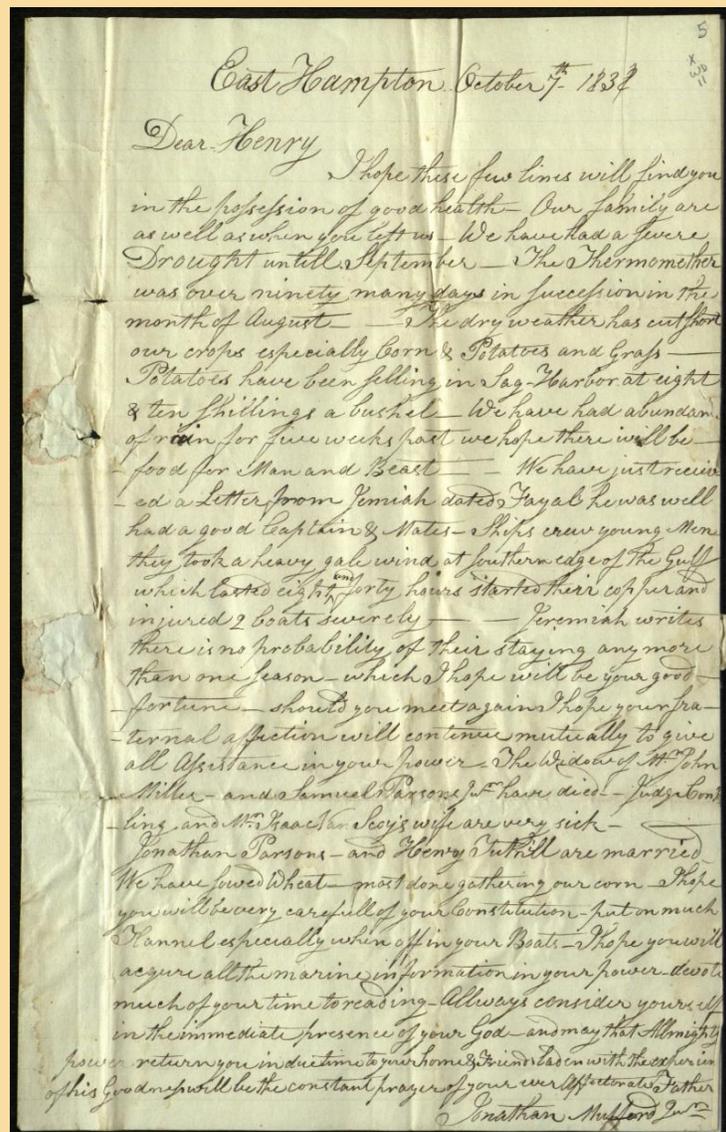




Item of the Week from the Long Island Collection

LONG ISLAND COLLECTION | DIGITAL LONG ISLAND | EAST HAMPTON STAR ARCHIVE



Letter from Jonathan Mulford, Jr. to Henry Mulford, 1838

What was it like living in East Hampton during the whaling industry boom? On October 7, 1838, 180 years ago this month, Jonathan Mulford, Jr. wrote his son Henry on the ship *Harvest*. The letter, above, was addressed care of Jonathan Stratton, with a notation that "Capt. John Godby" was master of the ship. While

there were multiple ships named *Harvest* on the waters in 1838, Mulford probably meant that Captain James Godbee was the ship's master. If so, then this particular *Harvest* was a bark that sailed out of Bridgeport, Connecticut on a two-year voyage, as per Judith Lund's [*Whaling Masters and Whaling Voyages Sailing from American Ports*](#).

Mulford's letter carried routine news of home, capturing a slice of life in East Hampton during Sag Harbor's whaling heyday. Mulford sent his son news from the last few months, referencing a severe drought and very hot weather throughout August, revealing he had not been in contact with his son for over two months. The news is mundane: reports on who died and who married, the price of potatoes, the state of crops, etc.

Jonathan also conveyed news from his other son Jeremiah, also at sea. Jeremiah expected his voyage to be one season, probably due to damage Jeremiah's ship experienced in "a gale" in the Gulf (of Mexico). Jonathan hoped Henry would share his brother's good fortune in having a short voyage with a good mate and captain. Jonathan worried about his son catching sick when he is "off in your boats," presumably a reference to the rowboats used to pursue whales, urging Henry to put on flannel to keep warm.

Most poignantly, Jonathan wrote about the affection he hoped his sons would show each other "should you meet again," expressing the uncertainty that came from the dangerous work of the whaling industry.

EXPLORE MORE

[**The Digital Long Island Collection**](#) is part of New York Heritage Digital Collections. Included are searchable scans of deeds, drawings, etchings, inventories, letters, maps, paintings, pardons, patents, photographs, plans, postcards, prints, sculptures, sketches, textiles, tiles, yearbooks and more to come.

[**The East Hampton Star Archive**](#) is a fully searchable, online digital archive of our local weekly newspaper, that features each complete issue of the paper from 1918-1968, exactly as it appeared in print. Visit the archive online, for a tour of our Town's history that will fascinate both the amateur and professional historian!

[**The Karl Grossman Research Archive**](#) is an extensive collection of materials digitized from the personal archive of Karl Grossman, an investigative reporter, columnist, author, and current professor of journalism at SUNY Old Westbury. The archive brings together a decades long career in reporting and journalism with topics ranging from the economy and pollution to fishing and East Hampton Town. Patrons are capable of searching this 9,500+ item collection by collection name, year, title, or keyword search.

[**The Local Artist Research Archive**](#) is a collection of over 19,000 items digitized from Guild Hall, containing materials including personal letters, photographs, news clippings, and art catalogs concerning artists of the East End. Patrons are capable of searching this archive by collection, title, or keyword search.

Welcome to the Long Island Collection's "Item of the Week."

We are an archive dedicated to the history and people of Long Island, with a special interest in all things East Hampton and East End. Unlike some small local history rooms in other public libraries, we have over 100,000 items including, but not limited to, rare books, maps, photographs, deeds,



postcards, letters, newspapers, and whaling logs. We also have a dedicated and hardworking staff ready to help you with any questions you may have. Unable to make it to the library? No problem! We upload images from the collection to Digital Long Island on a weekly basis, so there's always something new and interesting to behold.

Please visit us at the Library, make use of our extensive online digital resources, or contact us for assistance. Public hours are: Mon. - Tues. and Thurs. - Sat., 1:00-4:30 p.m.

Researched and written by Andrea Meyer, Librarian/Archivist, Long Island Collection.

Andrea Meyer began working in the Long Island Collection in January 2015. Her responsibilities include updating Digital Long Island, scanning, processing new collections, and assisting patrons with research. She earned her M.L.I.S. through Long Island University, and completed her M.A. in Archives and Public History at New York University through the dual-degree program. Andrea started working in archives in 2005. Prior to working for the East Hampton Library, Andrea worked at the New Jersey State Archives, at NYU Libraries, and as a private research consultant. Her clients included the New-York Historical Society. She is also involved with the Sag Harbor Historical Society.

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