

# LONG ISLAND BOTANICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

September - October 1995 Vol. 5, No. 5

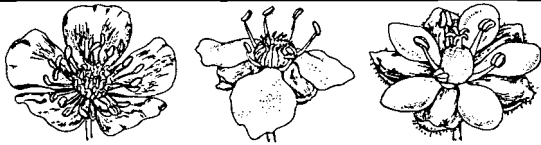
## In This Issue

Eric Lamont has edited In The Field With Roy Latham, II. In this installment Eric put together excerpts from letters Roy Latham sent Stanley Smith.

Lance Biechele has written an introduction to the Myxomycetes of Long Island. This is a fascinating group of organisms that may or may not be plants or fungi. This article was submitted early in the year but do to space limitations it was held until now.

### Gil Raynor 1918 - 1995

Gil Raynor died on July 18 1995. Paul Stoutenburgh has written an obituary of this remarkable Long Island naturalist.



## PROGRAMS

12 September 1995 - 7:30 pm, Dr. Ann Johnson, "Comparison of the Flora of Acid, Sandy Soils at Apalachicola National Forest, Florida, and the Napeague Cranberry Bogs, Long Island, New York." Museum of Long Island Natural Sciences, SUNY at Stony Brook (For directions to MOLINS call 516/632-8230).

10 October 1995 - 7:30 pm, Sherman Wolfson, "Native Orchids of Long Island." Museum of Long Island Natural Sciences, SUNY at Stony Brook. (For directions to MOLINS call 516/632-8230).

## IN THE FIELD WITH ROY LATHAM, #2

### Prologue

Included in this contribution are eight excerpts from letters of Roy Latham (1881-1979) to Stanley Jay Smith (1915-1978). Stanley Smith was Curator of Botany of the New York State Museum from 1947 until near the time of his death. The original letters are currently on file at the New York State Museum in Albany. I thank Richard Mitchell and Charles Sheviak for kindly making the documents available for study, and for permission to publish them.



Roy Latham (1920); Photograph courtesy of Diana Latham

"At Montauk a few years ago I found one plant of *Liatris scariosa* [Blazing Stars] with white

flowers. It is the only one I have seen with white flowers among thousands of the regular color. Do you know if it is rare in the species? The books I have do not mention it. White flowers occur so often in many species that there is no reason why they should not occur in this one. I am just wondering if others have seen them. I find on the sea beach, especially at Montauk, a very woolly yarrow with narrow leaves; I have thought with some doubt that this plant is *Achillia lanulosa*. I will send some in for you to look at. It may be only an extreme form of our common yarrow which is so common everywhere." [Letter from Roy Latham to Stanley Smith; 24 March 1950].



Stanley Smith; Photograph courtesy of N.Y.S. Museum

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"William Ferguson and I were frequent field companions and collected together in most of the eastern Long Island stations. Ferguson was a very keen botanist with an extra ordinary interest in the subject, especially as it applied to Long Island. I often heard him say "I am as enthusiastic as a school boy." He was a chemist by trade, but I believe in his later years was able to give almost all of his time to botanical studies during the summers on Long Island. He spent his winters in

Florida. As you have stated, most of his collections are at the New York Botanical Garden. Mrs. Ferguson gave all his botanical books and collecting outfit to me after he died and when I was there his collection was packed ready to be moved to the Garden. Mr. Ferguson was stone deaf, the most deaf man I ever knew. I had to shout right into his ear to make him hear at all. Perhaps I am just telling you a lot you already know, and you may have known him better than I did." [Letter from Roy Latham to Stanley Smith; 24 April 1950].

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"The other day near Roanoke Landing on the Sound shore about five miles north of Riverhead, I found a Hemlock tree in the rolling woods. There are about 275 acres of woodland in the tract and the man who owns the farm told me that about 50 years ago several Hemlock trees were scattered throughout the woods and there should be at least three there now. There are no records of settlements in the region and the trees have all indications of being natives. The tree I saw does not appear like a very old tree, but they told me it was there 50 years ago. I have never found the Hemlock wild in the woods before, although it escapes occasionally around yard borders. Also in the woods were numbers of *Azalea nudiflora* [Pinkster-flower] just showing flowers. This is really not a common species on eastern Long Island." [Letter from Roy Latham to Stanley Smith; 23 May 1950].

