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ABSTRACT

Although Shelter Island, New York, is the locus for hundreds of prehistoric sites, and is one of the last relatively undisturbed parts of Long Island offering splendid opportunities for studying coastal New York subsistence/settlement patterns, field work and published literature concerning the island have been limited. This overview attempts to expand the record by synthesizing prior commentary, by proposing a preliminary cultural sequence and chronology, and by providing data for future research which, we urge, should emphasize site reports and testable hypotheses concerning the archaeology of nearby coastal Connecticut with which Shelter Island is associated, geographically and culturally.

GEOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY

Located 19 kilometers (12 miles) south of the mouth of the Connecticut River, Shelter Island, New York (Figure 1) lies midway along a glacial archipelago of "Indian islands" stretching along the northern edge of the North Atlantic coastal plain province from Staten Island to Cape Cod. It is approximately 3200 hectares (7907 acres) in area, and is separated from Long Island Sound to the north and from the Atlantic Ocean to the south, by the north and south "forks" of Long Island. *Manhansack-aqua-quash-awamock*, "island sheltered by islands", was the Algonkian name for it used by resident Manhanset Indians in the seventeenth century (Duvall 1952:9).

A broad, shallow shelf surrounds most of Shelter Island, except in the northwest, where sandy bluffs rise 40 meters above sea level. Topography is morainal with kames, kettleholes, and erratic boulders that are the result of one or more advances of the late Wisconsinian glacier (Englebright 1982). The present shoreline of broad, irregular coves, shallow tidal marshes, and sandy beaches, was formed by post-glacial rises in sea level, and by the comparatively recent action of wind and waves. Much of the terrain available for human occupation during the post-Pleistocene is submerged (Lightfoot et al 1985:77).

Farming has been carried out on Shelter Island since the 1600s', although some portions of the island were never cultivated. Fortunately for archaeologists seeking to account for human activities since European contact that might have disturbed prehistoric sites, past land use patterns are well documented. Island soil is generally acetic to extremely acetic, and has a simple, well-developed profile. A thin upper stratum of decaying organic material and humus is underlain by glacial outwash sand and till continuing for a considerable depth (Broughton et al 1966:35).

Heavily forested once, the island still supports large stands of hickories and mast-producing oaks. The white oak (*Quercus alba*) grew profusely on Shelter Island in the 1650s, and was coveted both by Indians as a food source, and the European merchants seeking timber (Duvall 1952:10). The diametrically opposed

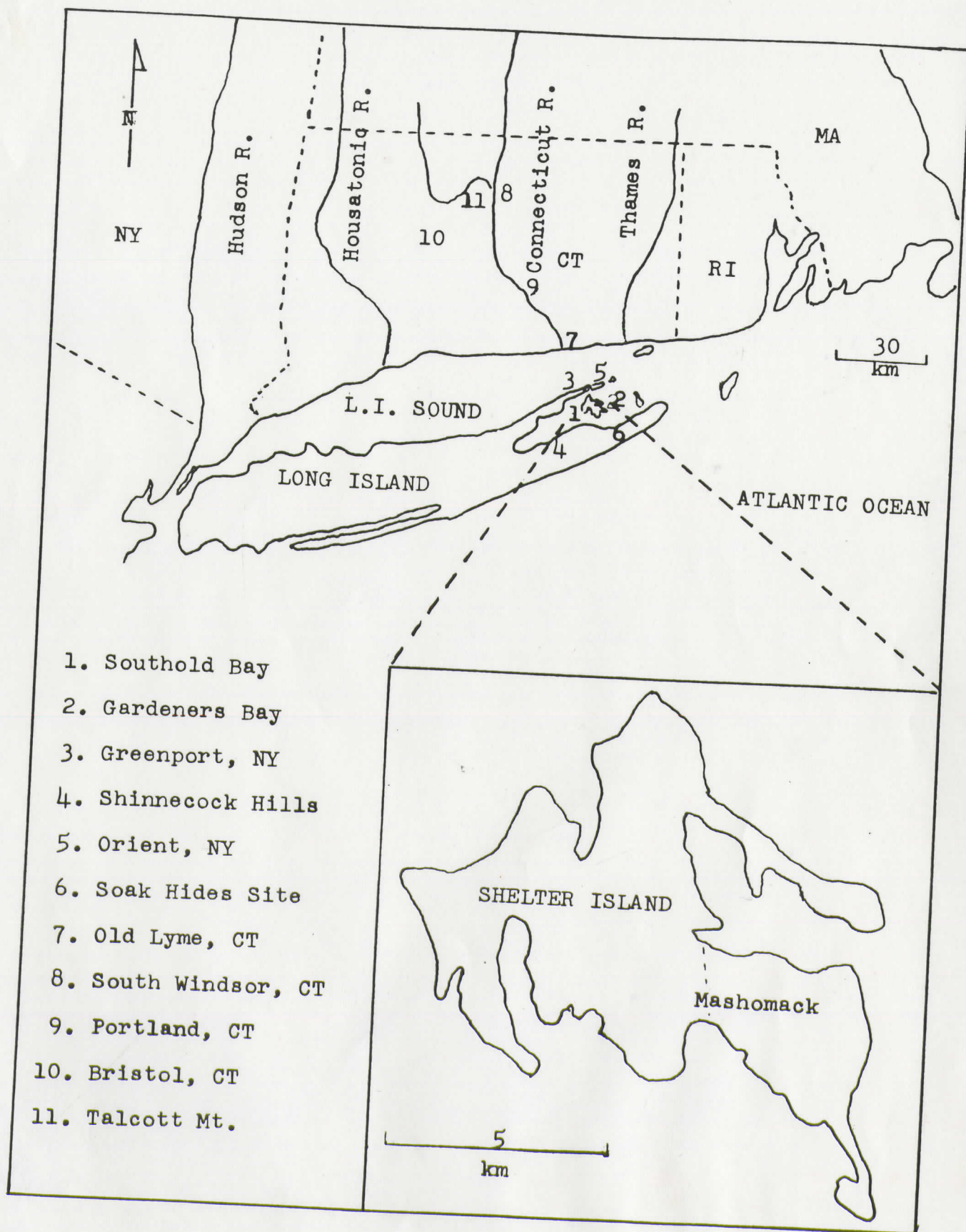


Figure 1. Shelter Island, NY, and locations mentioned in the text.

uses of this resource by whites and Indians presages the rapid dissolution and destruction of the latter's societies on Shelter Island and elsewhere throughout the northeast.

