



YAPHANK HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Historic Yaphank - Where the Past Greet's the Present

APRIL, MAY, JUNE 2020

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

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Board of Directors

- President - Robert Kessler
- Vice President - Jim Vavrina
- Treasurer - Audrey Kessler
- Recording Secretary - Kayann Donaldson
- Corresponding Secretary - Marie Desch
- Librarian - Peggy Judd
- Historian - Suzanne Johnson
- Historian Emeritus - Karen Mouzakes
- Curator - Helen Kalbach
- Honorary Lifetime Board Member - Kathy Schmidt
- 3-Yr. Trustee - Judi Bird
- 2-Yr. Trustee - Kitty Daniels & Tricia Foley
- 1-Yr. Trustee - Tom Skapinski & Gary Scherpich

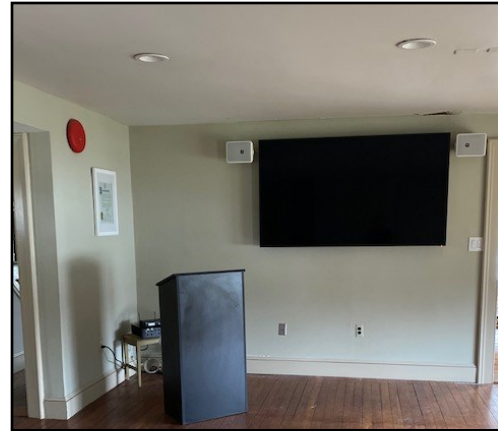
Technology Update --- New Improvements

We are happy to report that new equipment has been added to the Swezey-Avey House to enhance the meeting and program experience, thanks to a generous grant from the Robert David Lion Gardener Foundation. Programs will now be viewed on a new large-screen tv monitor and heard through a deluxe sound system.

At the Homan-Gerard House, we are working with Jim Metcalfe and Al Jarnow of Protozone Interactives to create an interactive software program which will help tell the story of this important former Yaphank mill complex. The software is expected to be ready in time for our summer house tours. We are grateful that the Gardiner Foundation has invested in this worthy project. Suzanne Johnson, Society Historian, serves as point person for this project.



Example of Interactive Visitor Guide



New HD-TV Monitor and Sound System.



Spring Community Yard Sale
Saturday, May 16th, 9:00am—4:00pm

at the Hawkins House
(rain date, Sunday, May 17th)

Please join us—Donation: \$10 per vendor.
No reservations Required.

Letter from the President

The Yaphank Historical Society has been very busy again this winter season. We had a very successful holiday season, welcoming many visitors to our historic houses. With the major portion of the Homan-Gerard House restoration completed, we will be adding the Homan House to our holiday house tours, as well as to our summer house tours. We also had a very busy and successful indoor yard sale at the Swezey-Avey House in February. We are now looking forward to the rest of the year.

We have several construction projects lined up. We want to finish the front portico at the Homan-Gerard House and we are waiting for plans to be drawn up so that we can price the job out and then raise the money to get this project done. We also need to build the stone steps that lead to the basement of the House. We are hoping to get these two projects done this year. These two projects will complete the final work on the Homan House. We also have plans to restore the shed at the rear of the Homan House. The shed needs to be picked up and a foundation put under it and new sills added to replace the old ones. Then the shed can be repaired and shingled.

We are also hoping to get all our fencing repaired and painted. We have put in a request for some fence material so that we can repair the fence as needed and extend the fence along East Main Street to the end of the Yaphank Historic District. In addition, we plan to put fencing around the Hawkins House property.

Brookhaven Town crews are going to power wash the Swezey-Avey House and surrounding fencing for us. They will also be putting fencing around the Hawkins Cemetery. After this is done, we will be able to go in and cut back the brush from the graves and hopefully repair some of the stones. We need to repair or replace the cemetery sign.

We have an Eagle Scout project scheduled for later this year. He is going to build a gazebo in the Swezey Park. This will be a great addition to the park. Hopefully some day we will be able to have concerts there. Many visitors continue to enjoy the park and the Historical Society takes care to keep the park in good order.

Our National Register listing for the Historic District project is moving along very nicely (see a brief update in this *Newsletter*). We hope to file for State designation this fall and apply for National status at the beginning of the year. We are also updating our audio and video technology at the Swezey-Avey House so that our guest speakers will be better equipped to present programs that can be enjoyed by all.

