THE EAGLE

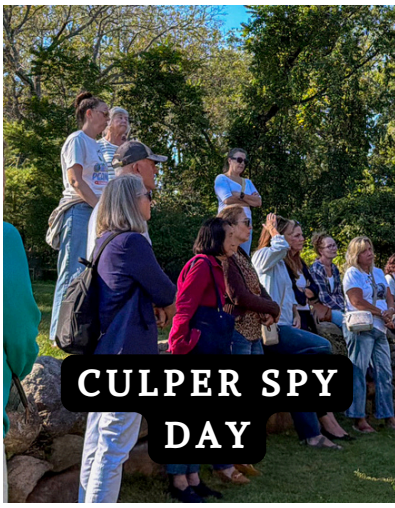
THE OFFICIAL WARD MELVILLE HERITAGE ORGANIZATION NEWSLETTER

FALL EDITION: NOVEMBER 2026









Tis the season for fall foliage, warm treats, and cozy events. At The Ward Melville Heritage Organization (The WMHO), we are hard at work in preparation for our holiday events as we reflect on the moments that have made the fall season so-far a success.

- **The 36th Annual Halloween Festival** hosted hundreds of families and enthusiastic trick-or-treaters, who enjoyed games, music, prizes, and plenty of candy. Winners of the **36th Annual Scarecrow Competition** were also announced.
- **"Hidden Beneath the Floorboards" walking tour** took guests on a adventure through time, exploring some spooky history of Stony Brook.
- On **Culper Spy Day**, hundreds of visitors went through the Brewster House (c. 1665) , learning about some of the earliest European settlers to the Three Village area, and their descendants' connections to the Culper Spy Ring.

And, all of our autumn events continued the momentum of this past spring and summer's successes.

- Stony Brook Village Center events, like **Pop-Up Saturdays and Summer Concert Sundays**, showcased an array of local talent and drew enthusiastic crowds.
- **Discovery Wetlands Cruises** took passengers on an idyllic journey through Stony Brook Harbor and The WMHO's 88-acre wetlands preserve where they learned about local wildlife and the history of the wetlands.
- Science education programs, including **Long Island Sound Connections (LISC) and Summer of Science (SoS)**, encouraged children through hands-on learning to understand and appreciate their environment.

Now, as the days get shorter, we hope you will continue to spend some time with us through our upcoming programs and events.

UNSUNG HEROES



Every day throughout Stony Brook Village, quiet volunteers take to the sidewalks with no fanfare and no expectation of recognition. As they walk, they pause to pick up litter, carrying away the small traces that can diminish the beauty of the place so many call home.

One of these dedicated individuals is Roger Armbruster, Ph.D., who has lived in his Stony Brook home for more than 40 years. Roger spends roughly three hours each week walking through the village and helping keep it clean. A retired occupational therapist and psychologist, he earned his Ph.D. in Florida, and spent portions of several summers working in Europe, before retiring in 1995. Originally from Corona, Queens, Roger is of Sicilian descent on his mother's side and recently published The Three Marias: A Sicilian Story. His love for Stony Brook is evident in every walk he takes. One of his favorite features of the village is the inscription found on Stony Brook's trash cans, a quote attributed to Abraham Lincoln, which Roger believes is the ideal message for any community to display: "I like to see a man proud of the place in which he lives. I like to see a man live so that his place will be proud of him." Roger embodies the spirit of stewardship and civic pride that helps make Stony Brook Village such a special place.



Mary and Joseph have lived in Stony Brook since 1994 and deeply love the village. Over the years, they have noticed that litter can be a problem, so they make a point of picking up trash whenever they see it. Lately, they have been happy to see more people helping keep the community clean as well.

Mary has long been active in the community. She and her friends have participated in the Walk for Beauty breast cancer awareness event in the past, and she is also a member of the Three Village Garden Club.

Mary and Joseph were married at the Three Village Inn in 1986 and have remained dedicated supporters of the community they call home. They hope their efforts inspire others to do the same.