Until the onset, in 1985, of an algal bloom that decimated island shellfish populations, local waters yielded commercial quantities of bay scallop (*Aequipecten irradians*), oyster (*Crassostrea virginica*), hard clam (*Venus mercenaria*), soft clam (*Mya arenaria*), knobbed whelk (*Busycon carica*), and channeled whelk (*B. canaliculatum*), all of which have been recovered locally from Late Woodland period middens.

Edible wild plants and game are abundant. Of the 32 species of mammals, birds, reptile, crustaceans, and fish recovered by Roy Latham (1957) from a Late Woodland stratum at Shelter Island's Smith site, 25 are still resident or visit the island. White tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus borealis*) is extremely populous. These and other local mammals are plagued by the deer tick (*Ixodes dammini*), which transmits Lyme Disease that is endemic on Shelter Island. Archaeologists working here are warned to protect themselves from bites during the long tick season, which lasts from May through November.

ISLAND ARCHAEOLOGY

Despite the opportunities it affords for the study of a wide range of prehistoric sites in relatively undisturbed settings, Shelter Island received scant attention from professional archaeologists until 1983. At this time, work commenced here under the direction of Dr. Kent Lightfoot, SUNY at Stony Brook, as part of the university's regional survey program designed to supplement ongoing cultural resource management projects on Long Island. An intensive subsurface testing program was conducted to detect buried sites within Shelter Island's Mashomack Preserve -- an 825 hectare (2039 acre) tract administered by The Nature Conservancy, a non-profit environmental organization. Lightfoot discovered 18 prehistoric sites and concluded that the coastal settlement pattern for Shelter Island "is relatively complex, consisting of a few large shell middens and literally hundreds of small, special purpose camps" (Lightfoot 1985:59). Mashomack is also the subject of a preliminary archaeological survey commissioned by The Nature Conservancy, which notes site locations inside and outside of the preserve (Brush and Brush 1982).

Previously, the only significant research on Shelter Island was the excavation of the Smith site by the avocational archaeologist, Roy Latham, together with Charles F. Goddard and other members of the Incorporated Long Island Chapter, New York State Archaeological Association. As early as 1911, Indian burials had been encountered at the southeastern Shelter Island site which was to preoccupy Latham between 1938 and 1945 [not 1943 - 1953, as he perplexingly states in his 1957 site report (Latham 1957)]. Long trenches dug by the excavators through a large shell midden revealed the only stratified site yet reported for Shelter Island. It included Late Woodland, possibly earlier Woodland, and Terminal Archaic components, and yielded five burials, floral and faunal remains, as well as architectural features including hearths and house structures. Unfortunately, most of the site has been obliterated by road grading and house construction, and Latham's (n.d.) field notes are cursory and incomplete.

A report by the writer concerning a cache of Susquehanna tradition blades (Witek 1989) comprises the rest of the published literature devoted to Shelter Island prehistory. A slender collection of documents -- town records, deeds, memoirs, court records, prose fiction, and local histories -- provides some ethnohistoric data about Indian life on the island from the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries.

Hundreds of artifacts from the Smith site, together with his manuscripts and field notes were donated by Roy Latham to the Southold Indian Museum maintained by the Incorporated Long Island Chapter, New York State Archaeological Association. Other Shelter Island artifacts may be found at the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation. Others, including those excavated by Lightfoot at Mashomack, are stored at Queens College.

Artifacts collected locally by island residents and exhibited at the Manhasset Museum, administered by the Shelter Island Historical Society, were particularly useful in preparing this overview. These include diagnostic and non-diagnostic artifacts of chipped, ground, and polished stone -- projectile points, celts, mortars, pestles, axes, adzes, bifacially chipped blades, knives, balls, scrapers, drills, problematic objects, Sebonac and Niantic pottery. A small sampling of 403 projectile points with a Shelter Island provenience was examined by the writer and classified by type according to Ritchie (1971). Findings are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Projectile Point Distribution By Type

Type	Number	Percent
Vosburg	3	.7
Brewerton Side-Notched	5	1.2
Brewerton Corner-Notched	1	.2
Brewerton Eared-Triangle	3	1.7
Normanskill	4	.9
Wading River	135	33.4
Bare Island	7	1.7
Orient Fishtail	8	1.9
Snook Kill	5	1.2
Adena	2	.4
Otter Creek	1	.2
Steubenville Stemmed	2	.4
Jack's Reef Pentagonal	3	.7
Jack's Reef Corner-Notched	1	.2
Rossville	8	1.9
Levanna	162	40.1
Madison	8	1.9
Untyped	45	11.0
TOTAL	403	

ASSOCIATIONS WITH SOUTHERN CONNECTICUT

Speaking at a Metropolitan Chapter meeting of the New York State Archaeological Association (May 14, 1987), Carlyle Smith drew an analogy between the Mediterranean Sea and Long Island Sound as conduits for ancient peoples and cultures, observing that the movements of prehistoric groups to and from Long Island occurred longitudinally across the sound, more often than overland from west to east. It would seem to follow, therefore, that to clarify Shelter Island's complex prehistory it must be examined within a perspective provided by adjacent southern Connecticut.

As late as 15,000 BP, Long Island and Connecticut were contiguous; separation due to glacial melting and rising sea levels occurred by 9000 BP (Lavin 1984:9). During this period, human occupation of the Lower Connecticut River Valley appears to have been intensive (McBride 1984a:56).

The Connecticut River meets Long Island Sound 19 kilometers (12 miles) due

north of Shelter Island. Allowing for swift currents in the Sound that run east and west, voyages from Connecticut to Shelter Island wouldn't have been extraordinary for Archaic and Transitional period riverine and maritime-oriented hunter gatherers and later inhabitants. Such travel would assist in explaining parallels that exist between Shelter Island and southern Connecticut's prehistory regarding subsistence/settlement patterns, resource exploitation, and systems involving trade or tribute.

