



Robert Hawkins House
P.O. Box 111
Yaphank, NY 11980-0111
www.yaphankhistorical.org

631-924-4803 -Swezey-Avey House
 Main Office

Meetings: Third Thursday of the
 Month; 7:30pm, Swezey-Avey House.

Newsletter Editor: Peggy Judd

Inside this issue:

A Winter Walk	... 1
President's Message	... 2
Viva Miss Booth	...3
Editor's Notes	... 4
RCA at Rocky Point	... 5
Upcoming Events	...6

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YAPHANK HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Historic Yaphank - Where the Past Greet's the Present

JANUARY, FEBRUARY, MARCH 2021

Society Receives Robert David Lion Gardiner Grant

The Yaphank Historical Society is pleased to announce the receipt of a COVID Relief grant of \$1627.34 from the **Robert David Lion Gardiner Foundation** which helped the Society survive during the COVID-19 pandemic. With annual fundraising activities shut down such as our twice-yearly Victorian teas, seasonal yard sales, and popular Christmas house tours, the Society faced a bleak year depending only on membership dues. Since we also needed to keep our gift shop at the Robert Hawkins House closed, this donation has helped the Society meet general operating costs such as paying utilities and purchasing cleaning supplies to ready our houses to reopen. The Society is grateful to the RDLG Foundation for its continued generosity to Long Island's local historical societies and looks forward to resuming educational programming and exhibits in our four buildings in the Yaphank Historic District in 2021.

A Winter Walk ---- Carmans River Nature Trail

Escape the house and still stay safe by taking a nice winter walk along the Carmans River Nature Trail, maintained by the Yaphank Historical Society. The trail head is located behind the newly-restored Homan-Gerard House located on Yaphank Avenue, across the road from the Hawkins House. The trail meanders through the woods, passing several historic sites of interest, ending back at your starting point. It takes about 30 minutes to walk the complete trail. Of especial interest along the trail is Weeks Pond, once called Cranberry



Weeks Cranberry Bog circa 1880

Lake. The pond was a commercially successful cranberry bog maintained by William Jones Weeks back in the mid-1800s. You will also pass the remaining stone foundation pit of the Octagon House built by William Jones Weeks in 1848. The trail continues past St. Andrews Episcopal Church, built in 1853, and the Mary Louise Booth House, circa 1829. So, pack a thermos of hot chocolate or a bottle of water and a sandwich, and after your walk stay for lunch at one of the picnic tables located at the beginning of the trail. There is adequate parking and a trail map should be available at the kiosk. Or you can download a copy of the map from our website.

Letter From The President

Welcome to 2021. I hope this letter finds you all well. It seems like we have a way to go before we get back to normal, whatever the new normal will be. Our historic houses remain closed until we deem it is safe to open them. We hope to be doing some virtual meetings this year and we will keep you up to date as we go along setting them up.

Our Librarian, Peggy Judd, and Board Trustee, Kitty Daniels, have been busy in our library. They have been working on creating a searchable library database for our Library Collections and Kitty has also been working with our Curator, Helen Kalbach, on creating a similar Society Collections database of our many artifacts and items of furniture.

Carpentry and repair work on our houses is continuing. We are installing weather stripping on the Homan House. We are also repairing all the original locks on the building and installing window locks. We are also rebuilding the front porch of the Hawkins House. There was considerable rot and we have a lot of repairs to do. Some of the trim and the moldings, as well as the balustrades, must be custom made to replicate the original. We also need to clean, repair, and paint all the fences in the Historic District this year.

The Yaphank Historical Society has some long-range plans for our district; we want to restore the portico on the front of the Homan House and restore the storage shed at the rear of the Homan House. This shed is dated early 1800s. We would like to do an archaeological study around the building when funds become available.

