



THE EAGLE

THE OFFICIAL WARD MELVILLE HERITAGE ORGANIZATION NEWSLETTER

SPRING EDITION: APRIL 2026

LET'S PARTY LIKE IT'S 1776!

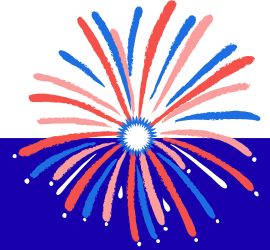
America 250: History at a Glance: The Brewster House (c. 1665)

As we at The Ward Melville Heritage Organization (WMHO) prepare for the 250th anniversary celebration of the country's founding, we reflect on how the stories we tell through our properties and programs are chapters in the ongoing narrative of our nation.

The sites entrusted to The Ward Melville Heritage Organization (WMHO) are a privilege to preserve, protect, and share with the public. Included in our care is the Brewster House (c. 1665), which is considered the oldest home in the Town of Brookhaven, as the core of it was built c. 1665. Now listed on the New York State and National Registers of Historic Places, approximately six generations of Brewsters as well as generations of indentured, enslaved, and free laborers lived on the property.

The Brewster House, originally granted to Reverend Nathaniel Brewster in the 17th century, played a meaningful role during the American Revolution through Nathaniel Brewster's great-grandson Joseph Brewster II, who farmed the land and ran an inn and tavern in the house like his father before him. While maintaining his public duties in local government during the early years of the war, Joseph was closely connected to the Culper Spy Ring—a covert Patriot intelligence network—through family ties, including his second cousin Caleb Brewster, an active member, and connections to Anna Smith Strong. As some family members served the Patriot cause on the sly, Joseph II remained active in the town government, serving from 1776–1780. In 1775, he attended a meeting of the Committee of Safety, a shadow government that functioned at the start of the war. And, Joseph II gave 500 pounds to the Continental Congress in 1780.

The WMHO is excited to announce the launch of a new, free audio experience at the Brewster House this month, offering visitors an engaging way to explore its rich history. This immersive experience can be easily downloaded to your phone, allowing you to listen and learn anytime, anywhere. The experience will be available at the end of this month.



IN THIS EDITION:

WMHO RECEIVES THREE EXCITING GRANTS

SAVE THE DATE- WMHO'S ANNUAL GALA

HISTORY COMES TO LIFE

UPCOMING EVENTS

SCENES FROM THE HISTORIC BREWSTER HOUSE (C.1665)



THE WMHO RECEIVES THREE EXCITING GRANTS THIS YEAR

ROBERT DAVID LION GARDINER FOUNDATION GRANT

The Ward Melville Heritage Organization (WMHO) has received a grant from the Robert David Lion Gardiner Foundation in support of community initiatives commemorating the 250th Anniversary of America. Through this grant, The WMHO will expand its efforts to preserve and interpret local history and deliver engaging programs at Stony Brook Village Center as well as its historic colonial properties: the Brewster House (c. 1665), Thompson House (c. 1709), Country House and Three Village Inn. This funding will help WMHO advance programming, educational activities, and public events that highlight the region's rich Revolutionary-era heritage while engaging residents and visitors in the national United States Semiquincentennial celebration.



OMNIBUS GRANT THROUGH LEGISLATOR STEVEN ENGLEBRIGHT GRANT

The WMHO is pleased to announce that it has received a Suffolk County Omnibus Grant through Suffolk County Economic Development and Planning, secured through the support of Legislator Steven Englebright, to help fund this year's Sunday Summer Concerts on the Green and Summer Saturday Pop-Up events. This will support a vibrant lineup of music, activities, and community programming designed to bring residents and visitors together throughout the season. These programs showcase local talent and foster community spirit. We look forward to welcoming everyone to these fun, family-friendly community events all summer long.