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"I saw in the paper that Dr. House died. I was indeed sorry to hear that happen. I had been in contact with him by letter ever since he first took office at the State Museum, and that was a long time ago. However, I had never met him face to face in all that time. He had collected some on Long Island and had planned to call on me but never reached Orient. I am a farmer by business and the best time to find me free from farm work is in May and June, although the best collecting time would be later on in the summer and early fall. From the first of July on into late fall I have no time to plan any appointments ahead. If I get a

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half day now and then, or part of a Sunday, I go on a collecting trip." [Letter from Roy Latham to Stanley Smith; 24 January 1950].

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"Yesterday at Fresh Meadow, Three Mile Harbor, north of East Hampton, I found a colony of *Carex* that appeared so different from anything in that genus I have seen that I collected a couple of specimens to send to you thinking perhaps you would recognize the species even in the immature condition. ... Later I will try to get matured specimens, whenever that may be. I noticed large beds of flowering Bird-foot Violets along the sides of the Three Mile Harbor Road for a distance of two miles. About a thousand acres of my best collecting grounds west of Riverhead were burned over this week and there was another fire near East Hampton which got many fine species of plants." [Letter from Roy Latham to Stanley Smith; 26 May 1951].

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"What do you know about the *Habenaria cristata* [Crested Fringed Orchid] we have here on Long Island? Several botanists have told me that our species on the island is a good hybrid because the flowers are bright lemon yellow instead of the usual orange color of this species in the south." [Letter from Roy Latham to Stanley Smith; 13 August 1951].

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"Last week I found one clump of *Lycopodium lucidulum* [Shining Clubmoss] in a white cedar swamp north of Riverhead. It appears to be a very rare species on Long Island. About 30 years ago I found a few plants near Greenport, but they died out after the woods were drained. I have been looking for a new station ever since without luck until last week. I will have a specimen for you later with other things. So far as I know, this is the third station for this clubmoss on the island, unless others have discovered it in recent years." [Letter from Roy Latham to Stanley Smith; 27 May 1957].

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"Perhaps I should not bother you with this subject, but I am interested in asking the opinion of others. During the Fall of 1964, near Greenport, I found three plants of *Solidago rugosa* [Rough-stemmed Goldenrod] with light cream colored flowers in a big colony of this species. They contrasted so sharply with the normal yellow color that at 200 feet I took them for white asters. Do you know if this color is recorded for this species of goldenrod? The difference in color does not show up so strongly in dried material." [Letter from Roy Latham to Stanley Smith; 16 October 1966]. --Eric Lamont

## The Myxomycetes of Long Island: An Introduction

Undoubtedly, during your summer woodland walks, you have come across an old log that seems to shimmer with the brilliance of silver, rubies and gold. Welcome to the wonderful and exciting world of slime molds, organisms that are neither plant nor animal.

This initial introduction into the classification of the myxomycetes is based upon the work of Alexopoulos and Martin. The largest, and one of the best, collections of myxomycetes is in the New York Botanical Garden. The herbarium contains the collections of **Robert Hagelstein** who collected many of his specimens in the villages of Albertson, Mill Neck and Mineola on Long Island. It was Hagelstein (1936) who wrote, "Truely, it may be said, that we do not know what surrounds us until we look." One hundred and sixty species were reported from Nassau County.

The purpose of this paper is to first introduce the student to the life cycle and classification of these fascinating organisms. All true slime molds go through both an animal and plant-like cycle. However, many of the plasmodiums (or amoeba-like stage) occur within rotten wood or debris and are only active in the moist environment of the substrate. The aphanoplasmodium of the *Stemonitales* lies hidden in wet logs until it begins its transformation into 'hair, growing on wood' --

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# Gil Raynor Dies

## *Top L.I. Naturalist*

[Note: Gilbert S. Raynor was born in Patchogue on 23 December 1918, and died on 18 July 1995.]

I believe it was a nesting broad-winged hawk in Montauk **Gil Raynor** was trying to document when he came in contact with a dog tick carrying Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever that would end his life. Gil had always been aware of ticks and had often picked them off himself. When he experienced a high temperature and went to the hospital, they diagnosed it as bronchitis and treated him for that. Gil got worse and, when they finally diagnosed it correctly, it was too late. He fell into a coma that lasted 11 years. With his death this past week, Long Island lost one of its greatest naturalists.

