educators, one of the underlying concepts was something broader—a belief in the ability to shape collective memory in service of social justice through history and education.^[15]
- 49 When the MAAP website launched, it made the latest research and archival materials related to many prominent, and lesser-known, aspects of the region's African American history accessible to the public. Comprised of interpretive narratives, historical images and maps, video interviews, and downloadable pod casts, each MAAP entry focused on a person, place, or event. They were then located on virtual maps (historic and modern) using color-coded pins to indicate their time period. Curriculum modules connected each entry to overarching themes that dovetailed with state requirements helping teachers to use MAAP effectively in classrooms. The value of bringing these materials together in this way was quickly recognized. In 2009, the Archivists Round Table gave MAAP its Innovative Use of Archives award.
- 50 Originally, the website focused exclusively on New York City. The lines dividing the city's boroughs of Brooklyn and Queens from the rest of Long Island, which seem so durable, served as MAAP's geographical parameters. However, since people in the past conceived of the landscape in ways other than those circumscribed by modern boundaries, the staff at the Center for Public Archaeology (CfPA),

housed at Hofstra University and then directed by Christopher Matthews, proposed an expansion of MAAP's boundaries to include Long Island sites.[16] Their intention was to encourage visitors to the MAAP website to think about how, amidst shifting perceptions of space across time, interpersonal connections developed across the region.

- 51 Since the technology-rich, standardized platform of MAAP required that all submissions include specific components in particular formats, only a few of the many known sites on Long Island qualified. Ten were selected and appear on the MAAP website, including Eastville and Joseph Lloyd Manor discussed above.[17] Additional contributions were planned but new uploads to the site are currently frozen. Despite this hiatus, MAAP continues to serve as an important online repository and educational resource, making information about African Americans' contributions to Long Island history readily accessible to the general public. It also serves to reinforce how local histories matter within the broader regional context.

Conclusion

- 52 From librarians to archaeologists, educators to community activists, many residents care deeply about preserving places of significance to local history. However, the differential rate at which such sites, especially those related to African American history, are being disturbed or destroyed adds a sense of urgency to this endeavor. If high profile sites like the John Coltrane Home in Dix Hills can wind up on the National Trust for Historic Preservation's List of Most Endangered Historic Places, what then will be the fate of less well-known, yet important places in hamlets and villages across Long Island?[18] As Long Island grows, residents are increasingly connected only by the spaces where things "used to be" and tension exists between the preservation of the past and future development. Attaching African American history to specific places aids preservation efforts and motivates continued research to uncover the complex stories of African American communities yet to be retrieved from the archaeological and historical records.
- 53 When considering African American history on Long Island, however, an additional challenge presents itself; for contrary to popular visions of historic sites as specific locales, fixed in time and space, many people and institutions were quite mobile, relocating periodically as necessitated by changing social and economic conditions. After the Bethel AME Church of Amityville was founded in 1815, for example, its congregants gathered in area homes for many years before settling into their first church building around 1843. For over two decades, this community institution thus shared the private spaces of its members both for public worship and for their associated school. In 1960, the growing congregation moved again, this time to Copiague.[19] Other communities have similar stories. Such relationships between households and institutions were simultaneously intimate and constitutive. The MAAP website provides one avenue, via technology, of making visible such multi-dimensional migrations that enmesh diverse people, places, and histories on Long Island.

- 54 By gathering together the remarkable variety of projects represented in this article, we gain an overview of how researchers today are seeking deeper understandings of such subjects as households, work, social relations, and collective memory. Much of this scholarship speaks to the dynamism, tenacity, continuity, adaptation, and mobility that characterized many aspects of life for people in African American and multiracial communities on Long Island. Making these projects—including works-in-progress—more accessible and open to collaboration, we hope will serve as a catalyst to raise new questions, encourage the use of existing research in public service, and inspire the formation of creative partnerships.

For more information on these projects:

Sylvester Manor

The archaeological materials excavated from Sylvester Manor on Shelter Island were analyzed at University of Massachusetts Boston. Images and additional publications related to the archaeological excavations can be found here:

<http://www.fiskecenter.umb.edu/Projects/SylvesterManor.html>

The Sylvester Manor Educational Farm is open to the public on designated days and has a regular schedule of educational programs and events. For more information, see <http://sylvestermanor.wordpress.com/>

Thompson House

The property is owned and maintained by the Ward Melville Heritage Association. For more information, call 631-751-2244 or visit <http://www.wmho.org/default.asp>

Joseph Lloyd Manor

The Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities owns, operates, and maintains Joseph Lloyd Manor. It is open to the public. Contact SPLIA for hours and programs.

www.splia.org or email info@splia.org.

Eastville

The Eastville Community Historical Society (ECHS) is located at 139 Hampton Street in Sag Harbor, New York. For information about research, programs, and volunteering, or to join the mailing list, contact Dr. Georgette Lovette Grier-Key <http://eastvillecommunityhistoricalsociety.webs.com> or email eastvillechs@gmail.com.

Jacob and Hannah Hart Home Site and the “A Long Time Coming” Project

For more information, please contact Dr. Christopher Matthews at matthewsc@mail.montclair.edu Please also visit the project on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/198562296851737/>

Garnet Memorial Fresh Air Home, Westbury [no longer extant]

While this site is not longer extant, an expanded article about Dr. Burgess’ work on Westbury was published in *The Nassau County Historical Society Journal* (2011) vol. 66, pp. 8-25.

