



Item of the Week *from the* Long Island Collection

LONG ISLAND COLLECTION

DIGITAL LONG ISLAND

EAST HAMPTON STAR ARCHIVE



4th of July Parade, East Hampton, N.Y., 1916

Independence Day is a national holiday we observe to commemorate the adoption of the Declaration of Independence. We typically celebrate the 4th of July with barbecues, parties, fireworks, and other patriotic displays. In 1916, East Hampton honored the occasion with a parade, but with some solemn overtones. In 1914, World War I began with the United States practicing a policy of non-intervention. In 1915, however, a German U-boat torpedoed the RMS Lusitania off the southern coast of Ireland, killing 128 American passengers. In response to this, President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed "America is too proud to fight" and demanded that Germany cease its attacks on passenger ships, which it agreed to do. However, many wondered how long Germany would keep its promise. It's no surprise, therefore, that being prepared was a prevailing theme of East Hampton's 1916 Fourth of July Parade. The procession began at Hook Mill and descended south along Main Street, led by Parade Marshal E.J. Edwards, followed by a military band playing Hail, Columbia (an unofficial national anthem until the Star Spangled Banner was officially chosen in 1931). Onlookers then beheld the **Red Cross girls** carrying a wounded soldier in a stretcher. They were possibly an extension of the Amagansett Red Cross Relief float, which later appeared depicting a wounded soldier in a battlefield hospital being cared for by nurses. **George L. McAlpin's farm tractor** (seen in the bottom right of this 1915 image) was disguised as a heavily armored battleship with large gun barrels protruding out the sides. Mary P. Hamlin's float (see above) featured two Civil War veterans with a sign displayed above their heads asking "Has the blood we shed in '61 turned to water in 1916." Additional signs read "Abraham Lincoln was not 'too proud to fight'" (alluding to Woodrow Wilson), "You insure your house, business, and automobile

- why not insure your country" and "Prepare!" **Dr. O.M. Edwards' float** was an automobile that looked like it had been to hell and back, covered in mud and bullet holes with a tire torn off the front, which won first prize for most original float. While there were other floats and displays in the parade that were more traditional, featuring Betsy Ross, Paul Revere, George Washington, and so forth, it was clear that possible war wasn't far from everyone's mind. In 1917, Germany broke its promise and resumed unrestricted submarine warfare, sinking seven U.S. merchant ships in the process. This eventually led to the U.S. declaring war on Germany in April of 1917.

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 6,500+ item collection by collection name, year, title, or keyword search.

The Local Artist Research Archive is a collection of over 10,000 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 wedding 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.

Gina Piastuck, Department Head, Long Island Collection

gina@easthamptonlibrary.org | (631) 324-0222 ext. 4

www.easthamptonlibrary.org

