

## Long Island Traditions

# NEWSLETTER

www.longislandtraditions.org  
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### Paraguayan Dance Classes October 15 - November 5

**J**oin us for a series of Paraguayan Dance classes at the East Meadow Public Library. LI Traditions & the East Meadow Public Library will present a wonderful interactive series of dance workshops for the whole family this fall. It is so much fun and these teachers make you feel as if you can really dance. The dance class series on Paraguayan Dance will be led by Berta Gauto and master teachers from the Panamabi Vera Dance Company. The 4-class series will take place on Saturdays, October 15 - November 5 at 11am, with a performance on November 5<sup>th</sup> following the class. Beginners and experts of ages 5 and up are welcome! To register call (516) 794-2570 ext. 560 or register online at [eastmeadow.info](http://eastmeadow.info).



*Nancy Solomon*

**Panamabi Vera and Ranchos Juventude will be performing and teaching in the upcoming ethnic dance class programs. All programs are free.**

Saturdays, October 15, 22, 29 and November 5: 1½ hour dance lesson from 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. each Saturday. The November 5 performance will take place at 2 p.m. (Note: There will be a regularly scheduled class before the performance.) ■

### Portuguese Dance Classes October 29 - December 10

**T**he Mineola Library and Long Island Traditions are pleased to announce a special Portuguese dance class series that will take place at the Mineola library this Fall featuring Antonio (Tony) DaSilva, a first generation Portuguese American and Mineola native who joined Rancho Juventude in 1989. He will be assisted by Michelle Carlos and Jose Macedo of Rancho Juventude. On December 10 the ensemble Ranchos Juventude will perform following the morning class.

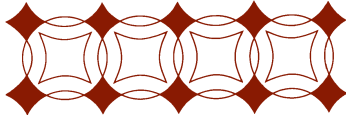
There will be four classes, each 1 1/2 hours beginning at 11:30 am. Two styles of dance steps, the Vira and Chula/Malho will be taught. Advanced sign up required. On December 10 there will also be performance by Ranchos Juventude following the morning class. The classes will take place in the library's Community Room. For reservations call (516) 746-8488 ext. 2 or e-mail [mineola@nassaulibrary.org](mailto:mineola@nassaulibrary.org).

The dance class series is sponsored in part by funds from the National Endowment for the Arts and the NY State Council on the Arts. ■



**Ranchos Juventude**

*Nancy Solomon*



## Long Island Traditions Inc.

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

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## Heritage Spotlight: Harding

This past March Long Island Traditions nominated to the NY State Historic Preservation Office for listing on the State and National register of Historic Places the Steven Harding House and Studio in Sea Cliff. The property, owned by Carol Weber, is now officially listed, a designation that affords the property owner protection from demolition and harmful actions by any level of government, but also grants the owner the right to preserve their home along with the privileges accorded all home owners, including the right to demolish or alter the site if they so wish. The current owner is a dedicated preservationist and hopes future generations of owners will preserve this historic site. The Harding House and Studio is one of several properties considered noteworthy by LI Traditions and Sea Cliff Landmarks



*Nancy Solomon*

**The Steven Harding House and Studio were recently listed on the National Register of Historic Places. LI Traditions submitted the nomination to the State Historic Preservation Office.**

Association, which sponsored the survey that led to this nomination. Other properties are being considered for listing.

The Harding Home and Studio was one of several homes constructed during the Methodist Camp meetings that took place in Sea Cliff. The meeting camp movement was a national one, beginning in the south in the ante-bellum period and progressing north after the Civil War. Sea Cliff was one of several communities outside New York City where Methodists worshipped in open spaces during summer retreats. The houses replaced earlier tent encampments beginning in the late 1870s and continuing until the mid 1880s. After the movement ended the village expanded as new residents came to Sea Cliff for summer retreats.

Unlike other early camp meeting communities constructed in the northeastern United States, Sea Cliff retains many of its original homes, which were converted to summer vacation homes in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and into year-round residential use in the 1920s and afterwards. Sea Cliff is similar to the Shelter Island Heights historic district in terms of architectural style and landscape, containing vernacular Queen Anne and Italianate style homes laid closely together in a radial pattern. Like Shelter Island Heights many of the original owners belonged to organized Methodist camp meeting ground associations based in New York City, who held 2-3 week summer gatherings featuring visiting preachers.

Alongside the trustees a small working class community

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# House and Studio, Sea Cliff

emerged that served the needs of the meeting patrons. While other camp meeting communities such as Lake Grove or Merrick did not erect permanent structures, the Association trustees envisioned a permanent community, as evidenced by the commissioning of a plan and lease system. The lease system was common in other camp meeting associations, enabling the trustees to regulate who “belonged.”<sup>1</sup>

In addition there was a strong belief that all structures should reflect upward mobility, including the community style adopted by the Association trustees. As historian Steven Cooley mentions, Rev. Gorham, the author of Camp Meeting Manual wrote: “Gorham instructed that the site should offer bountiful water, large shade trees, and high ground.” In this context Sea Cliff was uniquely qualified as an ideal meeting place, with its waterfront access, high sloping banks, historic trees and a plateau for worship. In addition the community has a number of smaller parks that were also used for worship, including Central Park, which borders 182 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

Stephen Harding was the only photographer listed in the 1880 census. He worked through a network of associates and also through advertising in various newspapers including the Sea Cliff News. The house is one of the best surviving examples of vernacular Queen Anne cottages in the Village, retaining its original sheathing and form including scalloped shingles, casement gable windows, a decorative porch which replaced an earlier porch, and its modest tri-gable ell plan. Other tri-gable ell plan houses including 191 Prospect Avenue and 1 Bay Avenue. The close proximity to Central Park reveals the original Methodist camp meeting plan, but perhaps also served to advertise Harding’s photography studio.