I wish to thank the Sheriff's inmate vocational training program for all of their help with our projects in the district.

Robert Kessler

Special Notice: In order to protect the health and well-being of our members and visitors, and to help mitigate the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19), the Society will be postponing and rescheduling several upcoming events. Each event will be evaluated as we move further into the calendar. Please check the Upcoming Events on page 6 for event information known at the time of this publication. Please check our website, www.yaphankhistorical.org, for ongoing current information. Thank you.

Welcome New Members

- Denise and Andrew Boeckel, Middle Island, NY
- Richard and Lorraine Mauszewski, Medford, NY
- Celeste and Robert Siemsen, Medford, NY
- Russ and Antonia Warren, Yaphank, NY

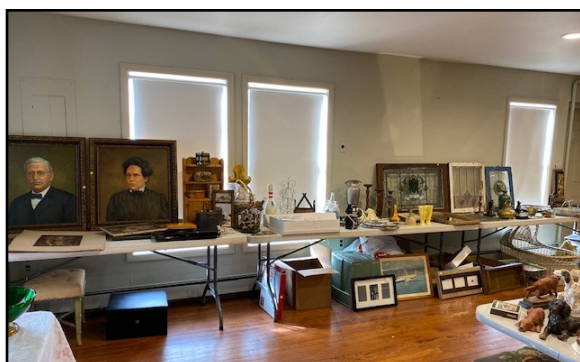
**Funds for this newsletter
were provided by
the Suffolk County Legislature,
Rudy A. Sunderman,
3rd Legislative District. Thank You !**

Renewal Dues Reminder

Your membership is important to us. Dues are currently payable for the Yaphank Historical Society 2020 membership year. Your membership will be active from January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020. Please include your current email address when you send in your dues. We look forward to hearing from you soon. If you have already submitted your 2020 membership dues, your support is much appreciated.

Indoor Yard Sale at the Swezey-Avey House A Successful Fund Raiser

Our Treasurer, Audrey Kessler, always thinking of the “bottom line” wondered if hosting an “indoor yard sale” might be a good fundraising opportunity. Discussing the idea with Kathy Schmidt, manager of our Society Gift Shop, they agreed that the event would be a good use of a couple of weekends in February. If successful, the event would also be a way of clearing out our storage locations; barn, shed, attics, closets, and gift shop. And hopefully the sale would bring in new funds. Kathy served as our point person for the event and special thanks goes to Gary Scherpich, Bob Kessler and Walter Maresco for doing much of the heavy lifting and setup. Several Board Members and member volunteers helped our many shoppers find the perfect item from the furniture, vintage china, books, linens, artwork, collectibles, and bric-a-brac. At the end of our two-weekend indoor yard sale, held at the Swezey-Avey House, the Society coffers were enriched by over \$1800. All proceeds will be used to support Yaphank Historical Society historic house preservation efforts.



From Our Archives

Here's an interesting posting from the August 7th, 1890 issue of the *Yaphank Currier*. Who knew Yaphank had a library? There are many interesting items about early Yaphank among these publications.

The Yaphank Library is now open at Roswell Davis' store and contains 375 of well selected popular books. Strangers (summer boarders) are cordially invited to call at any time and examine them by paying \$1 a year. Anyone can become a member of the Association and enjoy full use of the books.

Update— National Register Project

As previously reported, the Society is in the process of applying for National Register Status for the entire Yaphank Historic District. Work on this important and complex project is ongoing. Our consultant (Zachary Studenroth) and team have completed the fieldwork required for the Intensive Level Survey. Photographs were taken and notes were compiled on each of the buildings and structures in the hamlet. An annotated Building List will be prepared that will include all of the “contributing” (i.e., historic) and “non-contributing” resources in the district. A Methodology, a descriptive narrative that explains the process of collecting data, researching the general history of the area and the more significant buildings, will be prepared along with proposed district boundaries.

Once all these data are completed, the information will be submitted to SHPO (NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation) for approval. If approved, work will begin preparing the National Register Nomination Form.

Summer Season Historic House Tours Exhibit Information



This summer the Society will have four historic houses open for tours on **Sunday afternoons from 1:00 to 4:00pm in July and August**.

We are pleased to announce that we will be adding the newly-restored Homan-Gerard House to the tour schedule. As always, the Hawkins House, Booth House Museum and the Swezey-Avey House will be open for tours. More details about each house and the tour schedule will be in the next Newsletter.

