



## Item of the Week *from the* Long Island Collection

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### **The Second Annual Colored Ball, East Hampton, 1914**

On August 26, 1914, the "Second Annual Colored Ball"\* occurred at [Clinton Hall](#) (now Clinton Academy). The ball included [a concert from 8:30 to 9:30 pm with Europe's Orchestra of New York](#) playing for the dancers. The event was hosted by [Perry White](#) (1875-1935) and his wife, the former Miss Mattie Key, both known as excellent dancers.

Like everywhere else in America in the early 1900s, East Hampton's people of color navigated layers of social segregation. Many of East Hampton's summer colony relied on African Americans as household servants. A "colored ball" offered a chance for people of color living or visiting in the area to socialize in a setting where they were not normally included.

Little is written about the August 26, 1914 "Second Annual Colored Ball," but there are extensive descriptions of other similar local balls. The events typically included an orchestra from New York. By 1908, Perry White is identified as the event organizer. White came to East Hampton from Virginia in connection to the Gardiner-Tyler family in 1895. He owned a home on Main Street, and worked as a waiter in [the Osborne House](#) (later the Maidstone Arms). His obituary described his "great charm and dignity" and many recalled [White's career starting at Richmond's famous Jefferson Hotel](#). Other locals involved in organizing the early colored balls were Mary Banks, Mary Tucker, Elsie Parker, John Henry Fowler, and George Banks. While there is no recorded data on the attendance for the 1914 Second Annual Colored Ball, Perry White's 1912 colored ball boasted [over 300 people in attendance](#), which included costumes and musicians from New York City.

\* Oddly, despite the phrase "second annual" being applied to the 1914 ball, East Hampton's "colored ball" dances during the summer season [go back to 1890](#), according to *The East Hampton Star*. Despite two such events in 1913, and a series of colored balls in 1914, only the August 26th event was identified as the "Second Annual Colored Ball."

## 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:**

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*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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