



Item of the Week from the Long Island Collection

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

#3
A7
1804

Know all men by these presents that Jeremiah Osborn of the Town of East Hampton in the County of Suffolk and State of New York Yeoman have for and in consideration of the sum of 4 Dollars to me in hand before this signing and selling hereof paid by Ned a free blackman of the Town & County aforesaid the receipt whereof I do hereby acknowledge given granted bargained sold and conveyed and by these presents do give grant bargain sell and convey a certain tract of land lying in the Town of East Hampton aforesaid at a place called Sandy Hook containing by estimate half an acre be the same more or less bounded & bounded as follows Viz South easterly by Nathaniel Doming southwesterly by the lot that was Nathaniel Baker the 5th North westerly & North easterly by Highways To have and to hold the said bargained premises with the Building standing thereon & all the appurtenances & privileges to the same belonging to him the said Ned & to his Heirs and Assigns forever to his and their use and behoof forever - And I the said Jeremiah Osborn for myself my heirs Executors & Administrators do covenant to and with the said Ned his heirs Executors Administrators Assigns that I will lawfully defend in fee of the premises & that I will warrant secure and defend the same to him the said Ned against the lawful claims of all person - In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal the twelfth Day of November one thousand Eight hundred & four -

Signed sealed and delivered
in presence of
Merry P. 1804
1804

Capt Jeremiah Osborn

Sale of a 1/2 Acre Parcel by Captain Jeremiah Osborn to Ned, a Free Black Man, 1804

Ned's story is a lesson in noticing what's left out of the historical record. He had no last name, but as of November 12, 1804, he owned half an acre of property in East Hampton. According to the above deed, Jeremiah Osborn granted Ned, a "free black man," land in an area identified as "Sandy Hook" near Freetown, which was a community of freedmen established by the Gardiner family. No price is recorded, which could mean the land was gifted, bartered, or the price was unimportant.

Ned had to be a free person to own property. We can estimate Ned was released from slavery between 1784 and 1799. Ned rang the church bells for the East Hampton Town Trustees from 1780

until 1816, usually named in the Trustees' Records as "Ned, negro." However, in the 1784 Trustees' Records, Ned appears as "Jeremiah Osborn's Ned," suggesting he is still an enslaved person. By 1799, he appears on a church membership roster as "freeman."

We know nothing of Ned's family, or the work he did for Jeremiah Osborn, although there is reason to hope this could change. The little information we have on Ned largely stemmed from interest in his gravestone, erected in 1817, recognizing his work as a "faithful Negro manservant to Capt. Jeremiah Osborn." Researchers worked for years to find Ned's grave, concluding he was probably buried on his own property. The identification of his burial site off Morris Park Lane was celebrated in 2016.

As incomplete as Ned's story may feel, the records we do have about his work, his property, and his burial tell us a great deal at a time when people of color were routinely omitted from the record and increased awareness of his story has only added to his history.

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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