Wading River (narrow or small stemmed) points, much associated with the Late Archaic period, but shown to extend temporally into the Contact period (Lavin 1984:31), are abundant at sites along the Connecticut coast adjacent to Shelter Island (Bourne 1972:37; Pagoulatos 1983:56), and are a common point type occurring here. However, until parallel radiocarbon dates are obtained from Late Archaic sites in Connecticut and on Shelter Island, we can only presume that such points are coeval.

There is firmer evidence for visits to Shelter Island by Connecticut residents during the **Terminal Archaic (Transitional) period**. Twenty basalt Susquehanna tradition preforms excavated by the writer (Witek 1989) resemble closely preforms discovered in South Windsor, Connecticut (Vibert 1970) and elsewhere in New England (Hadlock 1948). John Pfeiffer, who excavated a major Susquehanna cremation burial site in Old Lyme, Connecticut (Pfeiffer 1980) has stated that the Shelter Island blades resemble specimens found by him there (personal communication 1987). Basalt occurs on Shelter Island only as glacial pebbles and cobbles, and not as frost-broken sheets from outcroppings, from which it would appear the 20 preforms were manufactured. Such outcroppings may be found at Connecticut's Talcott Mountain escarpment (Feder 1984b:53). Basalt also occurs along the Connecticut River at Rocky Hill and in the New Haven area (Lavin, personal communication 1987). Thin section studies could help to determine whether or not the Shelter Island specimens were quarried there. Other exogenic minerals -- graphite and amphibole talc -- indicate links between Shelter Island and New England.

Describing a cache of graphite found at East Quogue on the south fork of Long Island, Latham (1956) writes: "Judging by the material common in New England recorded in the Long Island sites, canoe traffic had been carried on for hundreds of years before the arrival of the settlers...The course by canoe would have been from Connecticut across Long Island Sound to Orient Point, west through Gardeners Bay, passing either north or south of Shelter Island.

If canoes skirted Shelter Island, they doubtlessly stopped there as well. Latham (1957) recovered 27 pieces of rubbed graphite from the Smith Site. We recovered a single, small, striated specimen from a possible Early Woodland site mentioned later.

Amphibole talc (steatite) is another non-local mineral Latham excavated at the Smith site, where he recovered seven sherds representing "two small vessels with notched rims" (Latham 1957:7). As to this material's source, Ritchie's comments about similar stone vessels near Orient, New York (1959:64) probably apply here as well: "...I am inclined to look northward across Long Island Sound to one or more of the numerous known aboriginal quarries of Rhode Island, Connecticut, or western Massachusetts."

Ritchie (1965:173) identified Providence, Rhode Island and Portland and Bristol, Connecticut as quarry and workshop sites of the steatite industry closest to Long Island, and concluded it was probable that in Orient times, "contact and trade relations existed across Long Island Sound. Parties of workmen from Long Island may have visited the New England quarries for soapstone vessels, or such vessels in the finished state may have been imported into New York from the New England Indians."

Precisely how trade figures into the aboriginal life of Shelter Island is conjectural. Sufficient data hasn't accumulated that would show whether or not

the island's archaeology reflects the "vigorous trading network operant in southern New England before European exploration of the area (Feder 1984a:58). Shelter Island projectile points and other chipped stone tools are crafted primarily from locally available white quartz. We have only one made of the chert used by Indians along the Connecticut coast, whose sites yield many artifacts and much debitage of this material (Feder 1984b:51-65).

For most of human prehistory, there may have been no resident Shelter Island population with whom one could trade; the place may have been *terra nullius*, a land belonging to no one. Visits by Indians from Connecticut were made probably only for limited special purposes. Local quartz pebbles would have been preferred for tool making because they did not have to be transported -- a conclusion which makes finding basalt preforms here even more enigmatic.

Without a burgeoning, sedentary population to deplete natural resources, Shelter Island might have been considered an inviting place to obtain food when conditions on the mainland made this expedient. Although it has been argued that Late Archaic subsistence/settlement patterns "based on the seasonal availability of a wide range of hunted and gathered resources prevents overexploitation of a single resource (Salwen 1975:55; Lavin 1984:28), it is reasonable to assume that central based wanderers from the Connecticut River Valley experienced occasional resource depletions due to ecological events, which might have resulted in brief foraging expeditions to Shelter Island.

By the Late Woodland period, a resident aboriginal population with a few large seasonal camps or semi-permanent villages seems to have established itself locally. During this time, relations between Shelter Island's Indians and those from Connecticut's mainland would have been influenced by political and kinship alliances, and by the territorialism of cultures whose world views were shaped, in part, by the dynamics of a sedentism not operant in pre-agricultural times. Most Shelter Island Late Woodland pottery thus far identified corresponds to the Sebonac phase of the Windsor tradition (Latham 1957:7), which is found elsewhere on Long Island and coastal Connecticut (Ritchie 1965:265; Wiegand 1987:34). More recent Niantic sherds, also found throughout the lower Connecticut River Valley (Lavin 1984:25), occur here as well.

During the opening decades of the Contact period, Shelter Island's Manhansets had to deal with aggression by Pequot and Narraganset Indians from southern New England -- a reason, among others, for which they participated in defensive alliances with neighboring tribes, in particular the Montauks, Shinnecocks, and Corchaugs.

PRELIMINARY CULTURAL SEQUENCE AND CHRONOLOGY

The sequence that follows is based on information obtained through our excavations and surficial inspections, a review of the literature, and examination of artifacts with a known Shelter Island provenience. Dates correspond to those presented by Lavin (1984:5-40) in her synthesis of recent studies of Connecticut prehistory. (For published radio-carbon dates see Lightfoot et al 1987).

PALEO-INDIAN PERIOD (10,000 - 7000 BC)

No evidence for this period has been found, although the loci for three fluted points have been reported not far distant: approximately two kilometers (1.2 miles) north, at Greenport; 13.5 kilometers (8.4 miles) southwest within Southampton township (Ritchie 1957:86); and roughly the same distance southeast at the Soaks Hides site (Saxon 1973:4).