SUMMER CONCERT SCHEDULE:

July 5 "One Step Ahead"
 July 12 "The Band EASY Street"
 July 19 "The Precisions"
 July 26 "Radio Active"
 August 2 "The Rustlers"
 August 9 "Sweet Ride Long Island"
 August 16 "Just Sixties"

POP-UP SATURDAYS SCHEDULE:

July 11 "Magic of Amore"
 July 18 "Uncle Tony's Reptile Shack" and "ARF (Animal Rescue Fund of the Hamptons)"
 July 25 "Storytelling Princesses"
 August 1 "Sweetbriar Nature Center"
 August 8 "Poetry in Stony Brook"
 August 15 "Marty Macaluso - Caricature Artist"



JUMPSMART GRANT



The WMHO is proud to recognize the impact of the JumpSmart Grant, which will conclude this June after supporting several important preservation and environmental initiatives. Funding from the grant made possible the restoration work at the historic Stony Brook Grist Mill (c. 1751). The work included a new roof, critical structural engineering work to help guide ongoing stabilization efforts, and the installation of a new sluice box to improve the function of the mill's water wheel system. The grant also supported the removal of invasive phragmites along Stony Brook Creek, helping to restore the health of this important local waterway. Together, these projects represent meaningful progress in preserving the Mill and protecting the surrounding natural environment for the community to enjoy.

YOU'RE INVITED...

250TH ANNIVERSARY OF AMERICA GARDEN PARTY

The Ward Melville Heritage Organization (WMHO) will host its highly anticipated annual dinner, in celebration of America's 250th anniversary. Set against the backdrop of the Three Village Inn (c.1751) the event reflects the WMHO's enduring mission: to celebrate the past while investing in the future. The commemoration exemplifies the spirit of service, civic pride, and historical legacy that has long defined the organization's work.

This special evening will take place on Wednesday, June 24, 2026, at the historic Three Village Inn.

The gala will feature a cocktail hour, dinner, and both silent and live auctions, bringing together community members and supporters for a memorable evening in honor of our nation's history. Proceeds from the dinner will directly support restoration, preservation, and education programs at our environmental and historic properties.

This year's celebration carries added significance, as a portion of the net proceeds will be donated to the Ophthalmology Department at Stony Brook Medicine to directly support our communities' vision care needs.

This year, The WMHO is honored to recognize the following distinguished individuals for their contributions to the community:



Dr. Robert Honkanen
Chair of Ophthalmology
at Stony Brook Medicine



Ann Strong
Associate Real Estate Broker,
Daniel Gale Sotheby's
International Realty &
Relative of Anna Smith Strong
of the Culper Spy Ring



Linda Margolin, Esq.
Ackerman, Pachman,
Goldstein & Margolin, LLP



**Brian Barton, Community
Leader, and Former Owner,
TEB North Country Car Care**



The WMHO will also present a Certificate of Recognition to the Anna Smith Strong Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution for their exceptional and enduring contributions to preserving and promoting our shared history.

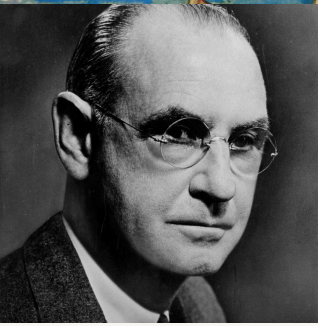
Scan to read more about our honorees and to purchase tickets or sponsorships on our website

We look forward to the possibility of sharing this memorable occasion with you. For more information on sponsorship opportunities, digital journal ads, and tickets please scan the QR code, visit: www.wmho.org, or call 631-751-2244. Checks can be made payable to the Ward Melville Heritage Organization, and can be sent to P.O. Box 572, Stony Brook, NY 11790.

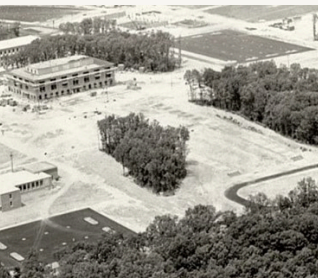
Your donation is tax-deductible to the full extent allowed by the law.



HISTORY COMES TO LIFE: MURAL COMMISSIONED BY WARD MELVILLE



**MELVILLE GAVE 600
ACRES TO BUILD
STONY BROOK
UNIVERSITY**



In the 1960s, Ward Melville personally commissioned renowned American muralist Allyn Cox to create a historical rendering for a 5.17 feet by 16.71 feet mosaic at Ward Melville High School that honored the community's Revolutionary War heritage. Cox, whose murals can be found in the United States Capital building, was no stranger to historic subject matter. For the project Cox depicted the clandestine work of Culper Spy Ring members Austin Roe and Caleb Brewster, who belonged to George Washington's espionage network that operated across Long Island.

