

MILL NEWS & NOTES

FROM THE

Water Mill Museum

41 Old Mill Road, Water Mill, NY 11976

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Vol. 56

Spring 2026



Greetings from Our Director

We may have been closed for the winter, but all of us at the museum have been busy getting ready for opening day, Thursday, May 21st. Our first event of the season is the 34th Annual Members' Art Show. I hope you will be able to join us on Saturday, May 30th from 4-6pm for the opening reception. I am happy to report that Kathryn Odell-Hamilton is once again curating the show and as always, our board is looking forward to welcoming all of you back. This season the gallery will be hosting a series of art shows featuring the works of local artists. Please take note that some of our art receptions are being held at different times this year, so mark your calendars.

This year we are celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Annual Quilt Show and Sale which runs from August 13th-30th with extended museum hours. We are also planning a series of afternoon events suitable for all ages and we have two dates scheduled for programs designed specifically for kids.

Most of you know the museum underwent a major capital improvement over the winter and thanks to a water quality grant from the Town of Southampton and to all of our members who generously made donations, the restoration of the museum courtyard is almost complete. With disruption comes opportunity and this spring we will be busy replanting the gardens that were disturbed by the project and creating some new green spaces. Our outdoor area which has always been open to the public will be even more accessible for everyone and the new gardens will serve as an educational tool for our expanded school programming in conjunction with the Bridgehampton Museum.

The mission of the Water Mill Museum has always been to preserve the history and educate the public about our hamlet and the water-powered grist mill. I hope all of you will come visit us this season and enjoy everything we have to offer.

—Rachel Verno, *Director*

America 250

2026 marks the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution and the signing of the Declaration of Independence. All across the country museums are participating in various programs marking this historic event. Visit www.suffolk250.org for a full calendar of events throughout Suffolk County celebrating this important piece of history.

Suffolk County has also created a "Passport Book" that includes museums throughout the North and South Forks. Visit us this season to get your "Passport Book" stamped and explore our updated exhibit honoring Water Mill veterans and the War Memorial located on the hamlet green.



To honor the 250th anniversary of the founding of our nation, the members of the Water Mill Museum plan to enter a patriotic float in the Southampton Fourth of July parade.



The Suffolk County 250th "Passport Book" can be downloaded for free at www.suffolk250.org or purchased online at Barnes and Noble, Amazon and Hulu. The museum will also have a few copies for sale at our gift shop.



THE LONG ISLAND 250th ANNIVERSARY PASSPORT BOOK

Your Journey Through History Begins Here

Explore Long Island's Revolutionary past with the official Long Island 250 Passport Book. It's your guide to historic sites, reenactments, lectures, museums, and special events.

- Collect stamps at historic locations
- Take part in America's 250th anniversary programs
- Perfect for families, students and history lovers



Purchase the Book: A quality softcover printed edition now available for purchase. Visit www.suffolk250.org for the link.



Free Digital Download: Access the book on the Suffolk250.org website or mobile app and print it for free.



Produced by the Suffolk 250 Commemorative Planning Committee
Hon. Edward P. Romaine, Suffolk County Executive

Point your camera at the QR code to get the app.

2026 Season at the Water Mill Museum
May 21 – October 13, 2026

★★★★ MUSEUM HOURS ★★★★★

Open Thursday-Saturday 11:00 am – 4:00 pm

Sunday 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Closed Monday-Wednesday and July 4th

Water Mill Museum

41 Old Mill Rd, Water Mill, NY 11976

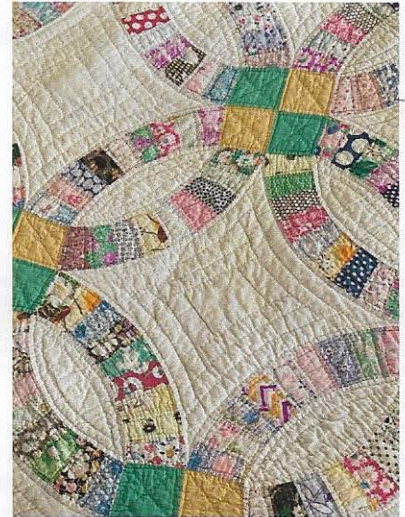
40th Annual Quilt Show & Sale August 13th – August 30th

Please join us in celebrating 40 years of hosting our Annual Quilt Show and Sale, August 13th - 30th. Offering extended hours: Daily 11 am–4 pm (Closed Wed.), Sunday open 1–4 pm. Admission donation is \$5.00

If anyone is interested in selling or entering pieces in the show, please contact us to get on our Quilt Show mailing list.