EARLY AND MIDDLE ARCHAIC PERIODS (7000 - 4000 BC)

Bifurcated projectile points and Neville and Stark points diagnostic for Connecticut's Neville horizon are negative traits for Shelter Island thus far. If there were Early and Middle Archaic sites here, it is likely that most would have been inundated by rising sea levels.

According to Bloom (1967:8) "the Connecticut coast has submerged about 9.7 feet (3 m) in the last 3500 calendar years, about 27.5 feet (8.4 m) in the past 8000 years." A drop in sea level of just 7 m "would have greatly altered the configuration of Shelter Island, creating a land mass nearly twice as large as it is today...There is a very good chance that coastal sites predating the Woodland period are now submerged under a meter or more of water (Lightfoot 1985:77). Cores of "muck" recovered several hundred feet east of Cedar Beach Point on the Great Hog Neck peninsula, show that much of the submerged area west of Shelter Island was once marshland (Walter Smith, personal communication 1987).

LATE ARCHAIC PERIOD (4000 - 2000 BC)

Less than a dozen local points pertaining to the Laurentian tradition have been seen by the writer. Evidence for the Sylvan Lake and Squibnocket complexes are presently lacking. Lamokoid points are common locally. Lightfoot's (1985: 75-77) survey at Mashomack revealed one Late Archaic lithic workshop, and a small lithic workshop we are currently excavating may prove to be Late Archaic.

TERMINAL ARCHAIC (TRANSITIONAL) PERIOD (2000 - 1000 BC)

During the Terminal Archaic period, Shelter Island experienced what may be described as ripples generated by the "explosion" of activity on the mainland by peoples using broad blades and fishtail points. Although Terminal Archaic period projectile points are uncommon locally, steatite vessels excavated by Latham, and Susquehanna tradition preforms discovered by us suggest that Indians from this period visited Shelter Island briefly.

Our finding Wading River and Orient Fishtail points with Susquehanna tradition broad blades at the same Shelter Island sites (Witek 1989), may reflect the contemporaneity of various Terminal Archaic complexes that McBride posits for southern Connecticut (1984b). Mortuary contexts, so important during this period and represented dramatically nearby at Orient, New York and Old Lyme, Connecticut, have not been discovered here.

EARLY AND MIDDLE WOODLAND PERIODS (1000 BC - AD 1000)

As recent research for Connecticut suggests (Lavin 1984:17), much continuity exists between the Early Woodland way of life and aboriginal life during the preceding Late Archaic period. Evidence for discrete Early and Middle Woodland complexes is very sparse for Shelter Island, which parallels the situation in southern Connecticut, where much more activity is noted for prior and subsequent periods. Rossville projectile points we have excavated might have originated in Early Woodland times, but the continuity of this type from the Late Archaic to the Middle Woodland period would make such a conclusion tentative.

LATE WOODLAND PERIOD (AD 1000 - 1500)

Diagnostic traits from Late Woodland occupations are abundant on Shelter Island. Triangular quartz Levanna points are commonly found at what appear to be fairly large seasonal camps. Madison points occur, but less frequently. A degree of sedentism not apparent in earlier occupations is evidenced by the presence of many domestic artifacts including mortars, pestles, milling stones, and manos.

Much pottery has been reported by informants, as well as the location of a prehistoric clay quarry, now obliterated. We recovered Sebonac body sherds at a large Late Woodland site; included was one large grit-tempered specimen made of compact, well-consolidated paste one cm thick, with scallop shell channeled interior, and a slightly cord-marked smoothed over exterior with parallel horizontal incised decoration. Sebonac pottery is also reported for the Smith site (Latham 1957:7). Other sherds from the Smith site with incised curvilinear decorations are probably Mantinecock Point incised ware of the Windsor aspect (Lopez 1958:235).

Shelter Island's Late Woodland occupations seem to mirror the florescence of aboriginal activity during this period reported for Connecticut (Feder 1984a: 104). However, we have not encountered much evidence, such as the presence of exotic cherts that would reflect the burgeoning of trade networks occurring on the mainland.

FINAL WOODLAND PERIOD (AD 1500 - 1638)

To date, ceramic analysis has been the entire basis for establishing the presence of Final Woodland components on Shelter Island. Latham (1957:7) reports that Niantic "styles" of pottery were associated with Sebonac ware at the Smith site. The case is similar for Connecticut, where Niantic occupations have been reported from Windsor to the mouth of the Connecticut River (Lavin 1984:24).

HISTORIC PERIOD (AD 1638 - 1835)

The first half of the seventeenth century witnessed the collapse of traditional Woodland communities throughout the northeast. Information concerning the size of historic Indian populations at this time is limited. Dunhill (1982:9) believes that "a few to 100 families" lived on Shelter Island "in semi-permanent villages that were moved in relation to seasonally available resources (Lightfoot et al 1985:65).

In 1638, James Farrett, the first European to arrive on Shelter Island, found it occupied by Algonkian-speaking Manhanset Indians, who were then allied with the other 12 Long Island tribes in the Montauk Confederacy. Previously, the Manhansets and their neighbors had been subjugated by the Pequots and forced to pay them tribute.

"The destruction of the Pequots in 1637 threw fear into all the tribes of the Sound. With the return of peace, English colonization of their land began in earnest, and the whites found most Indians anxious to sell them parts of their countries to have friendly Englishmen living close to them, providing them with manufactured trade goods, and sheltering them with their power against their enemies (Josephy 1972:73).

In 1652, an agreement made by Farret with the Manhansets, in which he claimed to have purchased their rights to Shelter Island, was contested successfully by the Indians before the Commissioners of the United Colonies of New England at Hartford, Connecticut. At this time Shelter Island's first white settler, the Barbados sugar merchant Nathaniel Sylvester, was obliged to

purchase the island again from the Manhansets.

Although the deed for this purchase notes that the sachem, Yokee, "with all his indians that were formerly to said island of Ahaquatawamock did freely and willingly depart the aforesaid island" (Duvall 1952:13), it is certain that a number of Indians remained, and were joined later by others.

