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## Fire Island National Seashore News Release

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### **New Exhibit at William Floyd Estate** *Scribblers and Scriveners: Floyd Family Authors*

Patchogue, NY – Fire Island National Seashore today announced the opening of a new temporary exhibit at its historic William Floyd Estate, located in the hamlet of Mastic Beach on Long Island. Superintendent Michael T. Reynolds invites you to the Estate to enjoy this summer’s special exhibit featuring the writings, drawings, notes, scribbles, and manuscripts of the Floyds who became authors. Throughout the 25-room furnished house, visitors will be treated to a variety of materials and information about the land, and the family, through the pens and pencils of the people who lived at the Estate. More than 250 objects are on display as a part of the exhibit.

The Floyd Family lived in the “Old House” at Mastic for more than 250 years. They were surrounded by pathless pine forests, clear cool springs and streams, sunlit beach hills and the ever present sea. Growing up in this beautiful area inspired many of them to write of their times at Mastic and feelings about themselves and their experiences here.

The Old House and the Estate grounds will be open to the public from May 27 through October 29, 2006 on Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays and holiday Mondays from 11:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Visitors are provided free guided tours of the main house and are encouraged to use a free pamphlet for the self-guided tour of the 11 outbuildings and family cemetery. Although the Estate is best known as the ancestral home of General William Floyd, Suffolk County’s only signer of the *Declaration of Independence*, it provides visitors an in-depth view of more than 250 years of family living.

For additional information on the [Estate](#) and the programs available, please call 631-399-2030.

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## Scribblers and Scriveners

### Floyd Family Authors

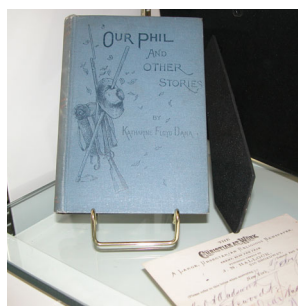
*Kit, Fan, Tot and all the Rest of Them, Sunny Memories of Mastic, If Mountains Die, The Journey of Mrs. Delafield and Her Snail, Letters to My Great-Great Granddaughter and Fiddlin' Freddie.* These book titles all have one common thread. The books were authored by members of the Floyd family and are the central theme of the William Floyd Estate's new exhibit. Family members produced a variety of materials from plays to published tracts to sketches and works of art. More than 250 of these items illustrate the family's love of the written word.

Surrounded by the great Pine woods, bordered by pristine springs and creeks, and bathed by the scents, sounds and scenes of the mighty Atlantic Ocean, the Floyds were writers, sketchers, authors, authoress, artists, dreamers and naturalists. Bounded by such natural beauty their writings again and again refer to the land, their love for, and how "Old Mastic" was a major part of their lives. The land at Old Mastic nurtured them, gave them inspirations, and lives today through their pens and pencils, books and manuscripts.



The Floyds were avid readers. The collection of books that the family left to the National Park Service numbers more than 3,000 volumes. They loved poetry and prose, history and geography, comedies and tragedies, geography and geology, and every other subject imaginable. When not playing outside, or riding horses, or picking wildflowers, the children read books, or were read to by mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers and a host of friends and family. Books were the gift of choice for birthdays and holidays and many of the volumes are inscribed with notes to a niece from an aunt or signed by the family author. Reading opened up their minds to the world around them, and in turn, their writings and artwork reveal to the world an intimate view of life at Old Mastic.

Book making was a favorite pastime of many of the children, beginning with scrapbooks of their favorite subjects.



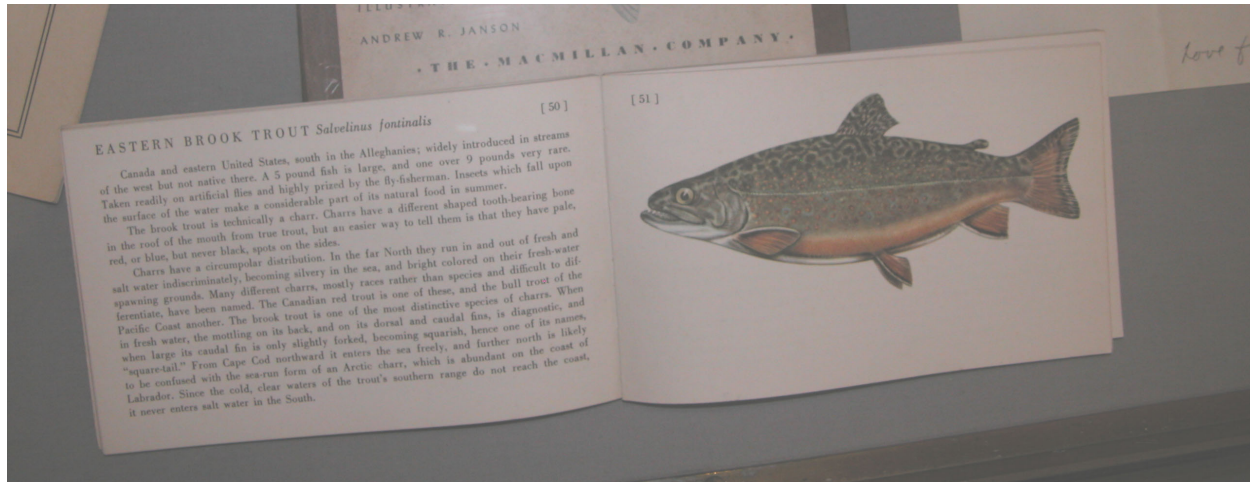
Among the many writers featured is Katherine Floyd Dana (1835-1886) who published her works under the pseudonyms of "Olive A. Wadworth" and "O.A.W." The choice of the pen name is described in a hand-written inscription that states "O.A.W." stood for "Only A Woman."

(more)

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John Treadwell Nichols (1883 – 1958) was world renowned for the works he published on topics ranging from ornithology, ichthyology, and herpetology. He was considered a leading scientist in those fields. He wrote hundreds of natural history articles, and was published in every major scientific journal of his time. He was also an artist and a poet. He was among the best naturalist-scientists in this country, and much of his writings were done at the William Floyd Estate.



Perhaps the best known of family authors is Nichols' grandson, John T. Nichols, II, now living in New Mexico. Two of his best selling novels, *The Sterile Cuckoo* and *The Milagro Beanfield War*, have been made into movies. However, as he writes in "If Mountains Die:"

"For that estate was the most dominating connection with nature I ever had. It also represented a continuity of generations—my real and tangible roots. I carried the sensation of belonging to a family, a race, and to history that it gave me wherever I went..."

The Floyd family authors whose works are on display in the house span the centuries from approximately 1822 to 1976. They are also among the most prolific of the family's writers.

Visit the [William Floyd Estate](#) this summer from May 27 through October 29, 2006 on Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays and holiday Mondays from 11:00am to 4:30pm for one glimpse of those past days here at Old Mastic and then imagine the great Pine woods, the cool, clear streams and the sailing ships of yore!

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