All three of their efforts are part of a larger tradition of care shared by many residents who quietly look after the village each day. These walkers go out of their way to preserve the charm, character, and natural beauty that make Stony Brook so special. In every piece of litter collected and every path left cleaner than they found it, they demonstrate the truest form of community service and dedication. Their actions remind us that a strong community is built through small acts of kindness and responsibility, performed consistently and without expectation of recognition. Through their quiet commitment, they help ensure that the roads, sidewalks, and public spaces of Stony Brook remain welcoming and beautiful for generations to come. They are truly unsung heroes.

CELEBRATING AMERICA'S 250TH ANNIVERSARY

As part of America's 250th anniversary commemoration, The WMHO successfully presented a dynamic series of events made possible through the generous support of a grant from the R.D.L. Gardiner Foundation. These programs created unforgettable opportunities for the community to connect with the past. An elegant colonial fashion show at the Country House Restaurant and an exceptional colonial dinner at the Three Village Inn showcased the tastes and traditions that shaped early colonial America. Signature in-depth walking tours invited guests to explore local Revolutionary War stories, landmarks, and hidden histories through engaging experiences.

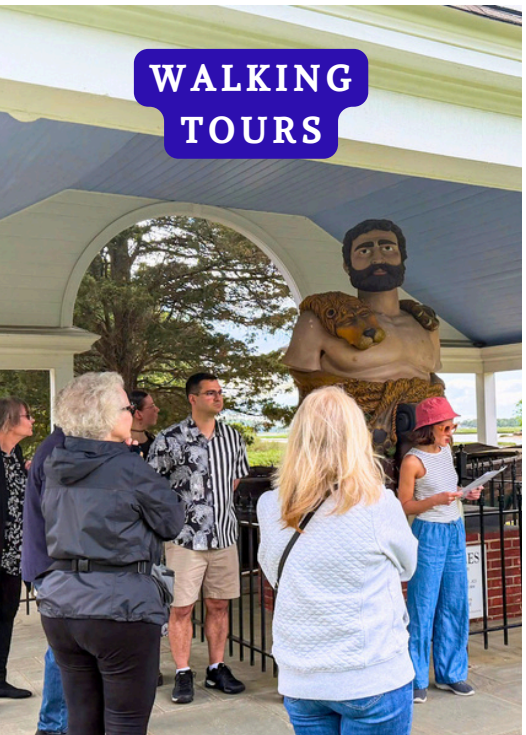
The WMHO also proudly participated in the Long Island History Hunt, a region-wide initiative that encouraged residents and visitors to discover and engage with historic sites across Long Island. Its Brewster House (c. 1665) was one of the featured locations and consistently ranked among the top-visited sites throughout the competition. The program attracted approximately 3,000 participants, demonstrating a remarkable level of public interest in local history and heritage while bringing new audiences to museums, historic houses, and cultural organizations across the region.



Thousands of guests visited the Brewster House and listened to the free audio experience as part of the LI History Hunt



Together, these anniversary celebrations reflected The WMHO's longstanding commitment to historic preservation, education, and community engagement, highlighting the organization's remarkable accomplishments in safeguarding our shared heritage while inspiring new generations to appreciate and celebrate America's rich history.





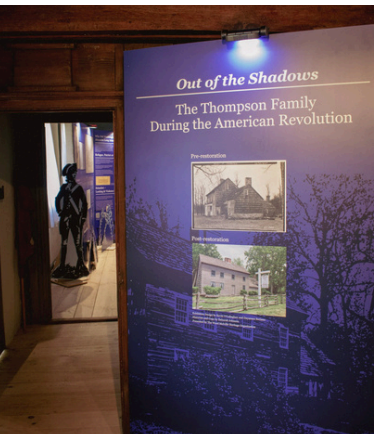


NEW THOMPSON HOUSE EXHIBIT

One of this year's standout highlights was the unveiling of Out of the Shadows at the Thompson House (c.1709) on July 11, 2026. More than 100 visitors explored the newly reinterpreted exhibition, which sheds fresh light on the Thompson family's experiences and contributions during the nation's founding era. The exhibit challenges a long-held belief that the family fled British-controlled Long Island during the Revolutionary War, **revealing that they instead remained in Setauket and endured seven years of British occupation.**

Drawing on newly uncovered American and British accounts, spy correspondence, and historical records, the exhibition brings to life the stories of Jonathan Thompson and Dr. Samuel Thompson, highlighting their roles in support of the American Revolution. The exhibit's successful debut reflects The WMHO's ongoing commitment to researching, preserving, and sharing with the community the rich history of the Three Village area.