“Mapping the African American Past,” (MAAP)

Notes

[1] See also Christopher Matthews and Bradley Phillippi, “White Until Proven Black,” paper presented at the 2013 Theoretical Archaeology Group (TAG) Conference. Chicago, IL.

[2] A representative list of the project’s publications follows: Katherine H. Hayes and Stephen A. Mrozowski, eds., “The Historical Archaeology of Sylvester Manor,” special issue, *Northeast Historical Archaeology* 36 (2007); Heather B. Trigg and David B. Landon, “Labor and Agricultural Production at Sylvester Manor Plantation, Shelter Island, New York,” *Historical Archaeology* 44, no. 3 (2010): 36-53; Stephen A. Mrozowski, “Creolized Materialities: Archaeological Explorations of Hybridized Realities on a North American Plantation,” *Journal of Historical Sociology* 23, no.1 (2010):16-39; Katherine H. Hayes, “Occulting the Past: Conceptualizing Forgetting in the History and Archaeology of Sylvester Manor,” *Archaeological Dialogues* 18, no. 2 (2011): 197-221; and Katherine H. Hayes, *Slavery Before Race: Europeans, Africans, and Indians at Long Island’s Sylvester Manor* (New York University Press, 2013). For more information about the history of the site, see also Mac Griswold, *The Manor: Three Centuries at a Slave Plantation on Long Island* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013).

[3] Estate Inventory, Samuel Thompson, 4 October 1811, box 2, Samuel Thompson Papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, New York Public Library.

[4] Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1998).

[5] Richard Shannon Moss, *Slavery on Long Island: A Study in Local Institutional and Early African American Communal Life* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1993).

[6] Lynn Ceci, “Field book, Queens College Archaeology Lab from Excavations at Joseph Lloyd Manor, Sept-Oct 1979,” Institute for Long Island Archaeology, Stony Brook University; Warren R. DeBoer and Paul E. Mahler, “Archaeological Probes at the Joseph Lloyd Manor House (SC1/2), Lloyd Neck, Suffolk County,” in *The Historical Archaeology of Long Island: The Sites*, eds. Gaynell Stone and Donna Ottusch-Kianka (Stony Brook, NY: Suffolk County Archaeological Association, 1985): 320-342.

[7] The following proposal was funded for the 2012-2013 academic year and is a work-in-progress. Jenna Wallace Coplin, “Tied to Land, Still at Sea: 19th Century African American Whalers and Their Households in Oyster Bay, Long Island,” (Paul Cuffee Fellowship, Mystic Seaport Museum, 2012).

[8] A charette is defined as an intense design planning process that includes layman stakeholders and multidisciplinary professionals to solve design challenges. The process yields a final plan with short-term and long-term design goals for implementation.

[9] For a detailed consideration of the background of the archaeological project, please see Christopher N. Matthews, “Lonely Islands: Culture and Poverty in Archaeological Perspective,” *Historical Archaeology* 45(3):41-54, 2011. Please also visit the “A Long Time Coming” Facebook page at: <http://www.facebook.com/groups/198562296851737/>

[10] Judith A. Burgess, "The Garnet Memorial Home: An African American Fresh Air Home in Westbury, Long Island, 1895-1954," *The Nassau County Historical Society Journal* 66 (2011): 8-25.

[11] The word "consular" is used in distinction to religious minister, which Garnet was also. The formal title was United States Consul Plenipotentiary to Liberia. See reference: "The Black Minister Plenipotentiary," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, July 31, 1881.

[12] Since the research project began in 2006, local and former Westbury residents have shared information with the researcher about the Home.

[13] Mary White Ovington was one of the social reformers of that period who spoke out in this way against the indignities African American women faced as workers. See M. W. Ovington, *Half A Man: The Status of the Negro in New York* (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1911): 162.

[14] "Mapping the African American Past," educational website hosted by Columbia University. <http://maap.columbia.edu/> (accessed 10/9/2012).

[15] Columbia Center for New Media Teaching and Learning. Columbia University. <http://cenmtl.columbia.edu/news/announcements/mapping-the-african-american-p.html> (accessed 5/13/2013).

[16] The MAAP project was undertaken as part of the work done by the Center for Public Archaeology at Hofstra University and accomplished only with substantial help from Allison Manfra McGovern. A particular debt is owed to those repositories across Long Island who allowed access to their archives, Jamie Cohen for the video interviews, Geri Solomon for the audio clip of Dr. King, and the students who recorded pod casts. Thelma Jackson-Abidally, Linda Day, Ph.D., as well as Mark Phillipson and others at CCNMTL. A complete list of participants can be found: <http://maap.columbia.edu/about>.

[17] Columbia Center for New Media Teaching and Learning, Columbia University. <http://cenmtl.columbia.edu/news/announcements/maap-newcontent.html> (accessed 5/13/2013).

[18] <http://www.preservationnation.org/issues/11-most-endangered/locations/john-coltrane-home.html> (accessed 10/9/2012).

[19] Lynda R. Day, *Making a Way to Freedom: A History of African Americans on Long Island* (Interlaken: Empire State Books, 1997): 54.