As a teenager Gil began a long and lasting friendship with **Roy Latham** of Orient. The two spent endless hours together in the field, studying all aspects of natural history. Several orchid voucher specimens currently at the New York State Museum were collected by Latham & Raynor during the late 1930's and 1940's. Roy and Gil were also active in archaeology during the early years of the Southold Indian Museum.



Gil Raynor in the 1960's; Photograph courtesy of The News Review (Mattituck)

The thing that made Gil such a well-known naturalist was his diversity of knowledge in birds, plants, trees, animals, reptiles. You name it and Gil had probably seen it and recorded when, where and how many he'd seen. One time, I dropped him on Robins Island and picked him up days later so he could study the mice and shrews of that island. His lifelong hope was that someday he'd be able to put all his records into a book on Long Island's natural history, but I'm afraid that dream is still a dream, for his notes, though extensive, are in a meteorologist's shorthand that only Gil could decipher.

Besides bringing up a family of nine, working at the Brookhaven National Lab, doing extensive field work, and being involved in college work for years at night, Gil always found time to do church work, being an elder in the church and superintendent of the Sunday school. He was an important member of Riverhead Town's Conservation Advisory Council, and it was through his detailed knowledge of the freshwater wetlands that Riverhead inventoried and eventually saved those valuable resources. Gil also was a founding member and past president of the Moriches Bay Audubon Society that has proven to be one of the most active on Long Island.

When it comes to keeping records concerning birds, there was none better than Gil. He always carried a small pocket notebook in which he listed everything he saw. It was natural for him to start his own Christmas bird count, calling it the Central Suffolk count. Since 1954, he had coordinated that marathon from dawn to dusk and then some. Besides his own count, he participated each year in the Quogue to Water Mill and Orient counts until he was afflicted with Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever.

I remember one time after one of the counts when we were all gathered at my place and tabulating our sightings. Someone asked if anyone had seen anything special. (It's then that the rarities are brought forth and the "ohs" and "ahs" are sighed.) This time, Gil said calmly, "Yes, I saw a dovekie." Now that is a rather rare bird to see on the Orient count so everyone was quite excited about it. Then Gil went on to say, "and I've got it right here" as he proceeded to lift the live bird out of his pocket. It had evidently hit a telephone wire and was stunned. Rather than leave

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it to a cat or other predator to catch, he brought it along for safety. It was typical of Gil's dry humor. How we laughed. The next day, he let it go, but it proved a record for our Orient count.

Everyone in the bird world knew Gil for his records and, of course, for his accuracy concerning them. When the state wanted a coordinator to bring together all the observers and their yearly records of breeding birds in the state, they asked Gil to oversee Marine Region 10, a monstrous five-year project.

Like Roy Latham, Gil Raynor was a self-taught individual. With his background in meteorology from his Navy service during World War II, he got a job at Brookhaven Lab. Knowing then his field was becoming more and more technical, he applied for a grant to further his education and, with the heavy competition of Brookhaven Lab's personnel, he came out on top. He was a remarkable person. He became so proficient and well-known in his field that he was often sent overseas to deliver papers on technical aspects of meteorology.

During the 1960's, Gil collaborated with the New York State botanist, Dr. Eugene Ogden, on pollen studies at Brookhaven Lab. Results of these studies were published in botanical, meteorological, medical, agricultural, and other scientific journals, including *Rhodora*, the journal of the New England Botanical Club. --**Paul Stoutenburgh**

## Society News

### *LIBS Elections 1995*

The Nominating Committee has proposed the following slate of candidates to serve as LIBS offices during 1996 and 1997. Elections will take place during the monthly meeting of 14 November 1995.--**Vincent Puglisi** (Chairman)

President . . . . . **Eric Lamont**  
Vice President . . . . . **Skip Blanchard**  
Treasurer . . . . . **Carol Johnston**  
Recording Secretary . . . . . **Barbara Conolly**  
Corresponding Sec'y . . . . . **Jane Blanchard**

## *New Members*

The Long Island Botanical Society is pleased to welcome the following new members: **Loidy Angulo**, Bayshore; **Aileen Bainton**, Amagansett; **Marty Condon**, Huntington; **Laila Dahl**, Forest Hills; **Maureen Levine**, Flushing; **Pamela Manice**, New York City; **Andria Post**, Bridgehampton; **Andrew & Kari Lyn Sabin**, Amagansett; **John Silba**, Lindenhurst; **Jeanne Suttie**, Syosset; **Max Taub**, Setauket; **Joseph Villani**, Hempstead.

