

Historical Geography of Long Island: Sequence of Settlement

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American Indians on Long Island

- **Paleo-Indians:** Probably arrived on LI from Asia c.12,000 years ago as they followed animals across North America in the post-glacial period (**Prehistoric Stage**).
- **Archaic Indians:** About 5,000 years ago, during the **Hunting and Gathering Stage**, they settled on LI and lived along the shoreline. They crafted tools and had boats that were able to ply coastal waters, allowing trade.

2

American Indians on Long Island

- **Orients:** Named for the archeological finds along the eastern north shore of LI, the Orients who came from the mainland, replaced the Archaic Indians (**Transitional Stage**).
- **Eastern Woodland Indians:** About 1,000-2,000 years ago the **Woodland Stage** began. The woodland people came to LI and settled in the interior. They cleared the forests to create farmland. Their principal crops were corn, beans, squash, and tobacco. They also hunted and fished and engaged in whaling.

3

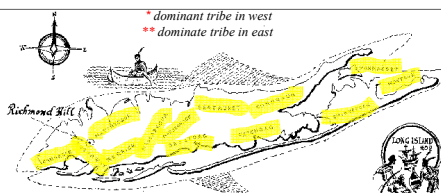
American Indians on Long Island

- **Lenape Clans:** By 1500 AD the Eastern Woodland Indians on Long Island had divided into clans, each of which inhabited parts areas of Long Island from the Narrows to the Twin Forks. They spoke a common Algonquin language and had similar customs.
- The head of the Montauk was the *sachem* or grand chief of all Long Island clans.
- In general they were peaceful people who interacted with the Europeans.

4

American Indians on Long Island

North Shore	South Shore	Shelter I
Corchaug (Cutchog)	Canarsee*	Rockaway
Matinecock	Massapequa	Secatog
Nissequog	Merrick	Shinnecock
Setauket	Montauk**	Unkechaug (Patchog)



5

American Indians on Long Island

- The **Montauk** was the dominant tribe of Long Island and controlled the eastern portion. Its chief was the *sachem* of all Long Island tribes. The Montauk were affiliated with the Pequot of Connecticut.
- The **Canarsee** was the dominant tribe of western Long Island. They were affiliated with the Mohawk of the Hudson Valley.

6

Indian Villages

Villages were arranged in central location with family huts surrounded by a stockade fence.

Huts were constructed of thin poles and covered with layers of grass and/or bark. An opening in the roof let out smoke.

It is believed that the Indian population on Long Island never totaled more than 6,000 people.



Detail, Visscher map, 1656

Indians and the Sea



On Long Island, ancestral "land" included the sea. During colonial times, the eastern clans (Shinnecock and Montauk) adapted their traditional fishing skills to whaling.

Working on whaleboats or captaining ships with mixed African and Indian crews, they prospered from the mid-1600s to the late 1700s. The Shinnecock continue to celebrate their whaling heritage.



<http://americanindian.si.edu/exhibitions/indivisible/land.html>

8

American Indians on Long Island

- Few American Indians remain on Long Island.
- Some left when the Dutch and especially the English began to buy up their land.
- Many died during battles when mainland tribes objected to their dealings with the Europeans.
- Many more died from European diseases for which they had no immunity.
- Others were assimilated into European culture and absorbed into European society through intermarriage.

9

American Indians on L.I. (cont'd)

- Their adaptability and intermarriage with Europeans and freed African slaves obscured their native identity in the eyes of the white population.
- By the end of the 1800s, many Montauk had left Long Island to join Native American communities in the Midwest.
- The Shinnecock have kept their land rights and continue to celebrate their heritage.
- Today memory of Long Island's American Indian inhabitants remains in the form of place names.

10

European Exploration

- **1524:** Verrazano was the first known European to see Long Island and to enter New York Harbor.
- **1525:** Gomez was the first to enter eastern Long Island Sound through The Race.
- **1609:** Hudson sailed into the harbor and up the river to present day Albany.
- **1614:** Block the first to sail the length of Long Island Sound from west to east.

11

Dutch Settlement

- The Dutch limited their settlement to areas along the North River (Hudson) including
 - the harbor perimeter,
 - western Long Island east to Jamaica,
 - tip of Manhattan island, and
 - the Hudson valley waterfront to Fort Orange (Albany).
- **Why?** To protect the fur trade.

12

Dutch Settlement

- New Amsterdam on Manhattan was established in 1625 and became the seat of government.
- In 1626 the Dutch West India Co. introduced African slavery to New Amsterdam as an alternative to providing indentured servants for the colonists.
- By the 1630s Dutch farmsteads were established in western Long Island.
- By 1638 there were enough people living on L.I. to warrant a ferry service to Manhattan.

