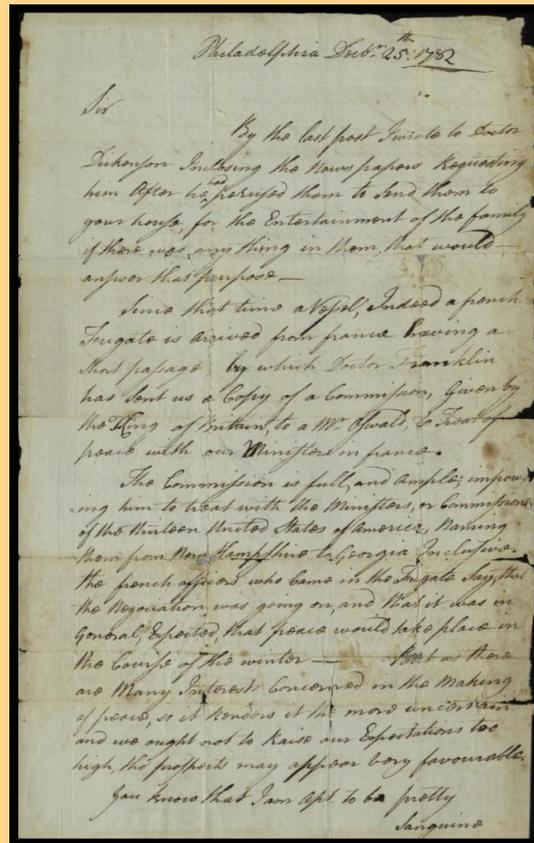




Item of the Week from the Long Island Collection

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



Letter from William Floyd to Thomas Dering, 1782

In July of 1776, William Floyd became one of fifty-six men to sign the Declaration of Independence. The 41-year-old from Mastic Beach joined the other signers in pledging his life, fortune, and his "most sacred honor" for our liberty.

For most of the next seven years, the Floyd family would be separated by the war and William's congressional duties. Following Washington's defeat in the battles for New York City, the British Army occupied Long Island, targeting families of the signers and rebel leadership. The Floyd family was evacuated to Middletown, Connecticut, among hundreds of patriot families seeking refuge. Many of those families left Long Island from Sag Harbor, according to [Frederic Mather](#). In May of 1781, William's wife, Hannah Jones Floyd, would die from sickness while still a refugee in Connecticut. British troops surrendered five months later at Yorktown, Virginia, but the war continued for another two years, with peace an uncertainty.

Despite all these struggles, William Floyd managed to write the letter above, dated Christmas 1782, to his Middletown neighbor Thomas Dering (of [Sylvester Manor](#)),

which emits a hope for peace and the reunion of families. Though his latest news from Philadelphia is weeks old and unreliable, Floyd is optimistic that the American and British governments will proceed with peace negotiations. He also wrestles with false rumors of the British evacuation of Charleston, South Carolina, and promises to send Dering newspapers, as old news is better than no news at all.

Within a year of this letter, the British evacuated New York, allowing William Floyd and his remaining family members to finally return to their Suffolk County home. During their exile, the [Floyd home in Mastic Beach](#) was plundered, occupied, and trashed. Supporting American independence came at a steep cost for William Floyd. It was not all fireworks and parades.

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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