There are two historic structures that the Society would like to acquire: 1) the old Post Office building for the long term storage of our ever-growing archival collections. This building is a masonry structure and was built in 1948 and would be perfect for our storage needs; and 2) the Grey Cottage that is next to the Homan House. We would use this house as a welcome center and a gift shop. The acquisition of the Grey Cottage and the old Post Office building, along with the Hawkins House, Homan House, Booth House, the old Garage, and our Nature Trail, would make a wonderful walking historic district.

Special thanks: I would like to thank our 3rd district Legislator **Rudy Sunderman** and his office staff for all their help in achieving our goals.

I would like to thank the **Suffolk County Sherriff's Vocational Training Program** and all of the Correction Officers and inmates in the program who have helped us with our many projects.

I would also, once again, thank **the Gardiner Foundation**, the **Pomeroy Foundation**, and the **Preservation League of New York** for stepping up and helping us in this time of need.

If you are not a member of the Yaphank Historical Society, I urge you to become a member and help us to preserve the beauty and charm that is Yaphank.

Robert Kessler

Welcome New Members

- Wayne Fellows, Yaphank, NY

Funds for this newsletter
were provided by
the Suffolk County Legislature,
Rudy A. Sunderman,
3rd Legislative District. Thank You !

A Successful Paris Exhibit—Viva Miss Booth

The *Musée des Arts Décoratifs*, (Museum of Decorative Arts) located in Paris hosted a special exhibit, *The History of Harper's Bazaar Magazine*. This Paris exhibit was the first of its kind devoted to a style magazine, not limited to just the photographs therein, but taking into account the impact of graphic design, the role of the women and men who created the concept of projecting style, and the ideas of fashion. Our own Mary Louise Booth, editor-in-chief of the first issue of *Harper's Bazaar* magazine, (1867) was one of these women of influence—on style, society, art and literature. Tricia Foley, Historical Society Trustee and author of *Mary L. Booth: The Story of an Extraordinary 19th-Century Woman*, was asked to send materials for the exhibit. Many of the materials she sent are part of the Society archives. (See full article regarding this exhibit in the January, February, March 2020, issue of the Yaphank Historical Society Newsletter.)

The exhibit was originally scheduled to run from February through July, 2020. Tricia traveled to Paris and enjoyed a private tour of the exhibition conducted by Exhibit Curator, Eric Pujalet-Plaa, prior to the official opening. As a result of the carefully curated collection of archival materials sent by Tricia to Paris, Mary L. Booth was prominently recognized for her important intellectual role of the time. The letter below is from the Director of the Museum, Olivier Gabet, thanking Tricia.

*“Dear Madam,
The exhibition: Harper's Bazaar: first in fashion, for which you have generously lent us pieces from your collection, is now open at the Museum in Paris until July 14th, 2020. I want to thank you again for your contribution to the success of the project and send you one copy of the exhibition catalogue.
Olivier Gabet”*

Of course, the global COVID-19 pandemic impacted Paris just like it did the rest of the world and caused a variety of rescheduling activities. Shortly after the exhibit opened, the Museum was closed as a safety measure; it reopened again in June, 2020. Both the Director of the Museum, Olivier Gabet, and the Assistant Director, Anais David, kept in contact with Tricia, informing her of scheduling issues, ensuring the good care of her collection, and sending status reports on how things were going. An October 29, 2020, letter from Director Gabet contained news that once again the Museum would need

to close. However, the letter (translated and edited from the French) stated

“since the happy reopening of the Exhibit in June, we have experienced a steady increase in the audience and in a younger and more varied audience. I want to reassure you that the museum is implementing the protection of the collection that you have had the generosity to loan us for our Harper's Bazaar Exhibition.”

The Museum recently ended the exhibit and is returning the Mary Louise Booth materials that were on loan to them. Recently, Tricia received a letter from the Assistant Director, Anais David. Along with specific shipping details, here are several quotes from that letter

*“Dear Tricia,
I hope you are well and wish you all the best for the new year. We have started to de-install the Harper's Bazaar exhibition and your loans are packed, ready for shipment. Thank you so much for your precious help! **Viva Miss Booth!**
Best regards, Anais”*



Trish Foley with Exhibit Curator Éric Pujalet-Plaà

A Successful Paris Exhibit—Viva Miss Booth (continued)



Musée des Arts Décoratifs
107, rue de Rivoli 75001 Paris



The height of fashion at the time.



