About Us

Our work would not be possible without the support of our members. Please join us in our mission. Annual membership in Long Island Traditions is available at five levels – basic, supporter, sustainer, champion, and heroes. All memberships include our printed newsletter, pre-registration for all tours, and discounts on tours, publications, and films. Visit our website – www.longislandtraditions.org – to sign up for membership.

Contact Us

We welcome hearing from you.

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Arts in Education

Maritime Folk Arts

Our maritime program for 4th-grade and higher grades educates students about fishermen, boat builders and other maritime traditions, once handed down from generation to generation through families and communities.

The program includes:

• An in-class presentation by a folklorist explaining the concept of traditions;
• Two in-class presentations by a local traditional bayman, including a slide presentation, explaining about working on the Bay and the Ocean, how Superstorm Sandy changed things, and what the typical day in the life of a bayman is like;
• A 3-hour Maritime Workshop, where students do hands-on work in small groups with Maritime Folk Artists and Fishermen. The Workshops provide students with a chance to interview different tradition bearers, including: model boat builders, commercial fishermen, decoy makers, dragger fishermen, clammers, and maritime artists.
• A boat trip with local traditional fishermen who explain how environmental changes have affected fish and fishing.
• A staff development workshop to help teachers get the most out of the program.

Long Island Traditions develops classroom materials and teaches students how to conduct interviews. The program culminates with a student project.

Tours

We offer two tours related to Long Island baymen and bay houses:

Boating with the Baymen

This boat tour provides a unique opportunity to learn about the traditions of local baymen, commercial fishermen, decoy carvers, boat builders, clamshell artists, and other tradition bearers whose families have lived on the water for several generations. The tour is a great way to learn about the region’s maritime culture from the men and women who have learned the occupational and recreational traditions of their ancestors.

Bay House Tour

Since 1992, Long Island Traditions has sponsored a bay house tour. Bay houses are small shacks that stand on the marshlands that were originally built in the 1700 and 1800s by fishermen, baymen, and duck hunters, and were passed down through families. Visitors will meet bay house owners to learn about the joys and challenges of owning these unique structures.
Publications & Films

Publications - Long Island Traditions has several publications available for sale on our website. These include:

- **On The Bay**: The second edition of *On the Bay*, by folklorist Nancy Solomon, documents the traditions of those who first built the modest bay houses, the traditional lifestyle of present-day bay house dwellers, and contains historic and contemporary photographs by noted photographer Martha Cooper.

- **West Meadow Beach**: This publication, available as a PDF, documents the history and architecture of the cottages of West Meadow Beach in Setauket-Stony Brook harbor -- the oldest and largest summer bungalow community on Long Island.

- **Long Island Traditional Architecture 1600-1870: A Teacher Resource Guide**: This 200-page Social Studies curriculum guide in a CD-ROM format explores the history and traditional architecture of Long Island from the first native settlers, its European colonists and the enslaved Africans who have lived on Long Island.

Films - We have worked with several filmmakers to develop compelling documentaries on Long Island’s heritage and culture. Projects include:

- **Jones Beach: An American Riviera** explores the creation of a New York landmark by famed builder, Robert Moses, from its origins to its position today as one of the most popular summer destinations in the country.

- **Baymen**: Filmmaker Glenn Gebhard and Long Island Traditions produced *Baymen*, a documentary on the south shore baymen of Long Island, exploring the history and contemporary hardships faced by baymen, and their future on Long Island.

- **A Farm Picture** examines the history of the region’s family and commercial farms, beginning in the pre-settlement periods of 1640 up to 2000, as farms vanish from the Long Island landscape.

- **A World Apart** produced by Greg Blank and Barbara Weber, explores the history, architecture and culture of south shore bay houses. The project will be completed in 2020.

*Members receive discounts on publications, films, and tours

Arts in Education

Ethnic Folk Arts Program

Our ethnic folk arts programs are designed for students from grade 4 through 12, and were created to expand students’ awareness and understanding of traditional and contemporary ethnic cultures through traditional artists residing on Long Island.

- Programs can be one full day- or multiple-day residencies.

- Students work with Native Americans, African Americans, Eastern and Western Europeans, Central and South Americans, Middle and Near Eastern immigrants based on teacher curriculum mandates.

- Programs include hands-on activities and model lessons.

- Programs meet New York state education standards in Social Studies and English Language Arts curriculum.

- Includes staff development workshops.

Community History & Architecture

This program, for grades 6-12, focuses on research and writing skills that examine settlement patterns and traditional architecture of Long Island. Field trips and PowerPoint presentations examining a community’s architecture are also developed. Long Island Traditions has also developed a teacher resource guide that can be used as part of the program or may be purchased as a stand-alone resource.
Architecture & Historic Preservation

Long Island Traditions studies traditional and vernacular architecture, sites and structures built by ordinary individuals for their own needs or those of their community. We work on behalf of sites that are in danger of demolition, as well as working with communities to preserve their historic past. We also prepare National Register nominations. Areas in which we have focused include:

• **Great Neck Plaza** – culminated in an in-depth research report to the Village identifying over 53 historic sites and structures dating from the late 1700s to the 1960s, the development of a web site, tours and publications, and guidelines for property owners.

• **South Shore Estuary** – Since 1987 Long Island Traditions has been documenting the South Shore’s maritime traditions and architecture through architectural surveys, oral histories, ethnographic photography and historic research tools.

• **Sea Cliff** – Long Island Traditions worked with the Village of Sea Cliff to preserve its earliest homes that were built as part of the Methodist Camp Meeting movement popular in the post-Civil War period on Long Island.

• **Far Rockaway** – Nested in the corner of Far Rockaway are over 100 historic summer bungalows built in the 1920s for Jewish families living in New York City. They are one of the last remaining summer bungalow communities left in the metropolitan area. Long Island Traditions prepared the nomination of the bungalows to the National Register of Historic Places by the NY State Historic Preservation Office.

• **Rockville Centre** – LI Traditions is surveying the Village’s historic homes and commercial properties.

Exhibits & Events

Long Island Traditions creates permanent and temporary exhibits highlighting the living cultural traditions of Long Island and its waterfront heritage. Some examples of these include:

• **Waterfront Heroes travelling exhibit** - features contemporary and historic photographs and personal narratives centered on a wide variety of tradition bearers, painters, and those seeking to preserve maritime culture and traditions in their communities.

• **Freeport Waters Trail** – a permanent trail of informative signage that highlights the personal stories, histories, and traditions of Freeport’s “Nautical Mile” (Woodcleft Canal).

• **Sandy Shores** – a permanent exhibit along the Jones Beach bicycle path exploring the history and construction of the Wantagh Parkway, (one of the first parkways created by Robert Moses), the history of Jones Beach, (Moses’ first state park on Long Island), and the South Shore’s maritime culture.

• **From Shore to Shore** – a traveling interpretive exhibit examining the history and traditions of contemporary boat builders and boatyards.

• **In Harm’s Way**, which explored the history and community responses to storms and hurricanes on Long Island.

**Events** - Every year Long Island Traditions works with museums, libraries and other organization to conduct events highlighting ethnic, cultural, and occupational traditions. Annual events include bay house tours, and maritime demonstrations at area festivals. Previous and up-coming events range from Klezmer concerts, Gospel performances, and Irish step dance to quilting and decoy-carving demonstrations. A schedule of events is available on our website.