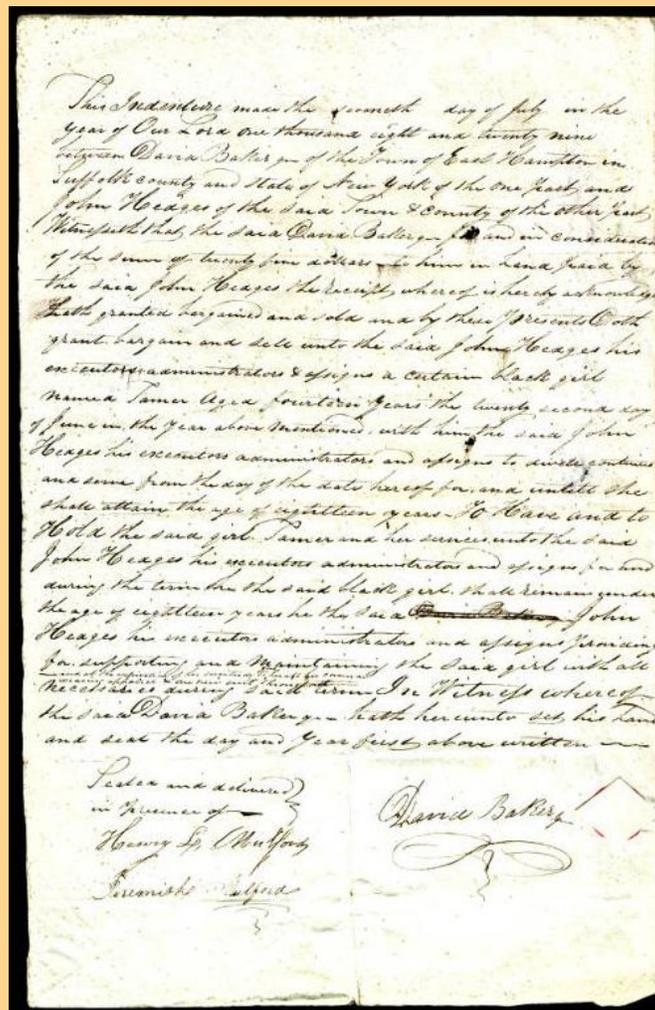




Item of the Week from the Long Island Collection

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



Sale of a certain black girl named Tamer, 1829

"Can you imagine being an enslaved person, knowing your child will eventually be free?" A researcher recently asked me this question, which has stayed with me ever since. This happened to a generation of enslaved New Yorkers, as slavery did not end in New York State until 1827. We forget Northerners held slaves, and while New York adopted a process called "gradual emancipation," that didn't mean slavery automatically ended when that legislation passed in 1799.

In 1829, a 14-year-old "black girl" named Tamer ended up being "sold" by David Baker, Jr. as an indentured servant in East Hampton, to be released by John Hedges when she turned 18. Four years of Tamer's work was then valued at \$25. When she was released from her "continuous servitude," Tamer was to receive a "full suit" of "common" apparel.

Under the 1799 legislation, children born to enslaved people after the act's passage were indentured servants until the children reached 25 (females) or 28 (males), an additional seven years

beyond white children. In 1817, legislation expanded, freeing enslaved New Yorkers born before 1799 in 1827. This law also ended indentures for the children of enslaved New Yorkers born between 1817 and 1827 at age 21, with the last of these indentures ending in 1848.

I was confused by how Tamer could be sold after 1827, but was informed by my very knowledgeable researcher that it appears Baker and Hedges actually made efforts to mimic the provisions of an indenture for a free white child, by providing her clothing and releasing her indenture at age 18 instead of 25. Where did Tamer end up after her indenture? What happened to her family? Records here do not answer these questions, but this document gives us a glimpse into the realities of gradual emancipation.

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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