Harper's Bazar 1867 first cover displayed behind a period gown.

Matthew Brady

Photo-carte de Mary Louise Booth

Vers 1860
Tirage argentique
Yaphank, Mary L. Booth Museum, Yaphank
Historical Society

Établi à New York, Mathew Brady est le portraitiste d'Abraham Lincoln et il est aussi photographe de batailles lors de la guerre de Sécession. Il représente Mary Louise Booth dans les années 1860 vraisemblablement au moment où elle est engagée au service de l'Union auprès de la Loyal Publication Society. La jeune journaliste, traductrice et historienne n'est pas encore impliquée dans la mode qu'elle aborde seulement avec *Harper's Bazar* en 1867.

New York-based photographer Matthew Brady is best known for his portraits of Abraham Lincoln and his documentation of the American Civil War. He took this photo of Mary Louise Booth in the 1860s, probably when she joined the Loyal Publication Society to support the Union cause. The young journalist, translator and historian was not yet involved in fashion, which she only tackled with *Harper's Bazaar* in 1867.



Matthew Brady took this photo of Mary Louise Booth in the 1860s, before she went on to *Harper's Bazar*.

Notes from the Editor: Zoom Meetings: The Society is planning on hosting Zoom meetings featuring guest speakers to take the place of our usual in-person monthly General Meetings. We have two guest speakers scheduled for March and April (see Upcoming Events on Page 6.). For each Zoom meeting, a Link, an ID number, and a passcode will be emailed to our members with active email addresses prior to the meeting. Others who wish to attend, please send an email request to webmaster@yaphankhistorical.org. Put "Zoom Meeting" in the subject line. In your message, please include your name, current active email address, and the name of the program you want to attend. We will then email the necessary linking information to you prior to the meeting.

Technology Update: Our newly-installed WiFi has been checked out and once we can resume in-person meetings, we look forward to the ability to easily connect to the internet for our members, guests, and guest speakers when visiting the Swezey House. General Meeting programs can be more informative and interesting for our attendees and our speakers will definitely welcome WiFi capability. Work continues on creating a searchable library database. Our extensive Library Collection of general interest books, reference books, historically pertinent books, and Yaphank/Suffolk County specific publications, will be searchable by author, title, subject, and publication date.

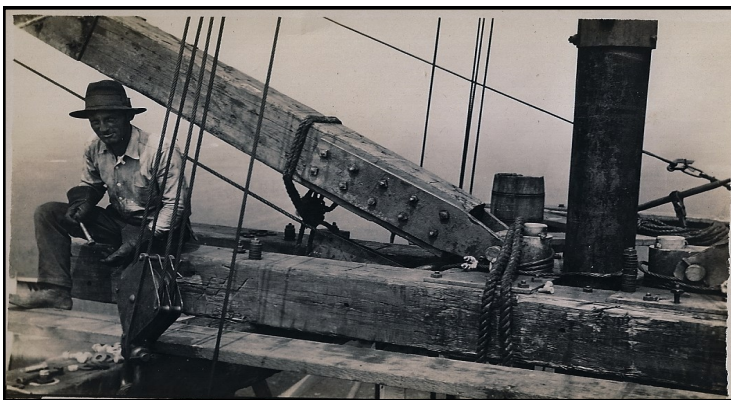
RCA at Rocky Point

by Karen Mouzakes

United States Government Regulations in 1917 & 1918 decreed that all the field of radio communication must be in the hands of U.S. owned corporations. Radio Central America was formed in 1919 as a subsidiary of General Electric. General Electric took over American Marconi and immediately began building a transmitting station at Rocky Point. The 6,400 acre site for this construction ran on both sides of Marconi Blvd. (later renamed Rocky Point Road) from Whiskey Road almost to Route 25A. Science of that period used long waves for communication. Two 200-kilowatt high frequency Alexanderson Alternators were installed. Using long wave frequency required the construction of tall 410 ft. steel towers with cross arms 150 ft. long. Twelve such towers were built 1,260 feet apart and stretched over a two-mile area. All the transmission was done through New York City at 64 Broad Street. Rocky Point was the master transmitter and the receiving station was a small building in Riverhead.

