



Item of the Week *from the* Long Island Collection

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



Julia Gardiner Tyler

The image above is a photograph of an oil painting of Julia Gardiner, ca. 1841, attributed to American painter Cephias Giovanni Thompson, which currently resides at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C. Born on Gardiner's Island in 1820, Julia Gardiner was the daughter of David and Juliana MacLachlan Gardiner. Her father was a lawyer, landowner, and New York State senator, representing the 1st District of Suffolk County from 1824-1828.

The product of a prominent and wealthy family, Julia was raised in East Hampton and attended a fashionable boarding school in Manhattan. She was very popular socially, often characterized as being bold and high-spirited, and had many admirers. In fact, one such admirer labeled her "Julia - the Rose of Long Island" in a poem submitted to a local newspaper. When she was 19, Julia scandalized polite society by posing as a model for a department store advertisement, which identified her as "The Rose of Long Island." As the ad did little to conceal her identity and such exhibitionism was unheard of at the time, Julia's family briefly left the country for a grand tour of Europe to escape notoriety.

A few months after returning home from Europe, Julia was first introduced to President John Tyler at a White House reception. She evidently caught his eye as he proposed to her later that year, but she refused him. After her father died in a naval gun explosion aboard the steam frigate *Princeton*, however, Julia agreed to a secret engagement while Tyler comforted her in her grief.

In 1844, Tyler became the first U.S. President to marry in office, which received much publicity and criticism, due to the couple's 30-year age difference. Julia, however, greatly enjoyed her role as First Lady and loved to entertain. At the end of his term, the couple retired to Tyler's Sherwood Forest Plantation in Virginia, where they had seven children.

Amazingly, two of their grandsons are still alive, making President Tyler the earliest former President with living grandchildren. They are Lyon Gardiner Tyler Jr. (b. 1924) and Harrison Ruffin Tyler (b. 1928). President Tyler had fifteen children over the course of two marriages. According to Harrison Tyler, his grandfather was 63 when his father was born, and his father was 75 when he was born.

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 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.

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