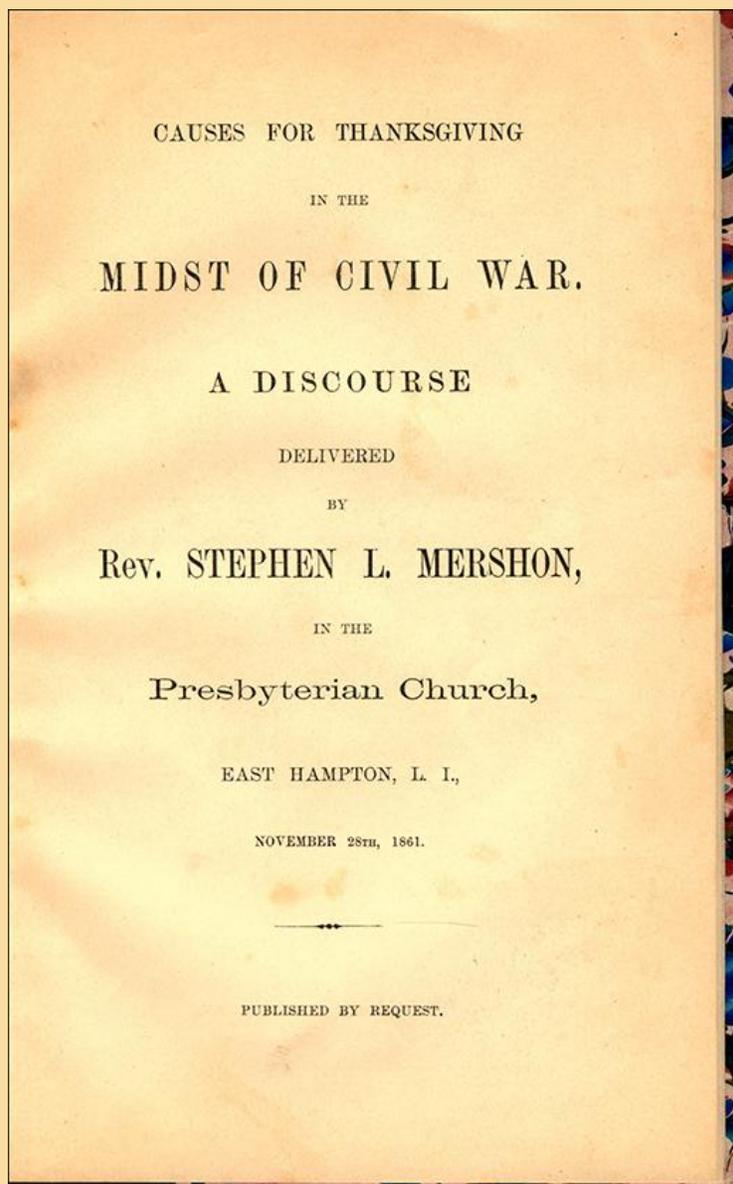




Item of the Week *from the* Long Island Collection

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



**Causes for Thanksgiving in the Midst of Civil War:
A Discourse Delivered by Reverend Stephen L. Mershon,
in the Presbyterian Church, East Hampton, L.I.,**

November 28th, 1861

In April 1861, upon the firing on Fort Sumter, East Hampton and its young men immediately rallied. A month later, a large liberty pole was set in the middle of the street, during the raising of which Reverend Mershon was one of the fervent patriotic speakers.

On November 28, 1861, the first Thanksgiving of what was expected to be a short-lived rebellion, Reverend Mershon delivered [this powerful, patriotic sermon](#), invoking the nation's Anglo-Saxon heritage of zeal and fortitude against their enemies, proudly recalling how "Old England has passed through her great revolutions, crushed her internal rebellions, and now as an industrious nation rests upon the surest of the foundations..."

The rebellion was not short-lived. Their son, Stephen Mershon Jr. later recalled: "...the leaving of the volunteer soldiers for the front, the almost unbearable anxieties in the homes in the absence of news ...intense sorrow of fallen heroes...my father and mother immediately gathered their children about them and placed us in the custody of our Grandma Mershon...both father and mother thereupon hastened, with her brother, Reverend T. DeWitt Talmage, to the battlefields of Virginia...they did what they could to minister to the needs and relieve the suffering soldiers of both the blue and the gray. They especially sought out with their best ability and greatest energy...the boys of East Hampton..."

In 1866, after 12 years of service to East Hampton, Reverend Mershon accepted a pastorate in Connecticut. He died in 1874. One can't help but wonder about the timing of his departure. Despite the victorious outcome for the Union, with its expected celebrations, there were costs, and surely unspoken burdens of consciousness. The Mershons' intense personal involvement included the Reverend's spirited charge, as a powerful leader of the community; their hands-on experience on the battlefields; and the tragic aftermath of the war, reflected in the faces of the families of those who didn't return, in the permanently altered bodies and minds of the veterans, was perhaps too much to bear.

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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Steve began working in the Long Island Collection in July 2004. His responsibilities include Library of Congress standards cataloging, assisting researchers, digitization, collection development, emergency planning, and space enhancement. He earned his M.L.I.S. at Long Island University with a certificate in archives and records management; his areas of concentration were land records, cartographic information, the USA Patriot Act, and archival security. Steve's previous educational background includes history,

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