The journal of Quaker John Taylor, records that when he visited Shelter Island in 1659 "a great many Indians lived on it..." (Wortis 1978:16). Elsewhere it is mentioned that in 1675, Sylvester permitted Ambusco, a sachem from Southold, Long Island, and his family, "to dwell on what is now named for him Sachem's Neck" (Loper n.d.:2).

Early colonial documents shed little light on the anthropology of Shelter Island's aborigines. The few notes concerning Indians are sketches mainly of the suspicions and dissatisfactions of their new neighbors. These include a decree of 1672 granting Nathaniel Sylvester constabulary power over the island's Indians, of which some, on prior occasions, had become drunk and disorderly; a court decision of 1675 holding that guns confiscated from the Indians not be returned, because they had formerly "paid Contribution to those of Narragansett"; and a complaint lodged that same year against four Shelter Island Indians who had agreed to go whaling for whites, and failed to keep their bargain (n.a.:1883).

The Indians ultimate dissolution is manifest in the unpublished journal of Lodowick Havens (1774 - 1858), who recorded that half of the Indian "huts" on Shelter Island were destroyed by fire in 1790. Of the Indians, Havens recalled that

...most all I can remember then lived on Sachem's Neck in wigwams. One old Indian by the name of Stephen, lived beside Henry Haven's swamp. There is one large burying ground on Sachem's neck in what is called the Thicket. Some of their names I recall very well. Peter, an Indian, with both feet frozen off; Mol Daniel, who drowned her child in the mill pond; Sam Gonnay, Geoffrey, Keziah, his wife and two children, old Tack and his wife, Sabina with six children, Joe Portagee, Old Sip, Sarah and Betty toby, Old Bet Stephen, Governor Will and his wife Cuffie Cuff and Sarah his wife, two children and old Stephen.

Havens also notes that he saw: "...in a grove of shrub oaks...the last Indian burying ground. I saw twenty braves buried there and at the time there were only about 30 remaining" (Havens n.d.). The last of the "Manhansets" living on Sachem's neck, Betty Tobs Caesar, died a Christian about 1835 (Loper n.d.:3).

SITES AND SURFACE FINDS

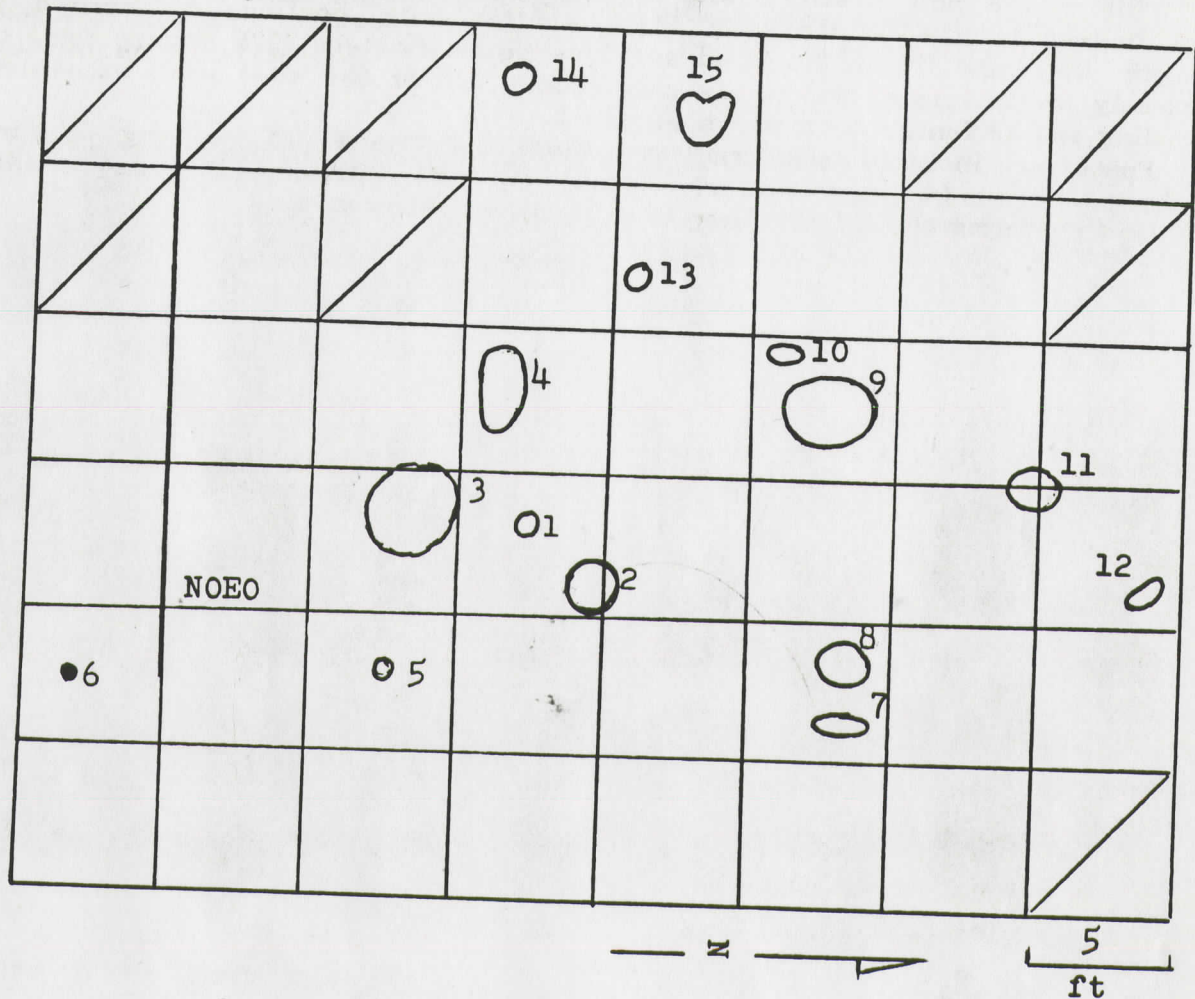
While preparing this report we encountered 47 sites and surficial hot spots through published literature, discussions with local informants, and direct observation. These range in size from an individual activity area about two meters (six feet) in circumference, to a large seasonal camp or residential base. The preponderance of sites are coastal and estuarine, and appear to be Late Woodland. Only four of the sites we visited included large shell middens.