13

Mapping the Area: 1635

Detail of the map drawn by **Willem Baeu**, *Nova Belgica et Anglia Nova*, 1635

This map is said to be based on Adrian Block's maps of 1614 when he explored Long Island Sound.

NOTE: The illustrations on 17th century maps were important sources of information about life in the New World for Europeans. A number of tribes are named. Birch bark and dugout canoes and Indian settlements are shown. American wildlife are illustrated.



14

Mapping the Area: 1639

Manatvs gelegen op de Noot Riiver (ca. 1639), "Manhattan on the North River"; author unknown.



15

Mapping the Area - 1656



For the first time Long Island is shown as one landmass.

Nicholaes Visscher's 1656 map is the best known map of New Netherland.



Dates of the Chartering of Dutch Settlements on Long Island

- 1642 Newtown
- 1644 Hempstead
- 1645 Flushing; Gravesend
- 1646 Breuckelen (Brooklyn)
- 1647 New Amersfoot (Flatlands)
- 1652 Midwout (Flatbush)
- 1656 Jamaica
- 1657 New Utrecht
- 1661 Boswijok (Bushwick)

17

English Settlement

- The purpose of English colonization of North America was settlement.
- The Dutch outposts between the North River (Hudson) and South River (Delaware) were seen as an impediment to English control.
- In the early 1630s English settlers began to move into eastern Long Island having received land grants from the crown.

18

English Settlement

- 1632: a land grant given to Sir Edmund Plowden in eastern Long Island.
- 1639: Lion Gardiner purchased what is now called Gardiner's Island from the Montauk.
- 1640: Quakers from Connecticut crossed LIS and settled along the North Shore.
- As the Indians sold land to the English for material goods, the English continued to build towns, usually on the sites of Indian villages, with layouts similar to those in New England.

19

Establishment of English Settlements in Eastern Long Island

- 1640 Southold; Southampton
- 1648 East Hampton
- 1652 Shelter Island
- 1653 Huntington
- 1655 Brookhaven
- 1665 Smithtown

20

Conflict between Groups

- With the Dutch increasing their fur trade north of New Amsterdam and English settlers expanding their ownership of land on LI, there was conflict between the Dutch and the Indians and the English and the Dutch in and around LI.
- In 1650 the *Treaty of Hartford* was drafted (but not ratified) which set an international boundary on LI between the English and Dutch colonies roughly at today's Nassau-Suffolk line.

21

Conflict between Existing Groups

- In 1660 Charles II of England decided he did not want the Dutch colony in America.
- Between 1660 and 1664 negotiations attempted to remedy the situation.
- Finally in 1664 he sent the Royal Navy into New Amsterdam to demand surrender.
- The Dutch colony was renamed New York and given to the Duke of York along with all of Long Island.

22

Mapping the Area: 1674

Robert Ryder, *Long Island Sirvaide*, 1674



First English map of New York and Long Island based on an actual land survey.

23

Conduit for Trade and People

- With the English takeover of all of Long Island, contact between New England and New York across Long Island Sound increased.
- Both merchant and passenger ships crossed LIS and moved from port to port along the North Shore of LI, the Connecticut shore, and NYC.
- Long Island Sound shipping routes became the short cut of choice to Providence (Rhode Island colony) and Boston (Massachusetts colony) because the overland route between them and NYC was so poor.

24

Conflict between Existing Groups

- During the last quarter of the 1600s, colonists began to object to English trade and shipping regulations and taxing policies.
- All goods destined for New York had to pass through NY harbor where they were taxed.
- To circumvent this, merchants smuggled goods into New York through eastern Long Island Sound and ports along North Shore.
- Smuggling thrived during this period and so did piracy. Capt. Kidd is the most famous Long Island pirate.

25

Settlement on Long Island

- In 1683 England formalized the New York colony and established the counties of Kings, Queens and Suffolk on Long Island.
- Dutch villagers were allowed to remain and own land. The Dutch trade was also protected.
- Dutch and English settlers intermingled in western LI from Brooklyn to Oyster Bay.

26

Mapping the Area: 1690

Robert Morden,
A Map of ye English Empire in the Continent of America, 1690.

Detail showing whaling off the coast of Long Island.

(Courtesy of New York Public Library.)



Note the depiction of whaling.

27

Sag Harbor Whaling Museum

A visit by
Ana Martiny.

28

Mapping the Area: 1710

Johann Baptista Homann, *New England in North America*, 1710.