The WMHO is pleased to share that its research into the history of the Thompson family is continuing. **This month, we plan to launch a new blog series on our website**, highlighting the lives and stories of the enslaved and indentured individuals connected to the Thompson House. Through this ongoing research, we hope to bring greater awareness to these important, often overlooked aspects of local history.





WMHO YOUTH CORPS – Kaya Zarcone and Emily Kral





L TO R: Kevin O'Callaghan, Designer and Dr. Richard Rugen, WMHO Chairman





PRESERVING HISTORY

The Ward Melville Heritage Organization (WMHO) has begun a flood mitigation project at the historic Thompson House (c.1709) to help protect the property from future flooding.

The project includes the construction of a protective berm around the exterior of the property. Contractor Excav Services is carrying out the work, which is expected to be completed the week of November 9th.

The Thompson House experienced flooding during a severe storm in August 2024, prompting these important preservation efforts to help safeguard the historic site for the future.

The WMHO anticipates reopening the Thompson House in the spring for private, reservation-only tours and field trips featuring its new exhibit. The organization looks forward continuing its commitment to preserving local history and protecting this historic property for future generations.

UPCOMING EVENTS ON THE HORIZON

BLACK FRIDAY FESTIVAL

Friday, November 27th from 1:30pm – 3:30pm

Kick off the holiday shopping season at Stony Brook Village Center's festive Black Friday event on Friday, November 27! Enjoy exclusive deals, family-friendly fun, and holiday entertainment across the village. From 1:30 to 3:30 pm, visit the Steppin' Out Ponies Petting Zoo near D.K. Brothers, and enjoy live performances by The Celestial Holiday Carolers. This event is **FREE** to the public.



47TH ANNUAL HOLIDAY TREE COMPETITION

Register to decorate a tree in Stony Brook Village by November 23rd. Beginning in early November, registration will be available on our website or in all Stony Brook Village shops. The winner will receive a $200 Stony Brook Village gift certificate. Contestants will decorate trees at their assigned on December 6th. The public will vote for its favorite tree by casting ballots, available in all Stony Brook Village shops, from Monday, December 7th – Sunday, December 20th.



47TH ANNUAL HOLIDAY FESTIVAL

Sunday, December 6th from 12pm – 5pm.

Tree lighting ceremony starting at 5pm.

Join us for photos with Santa, holiday carolers, a puppet procession with seven 14-foot pupperts, live performances throughout the day, a petting zoo, holiday trains at Wiggs Opticians and so much more! **Visit stonybrookvillage.com for a full schedule of events.**



VOLUNTEER WITH US!

Are you passionate about making a positive impact in our community? The Ward Melville Heritage Organization (WMHO) is seeking dedicated individuals who share our enthusiasm for preservation, education and community engagement.

Why Volunteer with The WMHO?

- **Make a positive impact:** Help us cultivate the next generation of citizen scientists, history makers and historians!
- **Build connections:** Meet like-minded individuals who share your interests and values.
- **Connect with your community roots:** Establish a deeper connection with the community, understanding its roots and the significance of historical landmarks and events.
- **Learn & Grow:** You'll be offered the opportunity to develop expertise in research, interpersonal skills, teaching, public history, and environmental conservation.

To express your interest or learn more about available opportunities, please call 631-751-2244 and speak with Tara and/or email educationmanager@wmho.org

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_____

City_____ State_____

Zip_____ Phone_____

Please make checks payable to:

WMHO

P.O. Box 572 - Stony Brook, NY 11790

Credit Card #_____

CVC_____ EXP_____

Billing Zip _____

Signature_____

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

SPECIFY WHERE YOU'D LIKE YOUR DONATION TO GO:

Youth Corps Programs $_____

Ernst Marine Conservation Center $_____

General Donation $_____

Stony Brook Grist Mill (c. 1751) $_____

Thompson House (c. 1709) $_____

Brewster House (c. 1665) $_____

Stony Brook Mill Pond $_____

The Discovery Pontoon Boat $_____

Education Programs $_____

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