Site characteristics are summarized in Table 2. The precise locations of sites in this paper not previously noted in the literature are on file with the Suffolk County Archaeological Association. Three sites discovered by the writer were studied with some intensity in the field between 1986 and 1988. Brief mention is made of them below.

Table 2. Shelter Island Site Information (see Lightfoot 1985 for sites 1-18).

NO.	SITE CODE	TYPE	PERIOD	LOCATION	REMARKS
1	C-1-18	camp	Woodland	estuary	L, FC
2	C-4-24	quarry	?	estuary	L
3	C-5S-32	lithic scatter	?	estuary	L
4	C-5N-6	lithic scatter	?	estuary	L, FC, Ch
5	C-5N-10	shell midden	Woodland	estuary	C, Sh, Ch
6	C-5N-12	shell midden	Woodland	estuary	L, C, Sh, Ch
7	C-5A-3	quarry	?	estuary	L, Sh
8	C-5A-5	shell midden	?	estuary	L, Sh
9	D-2-2	lithic workshop	?	estuary	L, FC
10	D-3-21	lithic workshop	?	estuary	L
11	D-3-30	lithic workshop	Woodland	estuary	L
12	D-3-33	shell midden	Woodland	estuary	L, Sh
13	D-5-20	shell midden	Woodland	estuary	L, Sh, Ch
14	D-7-23	lithic workshop	L. Archaic	estuary	L
15	E-3-2	lithic/ceramic scatter	?	estuary	L, Sh
16	F-4-4	lithic scatter	?	coastal swamp	L, Sh
17	F-7-4	lithic scatter	?	coastal swamp	L
18	F-7-12	lithic scatter	?	coastal swamp	L
19	SI-1-1	seasonal camp or village	Woodland/ Terminal Archaic	coastal	L, C, Ch, Sh, FC, CL, RL, PL AB, P, B, H
20	SI-2-1	food processing station	Terminal Archaic	estuary	L, Ch, FC, CL, RL, PL, H
21	SI-3-1	lithic workshop	Early Woodland?	estuary	Sh, Ch, L, CL, H, RL
22	SI-4-1	seasonal camp or village	Late Woodland	interior	L, C, Ch, Sh, FC, CL, PL, P, B, H
23	SI-A-0	?	?	estuary	CL
24	SI-B-0	?	?	interior	CL
25	SI-C-0	?	?	coastal	P, FC
26	SI-D-0	?	?	coastal	P, FC
27	SI-E-0	camp?	Woodland?	interior	C, Sh, CL, L
28	SI-F-0	camp?	Woodland?	interior	C, Sh, CL, L
29	SI-G-0	?	?	estuary	B
30	SI-H-0	?	?	coastal	P
31	SI-I-0	?	Woodland?	coastal	Sh, C, CL, P
32	SI-J-0	?	?	coastal	P
33	SI-K-0	?	?	interior	Ch, L
34	SI-L-0	surface finds	?	estuary	CL
35	SI-M-0	surface finds	?	estuary	P, Sh, CL
35	SI-N-0	surface finds	?	interior	CL, PL
37	SI-O-0	surface finds	?	coastal	CL
38	SI-P-0	surface finds	Woodland?	coastal	CL, L
39	SI-Q-0	?	?	estuary	FC
40	SI-R-0	?	?	estuary	Sh, P, B
41	SI-S-0	small camp	?	interior	H, L
42	SI-T-0	?	?	estuary	Sh
43	SI-U-0	?	?	estuary	Sh
44	SI-V-0	?	Woodland?	coastal	Sh, C, B
45	SI-W-0	?	?	coastal	Sh
46	SI-X-0	?	Woodland?	coastal	Sh, C
47	SI-Y-0	?	Woodland?	coastal	Sh, C

Symbols: L = lithics, C = ceramics, Ch = Charcoal, Sh = Shell, FC = fire-cracked rock, CL = chipped stone, RL = rough stone artifacts, PL = pecked, ground & polished stone, AB = antler/bone, P = pit, B = burial, H = hearth



SHELTER ISLAND EXCAVATIONS
1986-87 Suffolk County, NY

-  Unexcavated
-  Feature
-  Postmold

Figure 2. Site SI-2-1.

SI-2-1: TERMINAL ARCHAIC FOOD PROCESSING STATION

This buried non-stratified site on a low-lying tongue of land bordering a tidal lagoon is predominantly a lithic scatter with portions submerged in adjacent wetlands. Three hundred and five square meters (975 square feet) of extremely acetic humus and sandy clay (about 20% of the site) were excavated, revealing the 15 features shown in Figure 2.

Features include platform hearths, collections of boiling stones, stockpiles of worked and unworked pebbles, rock clusters, 20 Susquehanna tradition preforms cached together (Figure 3), and a post mold.