## *Education Committee News*

An interpretative trail guide for Orient Beach State Park is being produced by members of the LIBS education committee. **Paul Stoutenburgh**, **Tom Stock** and **Mary Laura Lamont** have been working on the project this summer. **Gary Lawton**, the regional director of education for N.Y.S. Office of Parks & Recreation, is overseeing the project; Gary is also a member of LIBS.

## *Flora Committee News*

The next contribution to the preliminary atlas of Long Island plants will be on the Magnoliidae subclass of flowering plants; including approximately 70+ LI species in the following families: Magnoliaceae, Annonaceae, Lauraceae, Saururaceae, Aristolochiaceae, Nelumbonaceae, Nymphaeaceae, Cabombaceae, Ceratophyllaceae, Ranunculaceae, Berberidaceae, Menispermaceae, Papaveraceae, and Fumariaceae. Anyone with LI reports from these families is encouraged to contact **Skip Blanchard** or **Steven Clemants**.

## *Leaf Miners Attack White Oaks on South Fork*

**Jim Ash** has reported that the white oaks (*Quercus alba*) in the vicinity of Northwest Harbor have been defoliated this summer by leaf miners. At least several square miles have been affected, and the leaf minor population has not yet peaked [as of the end of July]. Interestingly, the black and scarlet oaks have remained in good shape. **Larry Penny** has pointed out that the leaf minor, as so many other

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insects and plant-disease organisms, is most likely to become epidemic when the host plants are under stress. At the moment, the white oaks in question are under terrific stress from water deprivation. The water table in the Northwest area has been receding steadily for almost a year.

***Sir Ghillean T. Prance***  
***to speak at Brooklyn Botanic Garden***

**Sir Ghillean Prance**, Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew will be giving the first annual Van Brunt Lecture at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden on October 18, 1995 at 6 PM. He will talk about "The Biodiversity Challenge: Science and the Botanic Garden in the 21st Century." Sir Ghillean spent over 20 years at the New York Botanical Garden and has been a distinguished advisor to Brooklyn Botanic Garden since 1988. If you wish to attend call Joanne Woodfin at (718) 622-4433, ext. 215. Tickets are \$5 for BBG members/ \$8 for nonmembers.

***Field Trips***

**16 September 1995 -- Breezy Point/ Fort Tilden, Queens.** Meet at Fort Tilden Bldg. #1 at 10 am. To get to Fort Tilden take the Belt Parkway west to exit 11-S (Flatbush Ave South), cross the Marine Parkway bridge, bear right - exit for breezy Point, exit off the bridge onto Beach Channel Dr., go 100 yds. to traffic light (opposite Coast Guard Station Rockaway). Turn left into Ft. Tilden, proceed 200 yds. to Bldg. #1. **Bob Cook** will lead a walk through the dunes of Breezy Point and Ft. Tilden to look for rare plants and migrating birds. Call Bob for more information at 718-338-3730.

**24 September 1995 -- Sandy Hook National Recreation Area, Monmouth Co., NJ.** Meet at the north end of parking lot B, which is the first parking lot on the right after you enter the recreation area, meet at 10 am. Take the Garden State Parkway to exit 117 (Keyport, Rte 36) and take Rte 36 east for about 13 miles, then follow the signs for the Sandy Hook exit, which will be on the right just after you cross the Navesink River. **Karl Anderson** will lead this trip through a variety of dune

and dune woodland communities. Contact Karl at 609-267-2195 for more details.