This system made trans-Atlantic communication possible. Radio Central America (RCA) became the largest and most powerful transmitting station in the world. By the early 1950's short wave and more sophisticated radio technology made the "Sentinels of World Wide Wireless," as the towers were known, obsolete. Six of the towers were demolished in 1952, five more in 1961. The last 450 ft. tower was felled in December of 1977 and sold for scrap.

In 1978 the Rocky Point Property along with 2,000 acres in Riverhead were sold as a tax write-off to New York State for one dollar. All of the property is now in the care of the Department of Conservation.



Cribbing on top of the tower

Attaching blocks to tower

Note: In the early 1980's the Farigno family donated a stack of one hundred and one photographs to the Yaphank Historical Society. The photographs had been the property of a Mr. Hammond who had worked constructing the steel towers in 1920 & 1921. Some were personal photos with explanations of work he did on the towers. Others were official RCA photographs of the construction of buildings and towers taken by A.S Green of Port Jefferson. The photos captured my imagination and caused me to research the story behind them. All of the photographs have been digitized and are available for viewing at the Yaphank Historical Society.

YAPHANK HISTORICAL SOCIETY
MARCH, APRIL, MAY 2021 UPCOMING EVENTS

Special Notice: In order to protect the health and well-being of our members, guests, and visitors, and to help mitigate the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19), the Society will evaluate each event as we move into the 2021 calendar. At this time, all of our historic houses remain closed to the public. Please check our website, www.yaphankhistorical.org, for ongoing current information. We hope to be able to once again host in-person events, but in the meantime, we plan to host several Zoom meetings to keep in touch with our membership. Each Zoom meeting Link, ID number, and passcode will be emailed to our members with active email addresses prior to the meeting. Others who wish to attend, please send an email request to webmaster@yaphankhistorical.org. Put “Zoom Meeting” in the subject line. In your message, please include your name, current active email address, and the name of the program you want to attend. We will then email the necessary linking information to you prior to the meeting.

March General Meeting

Zoom meeting: Meeting Link, ID number, and passcode will be emailed to our members prior to the meeting. Non-members are also welcome; see registration information above.

Thursday, March 18, 7:30pm,

Guest speaker will be **Antonia Petrash**, President of the Long Island Woman Suffrage Association

Program: “Woman Suffrage Movement on Long Island”

May General Meeting

Zoom meeting

To be announced.

Bank of the River Gift Shop at the Hawkins House

CLOSED.

April General Meeting

Zoom meeting: Meeting Link, ID number, and passcode will be emailed to our members prior to the meeting. Non-members are also welcome; see registration information above.

Wednesday, April 14, 7:30pm

Guest speaker will be **Bill Bleyer**, author and retired prize-winning Newsday reporter.

Program: “Long Island Whaling” covering the whaling industry of Long Island from Native American era to the discovery of oil.

Membership Dues: Your membership is important to us. Dues are currently payable for the Yaphank Historical Society 2021 membership year. Your support is essential and we sincerely appreciate your support at this extraordinary time. **If you have already submitted your 2021 membership dues, thank you.**

Yaphank Historical Society
P.O. Box 111
Yaphank, New York 11980-0111

Please enroll me as:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Active Member | \$20.00/person - \$17.50/Senior Citizen (62+) |
| | \$25.00/couple - \$22.50/Senior Couple (62+) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contributing Member | \$50.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life Member | \$100.00/person - \$75.00/Senior (62+) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron Member | \$300.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor Member | \$500.00 |

Name _____ Telephone # _____

Address _____ E-Mail: _____

Town _____ State _____ Zip Code _____