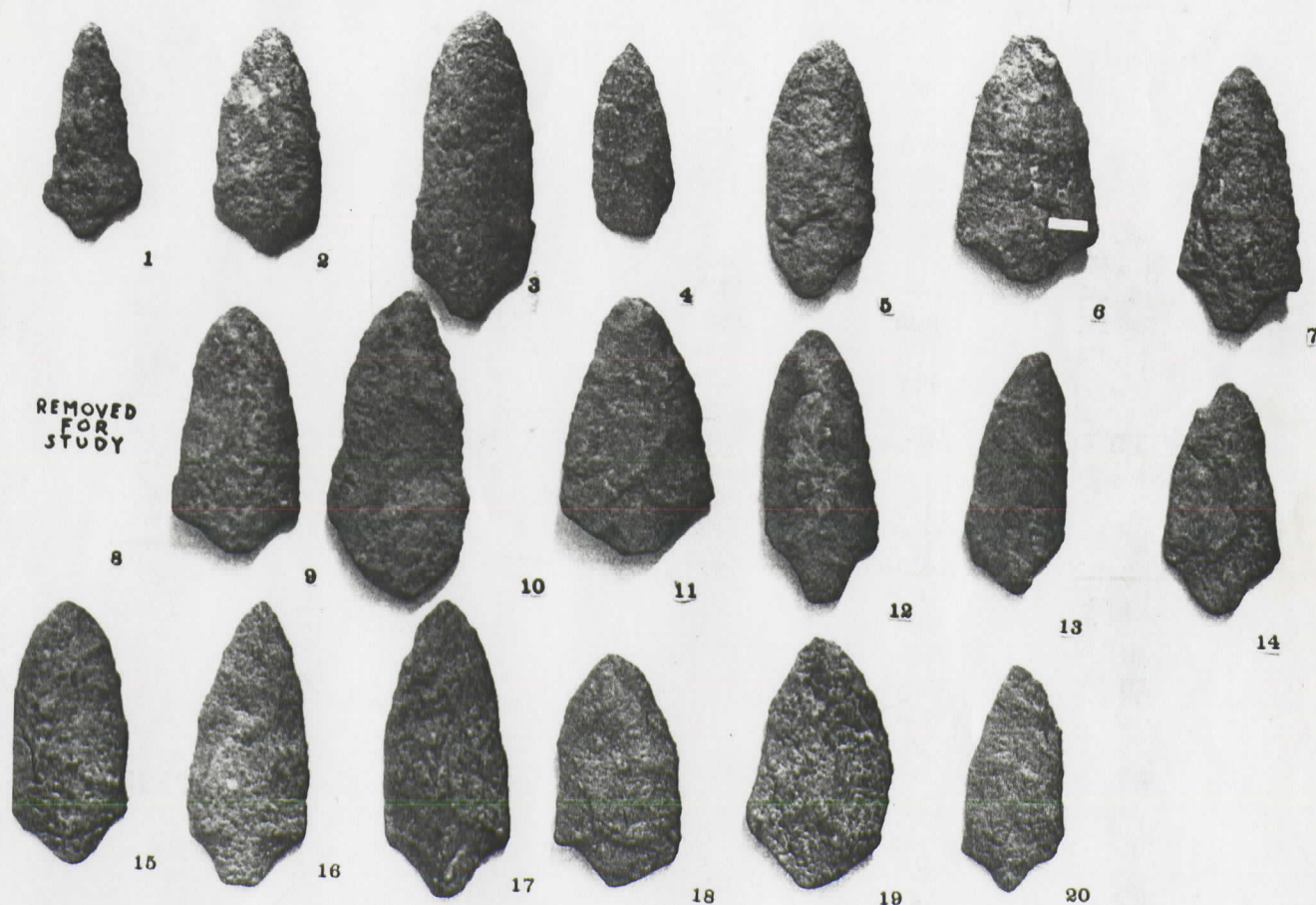


Figure 3. Susquehanna Tradition Cache Blades from Shelter Island.
Material: 1-20, basalt.

The rather equidistant location of the blade cache (Fea. 1) between a mass of boiling stones (Fea. 2), a stone platform (Fea. 3), and a rock cluster (Fea. 4), indicates that the location was oriented intentionally to these features. That all the features were made by a small group of people over a short period of time is suggested by their relatively even horizontal distribution, with no feature impinging upon another, and by their consistent vertical arrangement.

Recovered traits reflect hunting and butchering during the Terminal Archaic period. The projectile point inventory includes 14 Wading River points, 3 Orient

Fishtail points (2 of these are shortened variants) one each of Bare Island and Rossville varieties, and four problematic points (Figure 4). Crude, percussion flaked ovate quartz knives and quartz bifaces are common. The absence of domestic artifacts suggests further that the site was a field camp used for hunting and food processing.



Figure 4. Projectile Points, Site SI-2-1.

Top row: 1,2 point blanks; 3-8 narrow stemmed points. Middle row: 1-4 narrow-stemmed points; 5 Bare Island point; 6-7 Orient Fishtail variants; 8 Orient Fishtail point. Bottom row: 1 narrow-stemmed "bird point"; 2-4 narrow-stemmed point bases.

Material: all, quartz except; middle row, 6, quartzite.

SITE SI-3-1 EARLY WOODLAND(?) FLAKING STATION

A second discrete site was located 122 m (400 feet) west of SI-2-1, which proved to be a small, buried, non-stratified quartz pebble flaking station no greater than 23 m sq (248 ft sq) in area. Six 1.5 m squares were excavated by stratigraphic levels (Figure 5). Virtually all artifacts from the site came from a "C" Zone stratum of ashy gray sand, 18 to 23 cm (7 - 9 inches) thick. This productive stratum yielded thousands of white quartz decortication flakes, practically all of which were secondary products of pressure flaking.

A battered quartz cobble anvil was recovered together with associated arcuate quartz blades and blade fragments (Figure 6). A single, rhomboidal quartz projectile point (Figure 6:1) is limited evidence suggesting that the site is Early Woodland, although we recognize that this point type appears initially during the Late Archaic, and persists into the North Beach and Clearview ceramic foci (Ritchie 1971:46).

SITE SI-4-1: LATE WOODLAND CAMP OR VILLAGE

This large site is situated on the southern and western shores of a deep, spring fed kettlehole lake. It crosses the property lines of nine residents, some of whom have described interesting buried and surficial finds here including pottery, stone artifacts, shell middens, pits, and human burials.

SI-4-1 measures more than 245 m north-south by 91 m east-west (804 ft by 300 ft), and it includes vestiges of a channel that once connected the lake to semi-saline mud flats 200 m (656 ft) to the south.

A portion of the site is submerged beneath the lake to a depth of .6 m (2 ft). We studied 37 sq m (398 sq ft) of this portion encountering, first, a mantle of light colored sand up to 15 cm (6 inches) thick. Modern industrial artifacts occur in the stratum with decortication flakes, projectile points, and other chipped and ground stone artifacts (See Figure 7 and Table 4).

