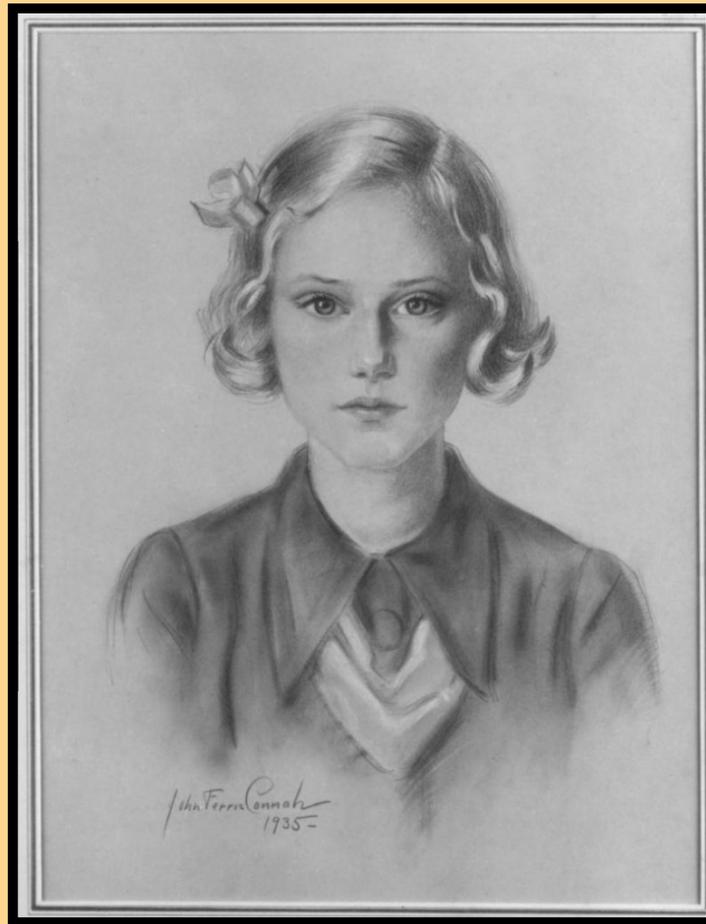




## Item of the Week *from the* Long Island Collection

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



### **Copy of a Portrait of Melissa E. Morgan**

The image above is a copy of an original pastel portrait of Melissa E. Morgan by John Ferris "Jack" Connah from 1935. For those who knew Ms. Morgan, she died last year at the age of 94. She lived on Maidstone Lane in East Hampton and was considered an active member of her community. From volunteering at Southampton Hospital to working in the East Hampton Ladies' Village Improvement Society thrift shop, she was also a member of the board of the East Hampton Library.

In view of her many accomplishments, Melissa Elizabeth Morgan was born on January 6th, 1923 in New York City to Thomas Earl Morgan and Catherine Gibson. Her father had a career in shirt design that spanned from 1908 to 1956, ultimately developing shirting and pajama fabrics for Dan River Mills in Danville, Virginia. Melissa attended the Hewitt School for Girls in New York and was most likely a student there when this portrait was completed when she was twelve years old. Her mother died two

years later in 1937.

According to the July 20th, 1935 edition of *The East Hampton Star*, an exhibition was held at Guild Hall featuring pastel portraits of children by John Ferris Connah. Though not specifically mentioned in the newspaper article, it's possible Melissa's portrait was included in the show, which featured the likenesses of Jacqueline and Lee Bouvier, among others.

Not much seems to be known about the portraitist, John Ferris Connah, though much is known about his father, Douglas John Connah. A landscape and portrait painter, as well as an illustrator, Douglas Connah taught at William Merritt Chase's Shinnecock Summer School of Art in Southampton, which was the first art school for open-air painting in the United States, from 1897-1900. He was also Director of the New York School of Art from 1897-1909, now known as Parsons The New School for Design.

## 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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