

A Mysterious Founding Father Comes Into Focus at the Long Island Museum

Selections from Xiomaro's photographs of the William Floyd Estate are on view until October 18, 2026

The Seat of Action exhibition at the Long Island Museum features photographs of the William Floyd Estate that invite visitors to a more personal connection with the mysterious Founding Father. As the only Long Island signer of the Declaration of Independence, little is known about this central historical figure whose home was ransacked by the British. Several large photographs created by the artist, Xiomaro, for the National Park Service are on view until October 18, 2026, alongside nearly 80 artifacts and images that celebrate the nation's 250th anniversary and tell the story of Long Island in the American Revolution and beyond.

Up Close and Personal

The photographs show William Floyd's few remaining possessions, including items rarely seen in public. One photograph offers a close-up view of his ceremonial sword. Another shows Floyd's writing desk, familiar to estate visitors, though keen observers will notice an arrangement of objects not included in the usual tour. "At my request, Floyd's snuff box, wine bottle, ink wells, and books were brought out of the archives," explained Xiomaro, a long-time Long Island resident. "In a sense, the photographs of these items — together with Floyd's workplace, home, and the surrounding landscape — help resurrect his spirit. It makes this mysterious General, who served under George Washington, come alive."

The Seat of Action

The exhibition spotlights Long Island's endurance of the British occupation and martial law from 1776 to 1783, a period longer than that experienced by any other region of the colonies. Destruction, property confiscation, and hardship affected many local families, including the Floyd household, which fled to Connecticut. In the war's aftermath, Floyd returned to a ransacked estate, which he restored and later welcomed figures such as Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. The region itself also began a difficult reconstruction that helped spur more democratic politics and set the stage for the eventual end of slavery on Long Island and throughout New York State.

Xiomaro: From Cancer to Creativity

After overcoming cancer, Xiomaro left a career as a lawyer to become a photographer and author. In addition to the William Floyd Estate, the National Park Service commissioned him to create collections of its two other iconic Long Island sites — Fire Island National Seashore and Sagamore Hill, the home and summer White House of President Theodore Roosevelt.

The Seat of Action: Long Island in the American Revolution and Beyond is on view now until October 18, 2026 at the Long Island Museum (a Smithsonian Affiliate), 1200 NY-25A, Stony Brook. A free 60-page eBook about William Floyd from a previous exhibition is available at www.xiomaro.com