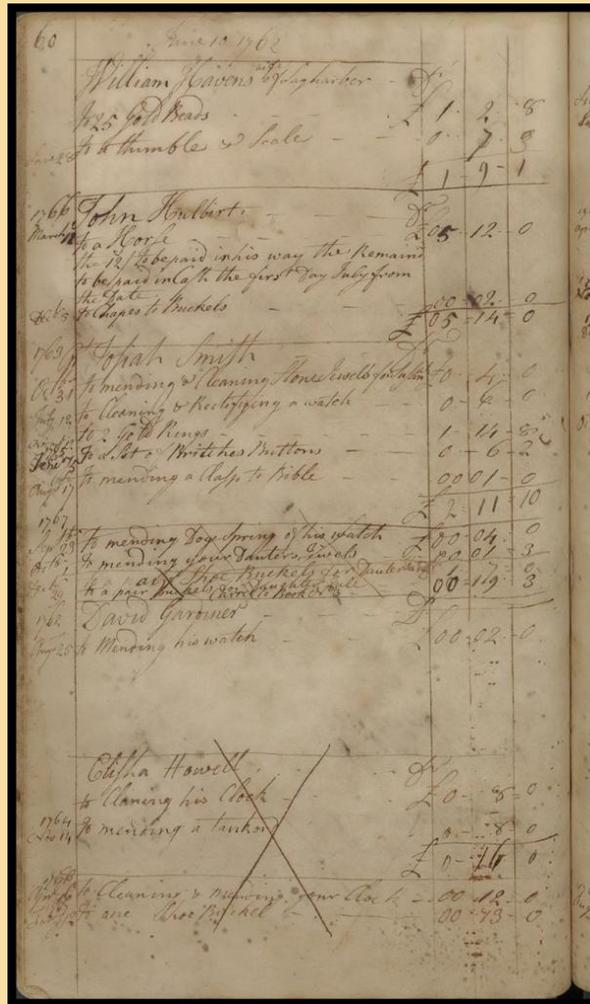




Item of the Week *from the* Long Island Collection

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



Account Book of Elias Pelletreau, goldsmith & silversmith in Southampton, c. 1759-1782, pg. 126

If you're ever pressed to name a notable American silversmith, your most likely response would probably be Paul Revere (1734-1818). In fact, John Singleton Copley's famous [portrait](#) from 1768 comes to mind, where Paul Revere is seen casually seated, holding a silver teapot, with his engraving tools seen in the foreground.

While not as celebrated as Paul Revere, Elias Pelletreau (1726-1810) of Southampton, NY was a silversmith who should not be overlooked. Born the

second child of Francis Pelletreau and Jane Osborne, young Elias was a descendant of French Huguenots who first immigrated to America, following the 1685 Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, which officially sanctioned the persecution of Protestants living in France.

After settling in New York, Elias' grandfather, Elie Pelletreau, gained employment as a candlestick maker, whalebone cutter, and shopkeeper. His son Francis, in turn, became a merchant who first arrived in Southampton in 1717. By 1728, he was successful enough to purchase a home there on Main Street.

When Elias was about 15 years old, he entered into a seven-year apprenticeship with goldsmith Simeon Soumaine in New York City. The term "goldsmith," at the time, indicated artisans and specialized salespeople involved in the creation, sale, and repair of goods made from both silver and gold. Upon completion of his apprenticeship and making a name for himself, Pelletreau returned to Southampton in the 1750s.

The item above is a page taken from an account book kept by Elias Pelletreau, which is the earliest known ledger to survive from the silversmith. In it, one finds "[25 gold beads](#)" and a "thimble & seale" made for the wife of William Havens of Sag Harbor; the "cleaning & rectifying" of a watch, two gold rings, a set of "bitches buttons," and the mending of a clasp to a Bible for Josiah Smith; as well as the cleaning of a clock and the mending of a [tankard](#) for a Mr. Howell.

If you're interested in learning more about Elias Pelletreau and his work, the [Long Island Museum](#) in Stony Brook is currently holding an exhibition titled, "[Elias Pelletreau: Long Island Silversmith and Entrepreneur](#)" until the end of December.

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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 Gina Piastuck, Department Head, Long Island Collection.

Gina Piastuck joined the East Hampton Library in 2007 as a librarian and archivist and has served as the Head of the Long Island Collection since 2009. She's a graduate of LIU Post's Palmer School of Library and Information Science and holds both an M.L.I.S. degree and a Certificate in Archives and Records Management. Her responsibilities managing the Long Island Collection include providing reference and research assistance to patrons on and off site, as well as the acquisition, arrangement, description and conservation of rare and new materials pertaining to the history and people of Long Island.

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