

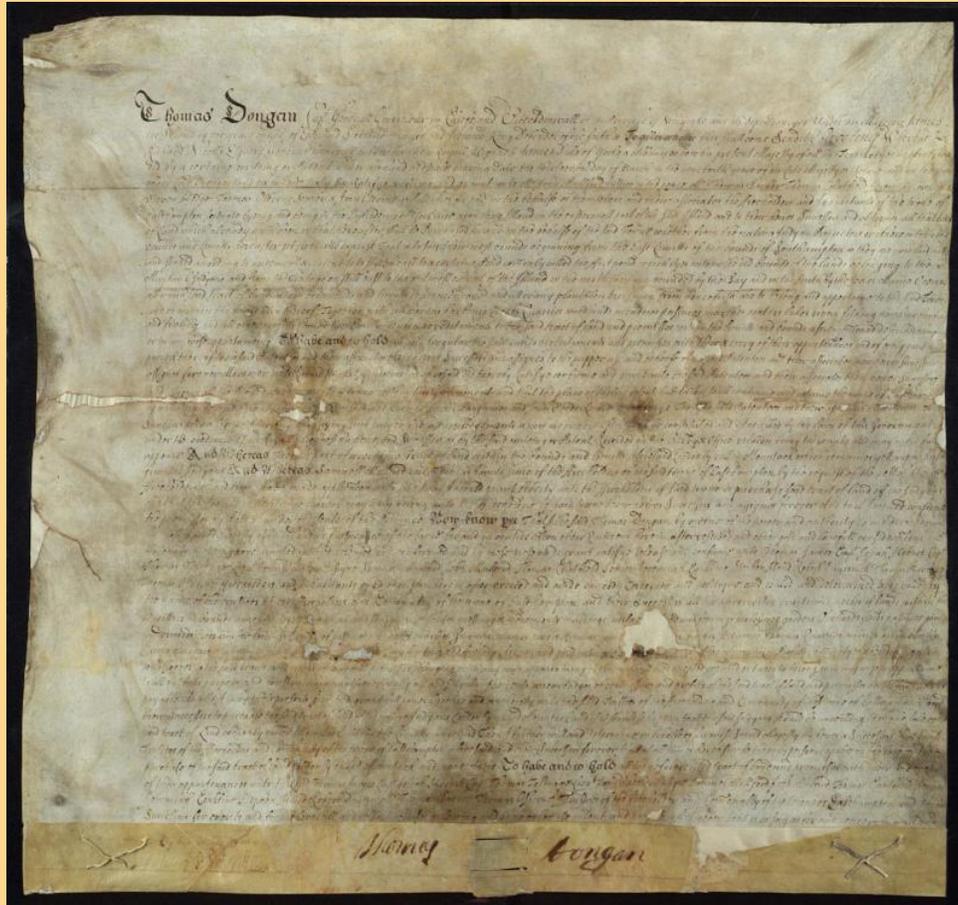


## Item of the Week *from the* Long Island Collection

LONG ISLAND COLLECTION

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EAST HAMPTON STAR ARCHIVE



### **Dongan Patent, December 9, 1686**

A question that I get asked in the Long Island Collection from time to time is: if I had to save one item from flood or fire, what would I choose? Given that we have a vast collection of important materials in our possession, that question presents me with a "Sophie's Choice" type of dilemma. How could I choose just one? Every item, no matter how insignificant it may seem to be, has value. However, I'd be lying if I said I never really thought about it. The truth is, I have an informal list of items I've been squirreling away at the back of my mind for the past few years and the Dongan Patent of East Hampton is definitely a high priority on my list. The Dongan Patent, dated December 9, 1686, is one of a number of land grants executed by Thomas Dongan, Colonial Governor of New York. As one of the founding documents of the Town of East Hampton (see also the 1666 [Nicolls Patent](#), which I would also save), it established Town Trustees as governing bodies tasked with managing common land. Specifically, the Dongan Patent granted the Trustees the ability to sell or discard the proprietary lands of the Town, assigning authority to them as agents. It also enabled the freeholders and inhabitants, as represented by the Trustees, as being one corporate body capable of passing laws, maintaining order, and so forth. Part of the reason why I find the Dongan Patent so important is that it is

evidence of an early established form of representative government in America at a time when the country was still under colonial rule. The Town Trustees continue to operate today as an autonomous governing body and many people still rely on the Dongan Patent to help settle legal disputes concerning land, water rights, and so forth.

## 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 6,500+ item collection by collection name, year, title, or keyword search.

**The Local Artist Research Archive** is a collection of over 10,000 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. Our public hours are Mon.-Tues. and Thurs.-Sat. 1:00-4:30 p.m.

***Gina Piastuck, Department Head, Long Island Collection***  
[gina@easthamptonlibrary.org](mailto:gina@easthamptonlibrary.org) | (631) 324-0222 ext. 4  
[www.easthamptonlibrary.org](http://www.easthamptonlibrary.org)