This year's raffle winner will receive a colorful antique Double Wedding Ring quilt. The raffle quilt is both hand sewn and hand quilted with a muslin back and dates to the early 1900s. Double wedding ring quilts have long symbolized love and unity. It is a challenging pattern that became popular in the 1920s, and continues to reflect the artistic skill and emotional significance of quilting. We hope you will help support the museum and take a chance to win this colorful quilt. Adding \$20 to your membership payment gets you 6 chances to win—tickets are in this mailing! The drawing will be held at our business meeting in October.

For more information, call Peggy Helstowski at 516-443-6692, Eileen Noonan at 516-848-7500, or the mill director, Rachel Verno, at the museum 631-726-4625.



Museum Calendar of Events 2026

Water Mill Museum's 34th Annual Members' Art Show Thursday, May 21 – Sunday, June 7, 2026 Reception: Saturday, May 30, from 4 to 6pm

Kathryn Odell-Hamilton is curating this year's exhibit featuring the work of Water Mill Museum members. Included are oil, acrylic and watercolor paintings, pastels, photography, mixed media and sculpture. The majority of the work will be for sale.

Good Ground Artists "Water Mill Museum & Good Ground Artists – Grist for the Body, Mind & Soul!!" Thursday, June 11 – Sunday, June 28, 2026 Reception: Saturday, June 13, from 2 to 4pm

Good Ground Artists is based in Hampton Bays but reaches artists throughout Suffolk County especially the North and South Forks. Lauded for the caliber of works presented, it is also appreciated for the eclectic selection of artwork—from traditional to avant-garde to surreal.

Christine D'Addario & Debbie B. Foglia "Brushed by the Sea" Thursday, July 2 – Sunday, July 19, 2026 Reception: Saturday, July 11, from 4 to 6pm

"Brushed by the Sea" brings together the fine artwork of Christine D'Addario and Debbie B. Foglia in a thoughtful exploration of Long Island's shores. Through expressive brushwork, subtle textures and a shared love of the coastline, their works capture the ever-changing moods of the ocean, bay and marshes. From quiet reflective moments to windswept energy, this exhibition invites viewers to linger, breathe and be gently carried by the rhythms of the East End.

EAST END PHOTOGRAPHERS GROUP "Through the Lens" Thursday, July 23 – Sunday, August 9, 2026 Reception: Saturday, July 25, from 4 to 6pm

The East End Photographers Group will present "Through the Lens," an exhibit of diverse photographic imagery, featuring traditional, digital and alternative photographic processes—carrying out its mission to promote photography and the visual arts in a community setting. The EEPG encourages photographic artists to exhibit new work at each show and provides support and a forum for new artists who are just beginning to exhibit their work and realize their personal vision.

THIRTY SQUARED "Summer Finale 2026" Thursday, September 3 – Sunday, September 13, 2026 Reception Sunday, September 6, from 4 to 6pm

The Thirty Squared painting group was formed in January of 2015 when artist Aubrey Grainger challenged her Facebook friends to paint 30 paintings in 30 days. The result was an exhibit featuring the fun, lively and free-spirited work of 18 artists. This year participating artists were asked to paint every day for 30 days, either doing a painting a day or working longer on more developed pieces. Along the way they encouraged one another with praise and constructive criticism. Come to this fabulous show and see what they achieved!

Deborah Acquino, Louise Peabody, Marilyn Stevenson & Susan Zises "Imagined Worlds" Thursday, September 17 – Sunday October 4, 2026 Reception: Saturday, September 26, from 4 to 6pm

Marilyn Stevenson is curating "Imagined Worlds." We all imagine our worlds very differently. Whether it is through environment, life experiences or cultural differences these four artists bring their "Imagined Worlds" to life. Each of their artistic expressions is a reflection of the worlds they have lived. Artists invited to exhibit are Deborah Acquino, Louise Peabody & Susan Zises.

Papermaking at the Mill

The weekly "Suffolk Gazette," printed in Sag Harbor from 1804 until 1811, had an interesting advertisement in its June 1, 1807 issue:

Wrapping Paper of a superior quality may be had of Mr. John Sowden, superintendent of the paper mill belonging to White & Hedges, near Southampton. Cash will be paid for clean Linen and Cotton rags.

What does papermaking have to do with grinding grain? Why was there a demand for wrapping paper in the early nineteenth century? And, if cotton and linen make the best paper, why was the mill not producing writing paper, which would sell for up to ten times the price of wrapping paper?

