



Item of the Week *from the* Long Island Collection

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



Killaen Van Rensselaer's Diary, 1675, pg. 02

One of the first items I scanned here in the Long Island Collection was this vellum (calf skin) bound book titled the "Diary of Killaen Van Rensselaer." The pages inside, written in Dutch, appear to be a diary but are interspersed with English language accounts of business transactions with indigenous people. It's not clear if the author of each account was bilingual or if there was more than one author.

The note included with this item adds more to its confusion as it claims the diary was started in 1675 by Killaen Van Rensselaer, "first Lord of the Manor of Rensselaerswyck," and indicates the book was used on Shelter Island. The problem is, Rensselaerswyck is near Albany, N.Y., and Jeremias Killaen Van Rensselaer is usually identified as the first Lord of Rensselaerswyck Manor. He died in 1674, which is one year before the start of this account. However, Jeremias's son and a nephew (who married Jeremias's daughter) were both named Killaen. When Jeremias's nephew died, his daughter Anna married Colonel William Nicoll of Islip and Shelter Island. Most likely, the book came with Anna or William Nicoll to Shelter Island as Nicoll worked closely with Giles Sylvester of Sylvester Manor.

Most of the accounts contained inside are with Native Americans identified by names like "Peter Indian" and "Jeffrey Indian," who were paid for goods they "brought over." The accounts read like a Stop & Shop Peapod order or a grocery list-quantities of molasses, wheat, soap, sugar, salt pork, vinegar, and potatoes regularly appear. Some pages also record housework performed by English colonists like Mehitable Edwards and Peregrine Stanborough for washing and "pulling" wool.

Though the authorship of the diary remains ambiguous, the volume itself is historically important because it's a testament to the melting pot of the "Atlantic World" where European settlers from different backgrounds interacted in the colonies with indigenous people, existing in a mix of languages.

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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