

Early maps of Long Island depict a land before the suburbs

WSHU | By [Jane Montalto](#)

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Courtesy Of Half Hollow Hills Community Library /

“The Iconic Fish: Early Maps of Long Island” exhibit.

A Dix Hills library is highlighting Long Island’s history by using maps.

“The Iconic Fish: Early Maps of Long Island” opened earlier this month at the Half Hollow Hills Community Library, in collaboration with the Huntington Historical Society. The exhibit features over 30 maps, including atlas, souvenir and overall maps of the island. The maps are from the 17th through the 20th centuries.

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“The Iconic Fish: Early Maps of Long Island” exhibit.

“They’re just really beautiful,” said Emily Werner, the curator and collections manager at the Huntington Historical Society. “They’re really fun to get up close to and examine.”

The exhibit’s timing was done to coincide with nearby elementary schools that are currently teaching local history. The surrounding district has organized field trips so students can witness these maps in-person.

“I think people get landlocked very quickly,” said Helen Crosson, executive director of the Half Hollow Hills Community Library. “When you look at these maps, it becomes so incredibly clear, geographically.”

Toby Kissam is a volunteer and former trustee at the Huntington Historical Society. Kissam has a map collection and helped contribute to the exhibit, along with the historical society and member Bill Frohlich.

“They can view [the maps] as objects of art, but they also show the different roads that existed then,” Kissam said, highlighting the development of the Long Island Rail Road.

“It’s really surprising to see railroad tracks on Long Island in the early 1800s,” Crosson said. “I think it’s interesting to see the development of transportation and roads and mostly railroads on Long Island, and how that created what now we refer to as suburban sprawl.”

“The Iconic Fish: Early Maps of Long Island” – a nod to the island’s shape – is on display at the Half Hollow Hills Community Library until the end of March.

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