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### NORTHEAST REGION

## "America's Cradle" Begins With William Floyd

[\[Printer-friendly text version\]](#)

The Northeast Region gained an incredible friend when Weir Farm National Historic Site (WEFA) selected photographer Xiomaro (or Xio for short, pronounced *SEE-oh*) as their 2011 artist-in-residence. Since then Xio's portfolio has grown to include images captured at Sagamore Hill National Historic Site (SAHL) and Fire Island National Seashore (FIS) as well. Although the three sites might not share similar chronologies, Xio points out unique ties that tell a larger regional story through his 28-photo exhibit at the Northeast Regional Office entitled [America's Cradle- Historic Houses of the Northeast](#), which marks the country's rise from a colony to a nascent republic.

While at WEFA, Xio photographed artist Julian Alden Weir's home and studio as well as Mahonri Young's sculpture studio. This project led Xio to photograph Theodore Roosevelt's summer home at SAHL, when it was being emptied of its 14,000 artifacts in preparation for a 7.2 million dollar rehabilitation.

More recently, Xio visited the Northeast Regional Office (NERO) in Philadelphia to present to NERO staff examples from his latest regional project, which was at FIS in New York, photographing William Floyd's Old Mastic House on the south shore of Long Island. William Floyd was involved in the American Revolution and was also a signer of the Declaration of Independence. William Floyd's descendants inhabited the Old Mastic House until the 1970s, which is reflected in the house in some unique ways. "There's a family growth chart in the hallway with names, dates and heights marked off representing the transition from childhood to adulthood," Xio remembered warmly. "To me, the chart also represents the span of history when America transitioned from an agrarian society to an industrialized one – and the house changed from a full-time plantation to a summertime retreat."

For example, when William Floyd was fighting the American Revolution so, too, was Nicholas Roosevelt, a distant relative of Theodore Roosevelt (TR). TR's brother, Elliot, was a friend of Julian Alden Weir and served as an usher at Weir's wedding. Xio echoed their connections by saying, "So Floyd helped found the nation while Roosevelt and Weir helped transform it into a political and cultural power, respectively."

Eighteen photographs of the Old Mastic House are on exhibit at Fraunces Tavern Museum in Manhattan entitled [Williams Floyd's Houses of Revolution](#). Xio arranged the first half of the exhibit to express an intimate sense of William Floyd as a living, breathing person that, in some ways, is not too different from any of us. "Close-ups of his snuff box and traveling liquor chest help recast Floyd and the other Founding Fathers in a more human, earthbound context in contrast to the idealized heroic poses seen in historical paintings," Xio elaborated. The photographs in the second half of the exhibit were chosen to present Old Mastic House as a microcosm of the nation. Not only did the house stand through periods of war and peace, but it also expanded, changed, and improved in tandem with the new country.

Xio commented on one photo in particular saying, "My favorite is the close-up of Floyd's signature from inside a book, which I think represents the project as a whole. There's nothing more personal than his signature, which also appears on this country's most important document – the Declaration of Independence." A free 60-page eBook with 18 photographs and bonus content can be downloaded at Xio's website: <http://www.xiomaro.com/>

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