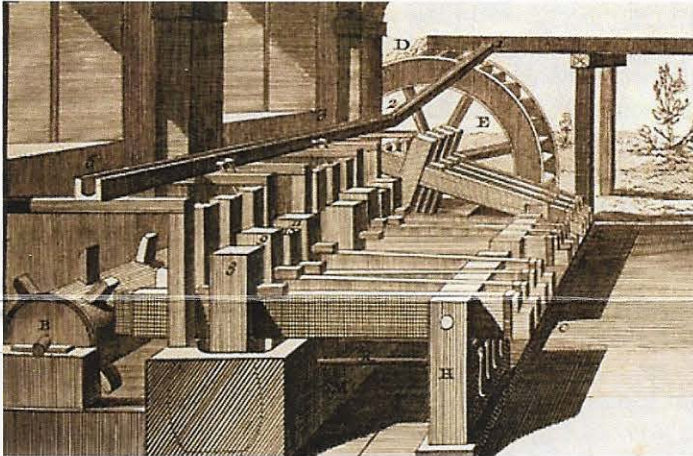
Early on, water power was exclusively used to run the cutting, macerating, and beating machines that turned rotted cloth into a pulpy slurry which, when poured onto fine screens and dried, became sheets of paper.

And before the advent of inexpensive glass, plastic, or cardboard, commercial items of all kinds were stored, sold, and shipped wrapped in paper.

Perhaps mill-owners John White and Jesse Hedges were planning to eventually offer a more refined product. But, until paper made from wood pulp was introduced in the mid-nineteenth century, it was difficult to produce a uniform creation from whatever color and quality of linen and cotton rags were available.

Incidentally, the almost three-inch thick cast iron block, measuring 27 by 40 inches, on which Mr. Sowden laid his fresh, wet sheets of paper be pressed and dried, is still at the mill today.

Come visit and learn how this industry, powered by falling water, was introduced here over two centuries ago.



Papermaking at a historic water mill

2026 Membership Dues

We depend on your dues and donations to keep the stones grinding and to help us share the rich history of our hamlet. Please use the enclosed envelope to rejoin or become a member for the first time. \$25 for individuals or \$30 for the family gets you a **10% discount** in the gift shop and free participation in the Members' Art Show—as well as the good feeling of helping to sponsor programs and exhibits benefitting the whole community.

Raids, Requisitions, and Hidden Livestock

Welcome to the British occupation of Long Island during the American Revolution! Numerous sources confirm that the British soldiers "requisitioned" livestock, grain, and other supplies for their troops. In practical terms, that didn't mean remuneration would follow. During the eight years of occupation, the soldiers repeatedly foraged and raided the farms. These acts forced farmers to avoid seizure by hiding their cows, horses, and sheep.

The geological features of Long Island formed by glaciers during the last Ice Age, more than 20,000 years ago, included many local kettle holes. These kettle holes, deep dells, swamps, and deep woods gave good natural cover for farmers to hide their animals in areas that were difficult to reach.



In *Memorials of Old Bridgehampton*, author Adams James Truslow wrote: "David Cook (1720-1814) enlisted May 3, 1780, at the age of 60 but was home the greater part of the time the Hessian troops were in occupation and was constantly robbed of his stock and farm produce. A little northwest of Mrs. Gardiner's house on the hill is a deep dell in the woods, known as Purgatory Hollow, and there, with others, he hid his cattle." The author goes on to say that Mr. Cook went to the hollow all winter to feed his animals.

This writing of Truslow's is the only verification, repeated in several publications, that I could find. I looked for documentation by reaching out to three local libraries, three local museums, and the Southampton Town Historian, all of which were eager to help but had little additional information to offer. Given that hiding livestock was known to be a common practice, and with so many natural hiding places available, could all the cattle have been hidden only in Purgatory Hollow? Or, were all these colonial farmers smart enough to hide their livestock in various places so that the British wouldn't find them? Penalties could be severe!

A nod to local folklore: All my life, I too have been told that during the American Revolution, local farmers hid some of their livestock in a kettle hole called Camp's Pond, not far from where Deerfield Road and Little Noyac Path meet today. Every spring, my mother took my sister and me for a hike through the woods to Camp's Pond, telling us this story. To add to the drama, she would leave the path to point out a lone lady's slipper, which we reverently took care not to touch, and wondered how our mother could find it every year in the middle of nowhere. History builds on itself, and I have a little add-on. (I'll bet you have your add-ons to history.) I was running around Camp's Pond, fell, broke my arm, and sported a cast for six weeks. A cast on a fifth grader, all your classmates signing it: huge! Make your own history today.