Roe is shown delivering a secret message to Brewster along the shore, a scene that captures both the danger and the ingenuity of the Culper Spy Ring. Following this exchange, the message would be carried by whaleboat across the Long Island Sound as part of the operations of the Culper Spy Ring. The mural captures the urgency and secrecy of the spy network that helped supply the Continental Army with vital information.

By inviting an artist of Cox's stature to portray these local Revolutionary War patriots, Melville ensured that the region's pivotal role in the nation's fight for independence would be vividly preserved for future generations. Melville strongly believed in the value of education. He gave 600 acres to build Stony Brook University in the 1960s and donated \$20 million to build the Three Village School District's schools, including Main Street School; Mount School; Robert Cushman Murphy Junior High; Paul J. Gelinis Junior High; and, Ward Melville High School. Melville sought to ensure that the schools would reflect and preserve the region's deep historical roots.

NORTH SHORE PROMOTION ALLIANCE RECEIVES DISCOVER LONG ISLAND AWARD

In May 2017, the North Shore Promotion Alliance (NSPA) led the effort to install 26 signs for the Washington Spy Trail along 25A on Long Island. The signs highlight the Route 25A corridor, utilized by the Revolutionary War-era Culper Spy Ring to deliver messages to George Washington. Working for over two decades, The Ward Melville Heritage Organization (The WMHO) partnered with local officials, including NY State Senator John Flanagan and current Legislator and former Assemblyman Steve Englebright to bring the trail to life.

Today, managed by The WMHO, the NSPA continues to highlight the rich heritage of Long Island's North Shore (from Great Neck to Port Jeff) through initiatives like the Washington Spy Trail, which brings Revolutionary War history to life by connecting sites tied to the Culper Spy Ring and the intelligence network that helped secure American independence. Through collaborative storytelling with NSPA members, visitors are encouraged to explore historic places and landmarks across the region.

In recognition of these efforts, the NSPA was recently honored with an award from Discover Long Island, celebrating the partnership's success in promoting heritage tourism and strengthening awareness of the North Shore's unique historical assets.



**NSPA WINS
DISCOVER LONG
ISLAND'S CULTURAL
HERITAGE
SPOTLIGHT AWARD**

WMHO STEM PROGRAM EXPANDS ITS OUTREACH

Long Island Sound Connections (LISC), The Ward Melville Heritage Organization’s (WMHO) student STEM program unifies middle schoolers on Long Island and in Connecticut by studying both sides of the Long Island Sound. Sponsored by the Fullwood Foundation and Lowe’s Home Improvement, the program, which began in 2021, has expanded its outreach this year to include an additional school and more classes.

Through experimentation and exploration, students study the causation and impact of different factors on the Long Island Sound, its surrounding environs, and the people who live near it. Conducting research of their local Long Island Sound ecosystem, students compare variables including erosion, water quality, and species interaction. They brainstorm solutions for any issues these variables may contribute.

Students work cooperatively in groups during in-class sessions; visit local wetlands – including The WMHO’s 88-acre wetland preserve; exchange e-postcards detailing what they are learning; and finally, share their findings at a virtual summit. The summit attended by sponsors, donors, and educators who support LISC, this event is the culmination and recognition of the participants’ dedication and diligence.



SIXTH GRADERS AT ADAM J. LEWIS ACADEMY IN BRIDGEPORT PARTICIPATING IN LISC PROGRAM
PHOTO CREDIT: MILL RIVER WETLAND COMMITTEE, INC.

STONY BROOK RANKED #1 BEST PLACE TO LIVE IN SUFFOLK COUNTY FOR 2026

Stony Brook has much to celebrate in 2026. Recently ranked the #1 Best Place to Live in Suffolk County by Niche.com, the hamlet continues to stand out as a vibrant and welcoming community. This recognition reflects not only excellent schools, natural beauty, and a strong local economy, but also the enduring legacy of a visionary whose influence still shapes the area today: Ward Melville.

Stony Brook’s present-day success is deeply rooted in Melville’s transformative vision. A businessman, philanthropist, and community planner, he played a pivotal role in shaping the charming historic village residents enjoy today. As the founder of the Thom McAn shoe company, Melville could have focused solely on commerce, but instead embraced a broader philosophy that blended business, culture, and civic life.

Beginning in the 1930s, Melville acquired land in Stony Brook with a bold goal: to create a model American town that balanced economic vitality with respect for history. His most visible achievement is the Stony Brook Village Center, designed in a distinctive colonial style to foster a sense of identity and continuity. Rather than permitting unchecked development, Melville insisted on thoughtful planning, resulting in a unified and inviting space that remains a focal point of the community today. Melville’s dream was to create a “living Williamsburg.” He envisioned a colonial-style village that would breathe new life into the area.

