



## Item of the Week from the Long Island Collection

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

Hingham, 5<sup>th</sup> Decemr 1821 -

I must commence my letter with thanking Cousin Charlotte for noticing my good will in furnishing your Saturday's defect. As I find you lay me open to the criticism of so many, I must now mind my p's & q's, as the old folks used to tell us; but as you say you are favorably disposed towards me, you will not censure me too hardly for my errors & failings. at the same time I submit to your corrections. I have now to thank you for 2. letters of the 24<sup>th</sup> ult<sup>o</sup>, one of which inclosed our friends last letter, which I now return - Owing to snow storms & other things I have not regularly improved the late Mails; but the one that takes this to you will I think be accompanied by two others. What a budget, say you! And now my cunning Cousin, how much coaxing & trying to come Honey over me, as the Irishman says, are you making use of to make me spin out my letters to an unwarrantable length. But do not fear my weakness - Neither think I write you for love to other folks, (the they always had a great share of their own) but for regard to yourself - Our friend now sees more into the political character of your kind than he used to, & may possibly think the "Sovereign People" may need a little more restraint. They are indeed a many headed Monster - But I am surprized at the character you give your State. What class of men do you designate by the name of "Buck tails"? I thought this applied only to the Virginia Rabble - Is your Canal an Individual or State Speculation: By all accounts that we have, it is nearly completed. You must greatly benefit your State -

Adieu! Y<sup>r</sup> as ever C.S.

### Letter from Charles Storer to Henry P. Dering, 1821

Sag Harbor's postmaster, politician, and customs collector, Henry P. Dering,

carried on prolific correspondence with many of his relatives, including his cousin Charles Storer of Hingham, Massachusetts. The letter above from Storer to Dering, dated December 5, 1821, is from a period when the two men wrote each other once a week. Despite his weekly efforts, Storer realized that the mail service's delays and interruptions would eventually result in multiple weeks of letters arriving at once.

In these letters, Henry P. Dering and Charles Storer regularly discussed political news. As part of this, they shared letters from mutual friends about politics, a common practice before more reliable access to news. In his December 5th letter, Storer mentioned one of those letters, referencing the "Sovereign People" and the still new democracy, agreeing they "may need a little more restraint -- they are a many headed monster." Storer's letter captures the period's divisive and uncertain politics, which may feel familiar today. The phrase "Sovereign People" speaks to the radical experiment of democracy, and the doubts many Americans experienced as the Revolutionary War's founding generation passed on. At this time, the Constitution was barely thirty years old, and the Industrial Revolution's changes only added to the bitter divides and political rancor over issues like slavery and westward expansion.

Storer closed the letter after asking after "your Canal," meaning the Erie Canal, which was under construction at the time. The canal itself was part of the changes shaping the country at this point, and it would be key to industrialization, connecting western New York to the Eastern Seaboard. Storer reported hearing the project was almost finished and asked whether it was funded by "Individual or State Speculation," using a period term for investors. The Erie Canal would finally be completed in 1825, although portions began to open in 1819.

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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.

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**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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