



Item of the Week *from the* Long Island Collection

LONG ISLAND COLLECTION

DIGITAL LONG ISLAND

EAST HAMPTON STAR ARCHIVE



Fire on Main Street, 1907, East Hampton, L.I.

Many would agree the purpose of a postcard is to have a memento of where you've been and to share that experience with others. Recently, I came across a postcard nestled between depictions of Main Beach and summer cottages, commemorating a fire that occurred on Main Street in East Hampton on May 30, 1907. It struck me as unusual that such a postcard would exist, but then I realized that just because something is unfortunate or unpleasant, doesn't mean it shouldn't be documented. Known as the "Decoration Day Blaze" according to the *East Hampton Star's* headline, the fire broke out on a Thursday morning in Main Street's business section, which was first discovered by someone living in a building owned by Bert Howard, who also operated a grocery store. Howard reported the fire before rushing outside to warn his neighbors, noticing the fire in the pool room behind Libert's Barber Shop (about where Starbucks is today). The fire engulfed the Howard block and spread to Fred Dayton's clothing store and a building on the corner of Main Street and Newtown Lane owned by Christian Schenck, which was occupied by Robert Matthews, a barber, and his wife who had a hat shop. When the fire department realized they couldn't save these four buildings, they focused all their attention on saving Samuel Parson's post office (also his home) and Christian Schenck's residence, which was threatened. Ultimately, the fire was stopped in the post office building (seen above, almost completely gutted), which kept it from spreading further. A new post office was later built on Main Street in 1908, which is BookHampton today (you will notice it is made of brick). The fire occurred at a time of year when the village was preparing for another busy summer season. In spite of financial setbacks, no lives were lost.

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.

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.

gina@easthamptonlibrary.org | (631) 324-0222 ext. 4 | www.easthamptonlibrary.org

