

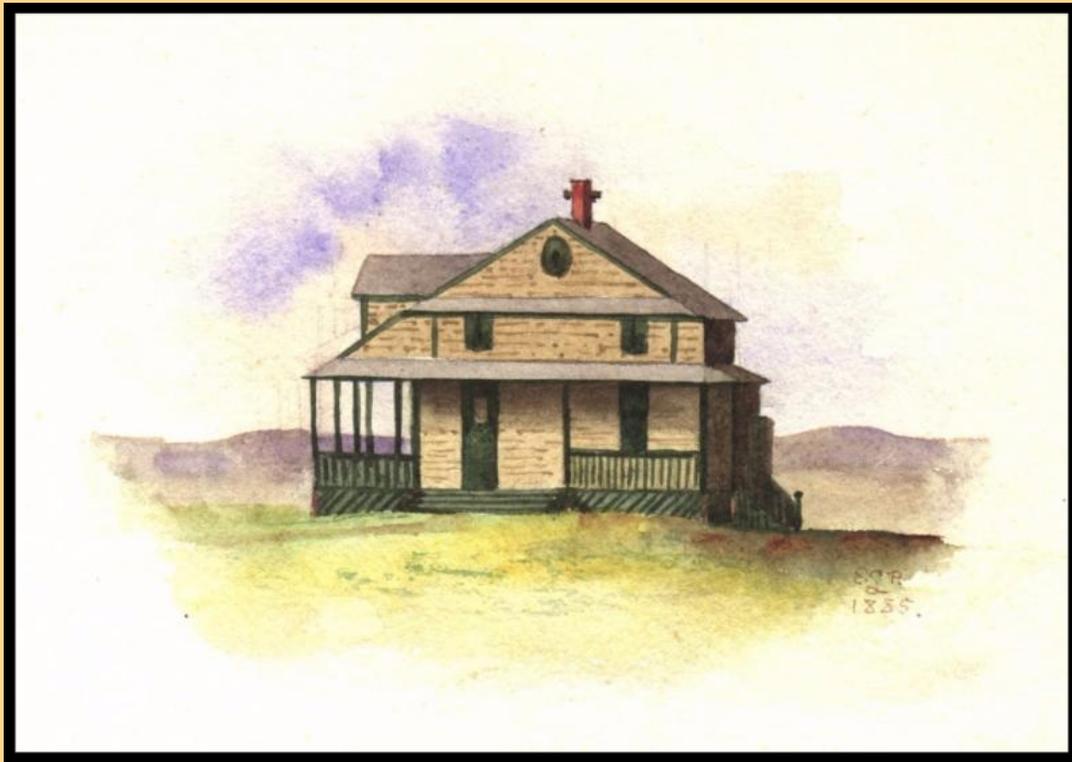


Item of the Week *from the* Long Island Collection

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EAST HAMPTON STAR ARCHIVE



Benson Cottage, Montauk Association Houses, 1885

Arthur W. Benson, founder and president of the Brooklyn Gas Light Company in 1823, as well as an original investor in the Brooklyn Bridge in 1869, is credited with the development of the New York City suburb of Bensonhurst, as well as Montauk. In 1879, Benson acquired 10,000 acres of government land at Montauk, paying a total of \$151,000 at auction. According to *The History of East Hampton* by Bob Hefner, the sale was important because it "marked the end of the common pasture system at Montauk which had been in effect for over 220 years..." and "resulted in the first significant resort development in the town outside of the Village of East Hampton." After the sale, Benson formed the Montauk Association with some of his wealthy friends from New York, building seven summer cottages (as well as a laundry, stable, and casino/clubhouse) designed by architectural firm McKim, Meade and White within a site plan designed by Frederick Law Olmstead (famous for designing Central Park, among numerous other accomplishments) on 100 acres near Ditch Plains. Known as the Seven Sisters, the houses were built in the then popular Shingle Style that took advantage of cool summer breezes while commanding impressive ocean views. The above [watercolor](#) (of Arthur Benson's cottage) is one of [several](#) painted of the Montauk Association buildings by Eloise Payne Luquer, a grandniece of John Howard Payne who wrote "Home! Sweet Home!" Each house is named after the original owner. The one cottage not included in this collection is the Orr Cottage, also known as "Tick Hall," which burned in 1997, but was painstakingly restored by then and current owner, Dick Cavett. Included in the collection, however, is the casino/clubhouse, which unfortunately burned in the 1930's and was never rebuilt. The laundry and stable buildings also no longer exist. The Montauk Association Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1976.

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!



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.

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