Today, Melville’s legacy continues through the work of The WMHO, which maintains the village’s character and promotes community engagement through preservation and stewardship.





MORE UPCOMING ON THE HORIZON

DISCOVERY WETLANDS CRUISE RETURNS

All aboard! The Discovery Wetlands Cruise launches its 2026 season on May 16 and goes through October 11. Steered by an experienced captain and guided by a knowledgeable naturalist, this 90-minute outing explores the natural wonders, ecological heritage, and human history of The Ward Melville Heritage Organization (WMHO)'s 88-acre wetland preserve.

Reservations are \$45 for adults, \$30 for children ages 3 – 12, and free for children two years old or younger. Life jackets are required for children who weigh less than 90 pounds and/or are under the age of 12.

Discovery does not have life jackets available for children two years old or younger, so parents/guardians must provide their own. For more information, visit wmho.org.



LI250 HISTORIC WALKING TOUR OF STONY BROOK VILLAGE

Step back in time with the Ward Melville Heritage Organization for a guided walking tour exploring the early history of Stony Brook Village and its deep connections to the early history of our country. Discover the stories, landmarks, and legacy that shaped this historic community.

Tour Highlights Include:

Hercules Pavilion – Dive into Stony Brook's nautical past, from whaling and shipping to the secretive Culper Spy Ring, and learn about the deep connection Indigenous communities had to these waters.

Three Village Inn – Uncover how early settlers balanced farming, shipbuilding, and life along the shore.

The Jazz Loft – Discover the evolution of communal gathering spaces from the Old Stone Jug to Revolutionary times, and the complex stories of those who lived here.

The Stony Brook Firehouse – Learn about Ward Melville's vision and his passion for preserving colonial-style architecture in the Village.

Village Green (Waterfront) – Take in the view and reflect on centuries of connection to the water and how it all ties into the Village we know and love.

Thursday, May 28th.

Time: 3:30PM

Tickets: \$15 per person

To reserve your spot, please call 631-751-2244.

This location is an official stop in the Suffolk County 250th Passport Book.

Be sure to collect your stamp during the event.



The Ward Melville Heritage Organization is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation founded in 1939 by businessman and philanthropist Ward Melville.

The organization owns and manages properties deeded to it by Ward Melville and creates interdisciplinary educational and cultural experiences that integrate history, art, theater, music, science, and technology for all ages.

Inspired by his legacy to preserve historic and environmentally sensitive properties, the WMHO continues to protect and interpret Long Island treasures. This includes leasing space at a \$1.00 a year to like-minded organizations such as:

The Long Island Music and Entertainment Hall of Fame, The Jazz Loft, The Long Island Museum and The Three Village Lending Aids for the Sick.

The Ward Melville Heritage Organization Properties

- The Brewster House, c. 1665
- The Erwin J. Ernst Marine Conservation Center
- The Stony Brook Grist Mill, c. 1751
- The Thompson House, c. 1709
- The Hercules Pavilion
- T. Bayles Minuse Mill Pond Park (also known as Tranquility Park)
- The Discovery Pontoon Boat
- West Meadow Wetlands Preserve
- The Upper and Lower Pond
- The Jennie Melville Village Green

The Ward Melville Heritage Organization
 P.O. Box 572
 Stony Brook, NY 11790
 (631) 751-2244
www.wmho.org

DONATE TODAY

Name _____
 Address _____
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SPECIFY WHERE YOU'D LIKE YOUR DONATION TO GO:

- Youth Corps \$ _____
- Ernst Marine Conservation Center \$ _____
- General Donation \$ _____
- Stony Brook Grist Mill (c. 1751) \$ _____
- Thompson House (c. 1709) \$ _____
- Brewster House (c. 1665) \$ _____
- The Eagle \$ _____
- T. Bayles Minuse Park \$ _____
- Stony Brook Mill Pond \$ _____
- The Discovery Pontoon Boat \$ _____
- Education Programs \$ _____

Please make checks payable to:
 WMHO
 P.O. Box 572 - Stony Brook, NY 11790

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Accepted Credit Cards:
 American Express, Visa, Mastercard, Discover

The WMHO is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization. Your donation is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.