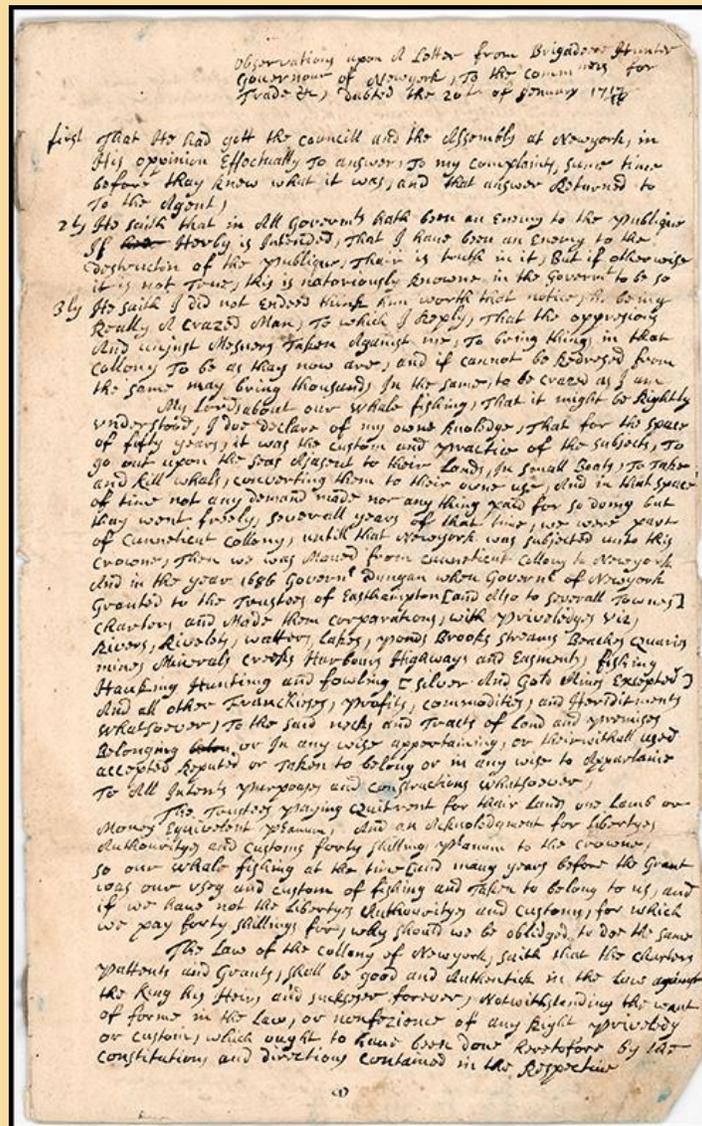




## Item of the Week from the Long Island Collection

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



### Samuel Mulford, Draft, Observations upon a letter from Governor Hunter to the Commons for Trade, 1717/1718

This manuscript is the draft of a response Samuel "Fish Hooks" Mulford (1644-1725) wrote in his ongoing fight with New York Governor, Brigadier Robert

Hunter, on January 20, 1717/1718. The use of the two years reflects the calendar change discussed in a previous Item of the Week.

Samuel Mulford was an early whaler, fisherman, militia captain, and a member of the New York General Assembly who objected to Governor Hunter's fishing licenses and 1711 whale-oil tax. Mulford fought with local authorities, refusing to pay the tax, and at the age of 70, traveled in 1716 to London to present his case to Parliament and the King.

His crafty effort to deter London's pickpockets by sewing fish hooks into his pockets during this trip provided the origins for his famous nickname. While the success of his MacGyvered fish hook security is frequently credited with getting Parliament to read his grievances, historians aren't sure that's how he got Parliament to hear his complaints. His argument proved persuasive, and within a year, the whale-oil tax and fishing licenses were repealed, much to the outrage of Governor Hunter. In 1717, Hunter sent a letter to the British government calling Mulford a "Crazed man" who didn't deserve attention.

In this draft, Mulford leans into Governor Hunter's "crazed man" description, arguing the "oppressions and unjust measures" of Governor Hunter may cause "thousands...to be as crazed as I am." Mulford then offers a brief history of whaling on Long Island, going back to the period when Connecticut still governed Long Island. Mulford's historical account describes "whal[e]s killed by Indians in my employ," who were probably Montauk or Shinnecock people. Mulford's account chronicles fifty years of the colonists practicing shore-based whaling expeditions, relying on small boats launched from the beaches near their properties. Mulford and Hunter continued their quarrel for the next several years, with Hunter expelling Mulford from the New York General Assembly twice, before Samuel Mulford retired from political life in 1720 at 75 years old.

## 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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