



Item of the Week *from the* Long Island Collection

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



Casa Basso, Westhampton, Long Island, N.Y.

Between the miniature castle, restaurant, and musketeer statues flanking the paved entryway, there's a lot to explain in the postcard above. Some of you may recognize it, as the scene still exists today. It's Casa Basso, an Italian restaurant overlooking Beaverdam Creek at [59 Montauk Highway in Westhampton](#), which has been in business since 1928. However, before the restaurant building was constructed, the castle, sculpture, and property were the home and pottery of Theophilus Anthony Brouwer Jr. (1864-1932).

Brouwer, of New York City, was a man of many interests. Long an admirer of art, he didn't possess any formal training when he decided to open a small pottery studio on an acre of land on [Middle Lane in East Hampton](#) in 1894. Called [Middle Lane Pottery](#), the entrance was adorned with the [fifteen-foot jawbones of a whale](#) caught off Long Island. The shape the jawbones made is significant in that they would become part of Brouwer's distinct [mark](#) on his pottery, which included the bones enclosing the letter "M" for Middle Lane Pottery.

What made Brouwer's pottery unique has everything to do with the artist himself. He turned all his own pieces, constructed his own pottery molds, did his own pressing and casting, and created his own decorating methods (of which he became known for his Fire Painting technique and *Flame* ware). As far as the art of pottery is concerned, he was considered extremely unorthodox and his pieces today are deemed rare and valuable. An [example](#) can be seen here, from the collection of The Met.

In 1902, Brouwer sold the pottery at East Hampton and moved to Westhampton,

where he soon built the castle, pictured above, that became his home. Behind the castle a larger pottery studio was built, where he perfected his techniques. As Brouwer grew older, his interests were drawn elsewhere, but he came to be known as one of America's top potters in the early twentieth century.

EXPLORE MORE

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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.

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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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