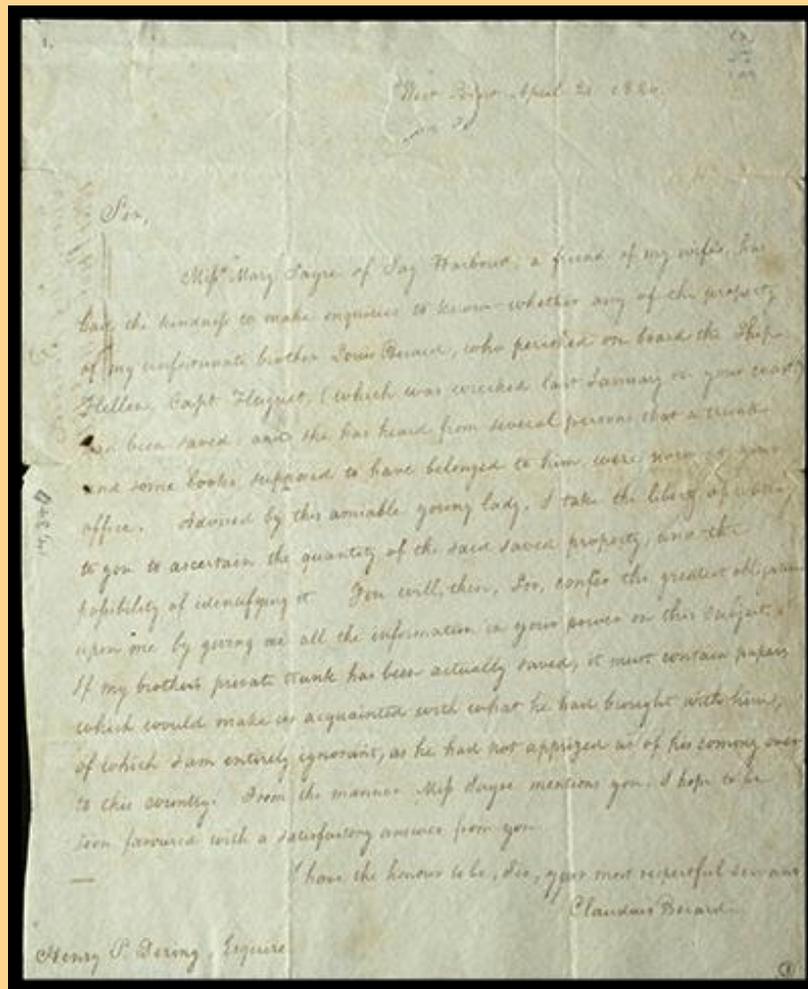




## Item of the Week *from the* Long Island Collection

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



### **Letter from Claudius Berard to Henry P. Dering, April 21, 1820**

Sometimes it doesn't take much to form a relationship, whether it be over a shared interest or a chance encounter. In the case of the [letters](#) exchanged between Henry Packer Dering and Claudius Berard, their association was initiated over a box of books, though the circumstances surrounding the box came at a heavy price.

The correspondence begins with a letter from Claudius Berard of West Point. Berard, born in Bordeaux, France, in 1786, was a Greek and Latin scholar who moved to the United States to avoid conscription in the French army. In 1815, he was appointed Professor of French at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York.

On April 21, 1820, Berard wrote Dering regarding the property of his brother, Louis, who died on board the merchant vessel *Helen*, which was wrecked off Southampton

during a storm on January 17, 1820. A friend of Claudius Beard's wife, Mary Sayre of Sag Harbor, heard from several people that a trunk and a box of books belonging to Louis Berard were salvaged from the wreck and sent to H.P. Dering at the Custom House in Sag Harbor.

As Dering was the custom master at a federal port of entry, he was responsible for levying taxes on goods that came through Sag Harbor. As such, Louis Berard's box of books were subject to a customs duty of \$30. The books were finally delivered to Claudius a year later after a thorough investigation. He paid the fee himself and subsequently deposited the books at the library at West Point, of which he was librarian.

Claudius Berard was thankful for H.P. Dering's help and understanding in the matter and it's interesting to see their friendship develop over time. The last letter in the collection is dated May 18, 1822, written by Dering's son, Henry Thomas, to Claudius Berard, notifying him of his father's death and expressing his family's gratitude.

## 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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