While the trustees were able to build elaborate Victorian and Italianate homes, the tradespeople who served them constructed modest homes with simple embellishments, such as the scalloped gable shingles and simple porch found on the Harding House and Studio.



Courtesy Carol Weber

**The Steven Harding House and Studio c. 1911.**

The Harding house is one of the few surviving examples built by the full time residents, most of whom were tradespeople ranging from butchers, laborers, grocers, carpenters, painters and other workers. Unlike other residents, Harding lived with his family including 2 children, the typical family size during the 1880s according to the 1880 census. The other tradespeople frequently took in boarders or were living at boarding houses themselves.

Many homes during this period were constructed according to local architectural practices and popular pattern books. In this case early balloon framing, with roughly cut beams spaced approximately 15 inches apart was used, rather than conventional balloon framing which typically used standard cut sawn lumber placed 8 inches apart. While balloon framing was increasingly common during this period, it was employed in a style that incorporated building practices more commonly associated with “post and beam” framing. Yet this was not uncommon. As architectural historian Dell Upton noted, “pattern books reinforced the notion that novelty and distinctiveness were desirable in the appearance of a building, while casting these into specific forms that made it possible to adopt the new superficially without seriously disrupting the old.”<sup>2</sup>

In addition the house reflects how bathrooms were installed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Prior to the creation of bathrooms most homes had an outhouse located at the rear of the property. Long after the camp meetings had ceased, Harding and other early residents installed bathrooms c. 1925. The home’s first bathroom is located on the second floor. To conceal the pipes the builder elevated the floor, placing the pipes underneath. As was characteristic the room had a cast iron bathtub, which remains intact, along with a linoleum floor.<sup>3</sup>

In conclusion, the Harding house is significant as one of the original homes built during the period when Methodist Camp Meetings were held in Sea Cliff. Sea Cliff was one of the major meeting places during the Camp Meeting Movement in the post Civil War period in the northeastern United States. The house is also an excellent well preserved example of the types of homes favored by Methodists – close to natural waterfront landscapes, situated so that neighbors could observe one another, and built for summer seasonal living when the Meetings took place. The Harding house is also important because it reflects the small cottage industries that developed in response to the Meetings. Stephen Harding, the builder, was a photographer who documented the people who attended the meetings. He also established a business studio in the home that continued to operate after the Camp Meeting era ended in Sea Cliff. The modest design and architectural embellishments reflect vernacular building practices common in the late Victorian era. ■

<sup>1</sup> Roger Robins, “Vernacular American Landscape: Methodists, Camp Meetings, and Social Respectability” *Religion and American Culture*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (Summer, 1994), pp. 165-191

<sup>2</sup> Dell Upton, “Pattern Books and Professionalism: Aspects of the Transformation of Domestic Architecture in America, 1800-1860” *Winterthur Portfolio*, Vol. 19, No. 2/3 (Summer - Autumn, 1984), p 150.

<sup>3</sup> Ruth Schwartz Cowan “The “Industrial Revolution” in the Home: Household Technology and Social Change in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century” *Technology and Culture*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (Jan., 1976), p 6.

# EVENTS OF INTEREST

**PLEASE NOTE:** If you have a Long Island concert or program that focuses on some aspect of traditional culture, drop us a line and we'll put it in our "Events of Interest" column. The deadline is the 1st of June, September, December and March.

***Don't forget to visit our web site and our Facebook page for timely information.***

**October 15 – December 5:**

Paraguayan Dance class series (see accompanying article). East Meadow Public Library. 1886 Front Street, East Meadow. For information and directions call (516) 794-2570.

**October 29 – December 10:**

Portuguese Dance class series (see accompanying article). Mineola Public Library, 195 Marcellus Road Mineola. For information and to register call 516-294-6459 or e-mail [mineola@nassaulibrary.org](mailto:mineola@nassaulibrary.org).

**October 22–23:**

26th Annual Rock Hall Country Fair. 199 Broadway, Lawrence. 11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Featuring decoy carver George Rigby, Native American dancers, and woodworkers and blacksmithing. For information (516) 239-1157.

**November 16:**

Bay House book presentation and signing. 7 pm. Northport Public Library. 151 Laurel Avenue, Northport, NY 11768 (631-261-6930).

## Bay House Programs

With the release of On The Bay: Bay Houses and Maritime Culture, Nancy Solomon is available for presentations and book signing events. These events are offered at no charge. Upcoming signing events are scheduled for November 16 at the Northport Public Library at 7 p.m., January 25 at the Massapequa Public Library at 2 p.m., and on January 26 at the Sayville Public Library at 7 p.m. You can also order the book online at [www.longislandtraditions.org](http://www.longislandtraditions.org) or purchase at the following bookstores: Sea Horse Gift Shop on the Nautical Mile in Freeport, the Dolphin Book Shop in Port Washington, and the Starfish Café in Amityville. ■

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