29

English Settlement

- As agriculturalists moved into Long Island and villages were established, trees were cut down leaving a near treeless landscape.
- Cornfields and pastureland predominated.
- Wildlife began to disappear (less habitat + more fences).
- Long Island farmers used slaves in the fields.

30

Slavery on Long Island

- Introduced in 1626 by the Dutch.
- The English allowed slavery to continue.
- By 1700 there were more slaves in New York than all of New England.
- Slaves were held by all social classes to tend the fields and do household chores.
- In contrast to the Southern Colonies, Long Islanders owned only one to three slaves and had looser control of their lives.

31

Slavery on Long Island

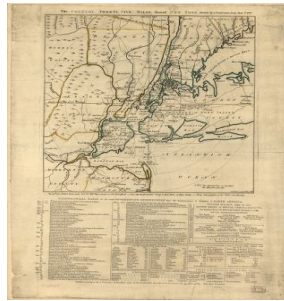
- The use of slaves peaked from 1750 to 1790.
- From the 1690s to 1794 both free and enslaved Africans were buried in a small burial ground in lower Manhattan north of the city's wall. Most likely, there were other burial grounds on LI.
- Abolition was a tenet of the American Revolution but slavery continued after the war's end.
- It was officially abolished by the NYS Legislature in 1817, with an effective end date of 1827.

32

NYC and Western Long Island

1775

Map of the Province
of New York
by John Montrésor



33

LI and the American Revolution

- After defeating the French in North America (French and Indian Wars, 1763), the English tried to assert greater control on the North American colonies and recoup the money spent fighting the war.
- Unpopular taxes were levied and rules regulating trade were enforced.

34

LI and the American Revolution

- On the eve of the American Revolution, the tensions that were building in New England and eastern LI came to NYC.
- Those who were wealthy or with connections to England stayed loyal to the Crown.
- At first, the delegates from the NY colony abstained in the vote for independence but later voted for it. (LI delegates were William Floyd, Francis Lewis and Philip Livingston.)

35

LI and the American Revolution

- Once New York espoused independence, there was a general conflict between city and western Long Island residents (Loyalists) and those living in the Hudson Valley and eastern Long Island (Patriots).
- Both Gen. Washington and the British saw the need to control NYC and its harbor.
- **One of the first and largest battles of the American Rev. took place on Long Island.**

36

Battle of Long Island

August 1776

British forces massed in the lower bay and came ashore at Gravesend Bay.

Washington's army held positions along the moraine but was forced to retreat.

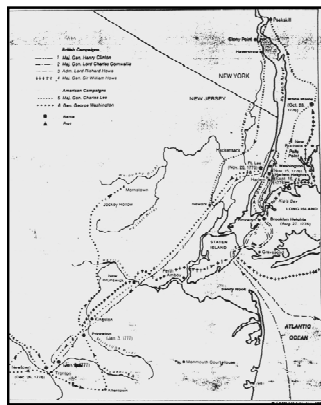


LI and the American Revolution

- Outnumbered over 2-to-1, the American forces were quickly outflanked and overrun by the British.
- Saved by fog, Washington's army retreated first to Manhattan, then further north and eventually to New Jersey.
- A brisk north wind and a strong river current prevented the warships from sailing north.

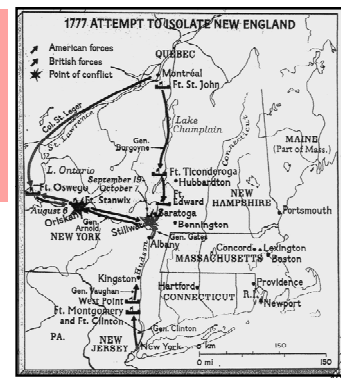
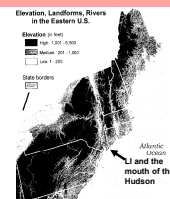
38

Battles in and around NYC during the American Revolution



39

1777 British Battle Plan to End the American Revolution



40

LI and the American Revolution

- After the Battle of Long Island, there were no other battles on LI. NYC and LI were occupied.
- However, Long Island was not quiet.
- The British raided North Shore towns and east end farming areas. Western LI residents were forced to provide food and housing for British troops.
- American militia used the numerous North Shore embayments to launch raids into Connecticut and to smuggle goods and people in and out of NYC. Washington had spies based on LI.

41

First American Map of Long Island, 1802



42

Question of the Day

Connecting Long Island
the Mainland: Worth the Cost?

Benefits?
Detriments?
Where?
How?

43