—Sandy Raynor

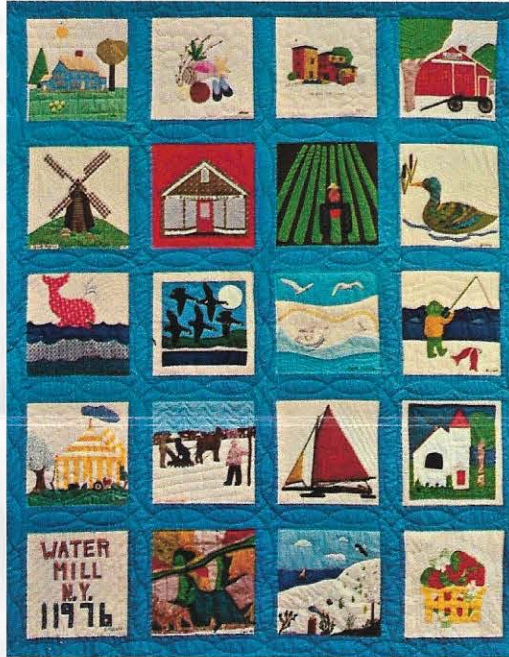
History of The Water Mill Museum Raffle Quilts

As we reflect on the 250th anniversary of our country's Declaration of Independence, we can embrace our history through many lenses. One of these lenses is the traditional craft of quilting.

Quilting has been traced back to ancient civilizations in North Africa, the Middle East, and China. It is thought that in the 12th century quilting was introduced to Europe during the Crusades.

In the 17th century, settlers brought this skill to America with them. Quilts served as warm bedding, and over time they became expressions of artistry for women as well as treasured heirlooms. Enslaved African Americans used their quilts for storytelling as well as warm bedding. The Lakota Sioux Native Americans became known for their Star Quilt, which became a symbol in their ceremonies.

The craft of quilting had a major resurgence in the 1970s as we approached the nation's 1976 Bicentennial. We ladies in Water Mill were no exception, and embraced quilting! At a meeting of the board of the Ladies Auxiliary of Water Mill, known today as the Water Mill Museum, the discussion turned to fund raising. The board members didn't want just any old fundraiser, but rather one that would keep the town's beloved



water mill churning and in good condition. They also wanted one that embraced what the water-powered mill was used for at one time: the manufacture of cloth. The board members decided to make a raffle quilt that featured 20 scenes—our water mill, windmill, and other local historic scenes, including one depicting our zip code, 11976. This Bicentennial raffle quilt hangs in the museum today.

The 20 quilt blocks were made by the following women: Doris Foster, Helen Jones, Mary Maran, Marge Burnett, Kay McKeever, Marilyn Burden (two blocks), Joyce McKay, Kathie McLaughlen, Debbie Rishel, Elizabeth Ann Forney, Donna Liehr, Barton McGuire, Sandy Raynor, Dot Halsey, Eleanor Ross, Irene Muller, Willie McKay, Marlene Haresign, and Martha Zukosky.

After the quilt was finished, a photographer from the local newspaper came to take our picture and write a story about our efforts. What happened then has irked me for 50 years. The photographer went around the room collecting the names of the quilters in this format: Mrs.

Husband's name and last name. When she came to me, I said Sandy Raynor. The photographer corrected, no dear, your formal name. I countered that my husband did NOT quilt my square, I did, and my name is Sandy Raynor. At this, heads moved at whiplash speed with looks of confusion. (In 1976, virtually all women mentioned in the newspaper were identified by their husbands' names, including obituaries listing a married woman. If the woman was lucky, her first name was listed later in the announcement. To be fair, the etiquette of that time was slowly changing, moving away from husband-centric conventions. At the time, I found myself unsettled, uncertain how to fit into this changing understanding of self.)

Funds earned from our first raffle quilt, the many succeeding ones, and our quilt shows have helped us to continue to preserve our 1644 water mill for future generations. We are so grateful for our many supporters.

Respectfully, The Ladies Auxiliary of Water Mill
(known today as the Water Mill Museum),
where ladies all have their own first names.

— ANNUAL MEETING —

The annual meeting of the Board of Directors of the Water Mill Museum, the Quilt Raffle Drawing and the election of Board Members for 2027 will be held on Tuesday, October 13th at 4PM at the museum. This meeting is open to the public.

A very special thank you

to all those who generously donated to our Fall appeal. Your support will help us to continue offering programs and to keep our Mill grinding.

Please scan and sign up to receive emails about our news and events.

We appreciate your support!
Thank you



Online at www.watermillmuseum.org
or find us on Facebook

Honorary Life Members

Marlene Haresign	Lucille Berrill Paulsen
Mary Maran	Muriel and Bill Petty
R. Timothy Maran	Gay Colina

To write us: Water Mill Museum
PO Box 63
Water Mill, NY 11976
To phone us: 631-726-4625