**30 September 1995 -- Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge.** Meet at 10 am, at HG. By car: take the Belt Parkway to Cross Bay Boulevard, take Exit 17 (Rockway). Cross the North Channel Bridge. Refuge is about 1 mile past the bridge on the right. By subway: take the IND A or CC to Broad Channel Station. Walk west to Cross Bay Blvd, then north about 0.75 miles to Refuge HG on left. By bus: take the Green Lines Q21 to Refuge. We will see a varied fall flora of the salt marshes and their adjacent transitional habitats. Be prepared for wet walking and bring lunch, beverage, and insect repellent. Leader: **Partrick Cooney**, 221 Mt. Hope Blvd., Hastings-on-Hudson, NY 10706; (914)-478-1803.

***Field Trip Reports***

**June 13, 1995, Swan Pond Biological Station, Manorville, Suffolk Co.** Many pine barrens species were identified and discussed, the highlights included *Quercus x rehderi*, a natural hybrid between *Q. ilicifolia* (scrub oak) and *Q. velutina* (black oak). **Tom Meoli** is credited with locating a small population of the delicate bellwort, in the Lily Family, *Uvularia pudica* (*Uvularia puberula* var. *nitida*). Leader, **Glenn Richard**; attendance, 15.

**June 25, 1995, Pelham Bay Park, Bronx Co.** More than 120 plant species were recorded on this field trip; highlights included River Birch (*Betula nigra*), Moonseed (*Menispermum canadense*), Persimmon (*Diospyros virginiana*), Swamp White Oak (*Quercus bicolor*), Purple Milkweed (*Asclepias purpurascens*), Sedge (*Carex bushii*), Mountain Mint (*Pycnanthemum tenuifolium*), Gamma Grass (*Tripsacum dactyloides*), Short-fruited Beak Rush (*Juncus brachycarpus*), Shiny Buckthorn (*Rhamnus frangula*), Wild Ginger (*Asarum canadense*), Black Ash (*Fraxinus nigra*), Nipplewort (*Lapsana communis*), and Winged Monkey Flower (*Minulus alatus*). Leader, **David Kunstler**; recorders, **Barbara Conolly & Betty Lotowycz**; attendance 12.

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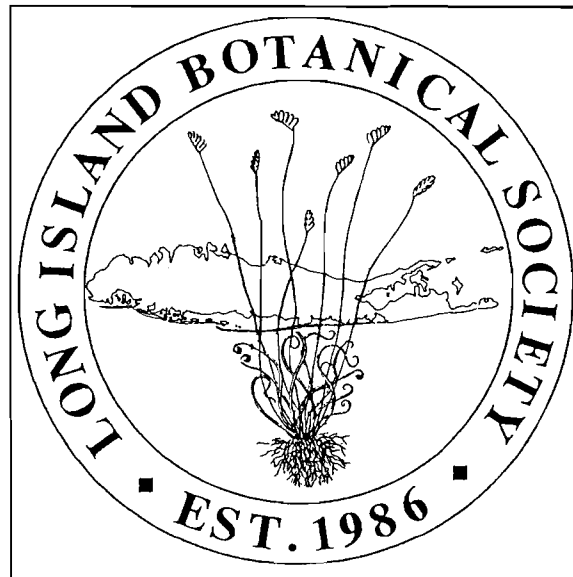
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LONG ISLAND BOTANICAL SOCIETY

Founded: 1986; Incorporated: 1989.

The Long Island Botanical Society is dedicated to the promotion of field botany and a greater understanding of the plants that grow wild on Long Island, New York.

President	Eric Lamont . . . . .
Vice President	Steven Clemants . . . . .
Treasurer	Carol Johnston . . . . .
Rec'rd Sec'y	Barbara Conolly . . . . .
Cor'sp Sec'y	Jane Blanchard . . . . .
Local Flora	Skip Blanchard . . . . .
Field Trip	Glenn Richard . . . . . Allan Lindberg . . . . .
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Education	Mary Laura Lamont Tom Stock . . . . .
Hospitality	Nancy Smith . . . . . Betty Lotowycz . . . . .
Program	Eric Lamont . . . . .
Editor	Steven Clemants . . . . .



Membership

Membership is open to all, and we welcome new members. Annual dues are \$10. For membership, make your check payable to LONG ISLAND BOTANICAL SOCIETY and mail to: Lois Lindberg, Membership Chairperson, 45 Sandy Hill Rd., Oyster Bay, NY 11771-3111

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LONG ISLAND BOTANICAL SOCIETY

c/o Muttontown Preserve  
Muttontown Lane  
East Norwich, NY 11732