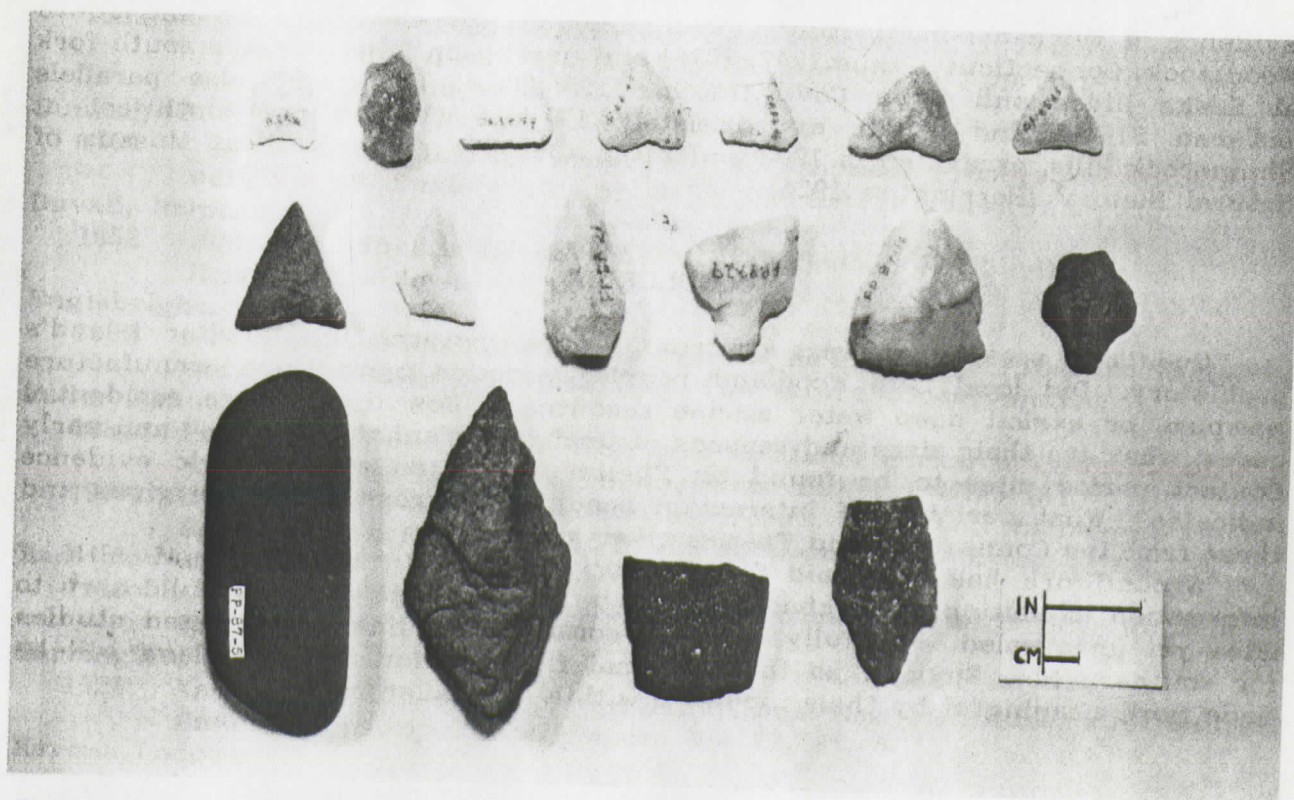


Figure 7. Artifacts, Site SI-4-1.

Top row: 1 lanceolate point; 2 narrow-stemmed point; 3-7 Levanna points. Middle row: 1 Levanna point; 2 Madison point; 3 biface blade knife or point; tool of unknown use (possibly rechipped Fulton Turkey Tail point); 5 denticulate end scraper; 6 drill base. Bottom row: 1 whetstone; 2 perforator; 3 gorget fragment; 4 knife or spear point. Material: Top row: all, quartz. Middle row: 1 chert; 2-5 quartz; 6 slate. Bottom row: 1 basalt; 2 traprock; 3 unknown; 4 smoky quartz.

Beneath the sand is a layer of dark, compact sandy loam (pH 8.0), of which the uppermost 5 cm (2 inches) is impregnated with fire-cracked rock, patches of amorphous charcoal, and concentrations of burned, broken hard clam and oyster.

Fifteen shovel probes were made in this stratum, and the soil thus obtained was dried and sifted. The process yielded eight thin-walled, shell-tempered pottery fragments .8 cm (5/16 inches) or smaller in diameter, four small, shat-

tered mammalian bone fragments, and what might be a human molar.

The presence of many pits reported for this site suggests that occupation was at least semi-permanent. This assumption is supported by much evidence that the occupiers exploited a wide variety of shellfish, the availability of which would have been subject to seasonal and ecological variables (Braun 1974). Practically all the submerged shell we encountered is hard clam and oyster. On land, 18 m (59 ft) north, a small individual activity area revealed a scatter of broken valves almost entirely from soft clam and bay scallop. Sixty meters (197 ft) south of the submerged portion of the site, a shell midden exposed during house construction produced many unbroken scallop valves and some knobbed whelk.

The site's large size, choice location, proximity to marine shellfish resources, and the kind of domestic artifacts it is yielding, suggests that we have here another manifestation of the stable, Sebonac focus Windsor aspect community described by Ritchie (1965:265-267) and by Smith (1950:133-34). Evidence of much Sebonac activity locally includes sites at Old Lyme and South Woodstock, Connecticut (Praus 1942, 1945) and nearby on Long Island's south fork at Soaks Hides and Squa Cove (Ritchie 1965:265). There are also parallels between SI-4-1 and a site approximately 17 kms (10.6 miles) southwest at Shinnecock Hills, excavated in 1902 under the auspices of the American Museum of Natural History (Harrington 1924).

CONCLUSION

Questions seeking answers confront future research into Shelter Island's prehistory. Did local Late Woodland peoples practice agriculture, manufacture wampum, or exploit deep water marine resources? How diverse are residential bases; what are their sizes and seasons of use? Are Manhasset "forts" and early Contact period sites to be found on Shelter Island as ethnohistoric evidence indicates? What varieties of interaction occurred between local aborigines and those from the Connecticut and Thames river valleys?

Groundwork has been laid for finding answers. In the field, a wealth of information is waiting for archaeologists who can beat developer's bulldozers to sites yet unrevealed. Hopefully, work to come will be linked to related studies for southern New England so that regional findings for Shelter Island will be made more meaningful by their inclusion within a broader context.

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