Exhibits:

Homan-Gerard House: All rooms will have artifacts on display. An interactive visitor guide will be available for use by docents and attendees.

Hawkins House: “Small Dolls” The upstairs exhibit room will contain a collection of small dolls dating from the mid-nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century. From the purely decorative to the functional to the beloved baby doll, small dolls find numerous paths to work their way into our hearts.
(Olive Archer & Marie Desch)

Booth House Museum:—birthplace of Mary Louise Booth. Variety of exhibits illustrating an overview of her life and lifestyle, plus a copy of a letter to Ms. Booth signed by President Abraham Lincoln. (Tricia Foley)

Swezey-Avey House: “Greetings from Yaphank” Vintage Yaphank postcards will be on display in the main meeting room, and “Swezey-Avey Family Information” will be on display in the front parlor. (Tricia Foley)

Swezey-Avey House: “The Legacy of Leslie Marchant” exhibit remains in the upstairs exhibit room. Both the permanent “Weeks Family” and “Kovarik Room” will be open for visitors. (Tricia Foley)

Volunteers Needed for the busy Summer Season

We need help. If you can donate a few hours on one or two of the Sunday afternoons in July or August, you can welcome visitors to one of our Historic Houses. We have docent information for each house which you can refer to during the tour. If you are interested in learning more or want to volunteer, for either Sunday afternoon tours, or Special Tours, **please CONTACT Tom Skapinski at 631-732-1825**. Thank you in advance for your support.

Butterfly Garden at the Swezey-Avey House

During the summer and fall of 2019, the Society hosted girl scout Rina Jenne, who offered to build a butterfly garden as her project to receive a Gold Award (similar to the Boy Scouts Eagle Scout award). Rina, her family and girl scout helpers constructed an impressive garden on the south-west side of the Swezey-Avey House. The garden is much more than just plants and much care was given to make the garden pretty, educational, and very useful to butterflies. Working with Ms. Jenne was a pleasure. In addition to her Gold Award from the Girl Scouts, the Society is recommending that Ms. Jenne receive the Past Presidents' Scholarship offered by the Girl Scouts of America.

The Butterfly Garden is a place designed to create a habitat for butterflies all of whom have experienced considerable loss of natural habitat. There are nectar plants for adult butterflies and host plants that caterpillars like. Our ecosystem relies heavily on pollinators, such as bees, moths, and butterflies that visit gardens like these, thereby helping to strengthen our ecosystem. Rina's garden contains educational information in addition to the landscaping, providing information about the role that butterflies play as pollinators. In early September this past year, Rina and her girl scout helpers released adult butterflies into her garden. We are looking forward to seeing our colorful winged visitors this coming year. The garden is a nice addition to the grounds of the Swezey-Avey House and will be enjoyed by visitors to both the Historic Society and to the adjacent Brookhaven Town Park.



YAPHANK HISTORICAL SOCIETY
APRIL through AUGUST 2020—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 be postponing and rescheduling several upcoming events. Each event will be evaluated as we move further into the calendar. At the time of this publication, only two events have been rescheduled and they are noted below. Please check our website, www.yaphankhistorical.org, for ongoing current information. Thank you for your support.

March General Meeting-- **RESCHEDULED**

Originally scheduled for March 19th, 7:30pm

Swezey-Avey House

Rescheduled to August 20th, 2020.

See details below.

April General Meeting

Thursday, **April 16th, 7:30pm**, Swezey-Avey House

Guest Speaker will be **Antonia Petrash** - Author, Speaker, and President of the Long Island Woman Suffrage Assoc.

Program: "Woman Suffrage Movement on Long Island and throughout the United States".

Refreshments will follow the meeting.

Spring Victorian Tea--RESCHEDULED****

SOLD OUT

Originally scheduled for April 25th, 2:00—4:00pm, Hawkins House

Rescheduled to October 10th, 2020

Current registered guests will be contacted by phone.

Saturday, **October 10th, 2:00—4:00pm**, Hawkins House.

Spring Community Yard Sale

Saturday, **May 16th, 9:00am—4:00pm**

(Rain date: Sunday, May 17th)

Donation: \$10 per vendor.

Set up on the **Hawkins House** lawns.

No reservations necessary.

Call 631-924-4803 with questions.

May General Meeting

Thursday, **May 21st, 7:30pm**, Swezey-Avey House

Guest Speaker will be **Max Elfenbein**, Entertainer and Reenactor.

Program: "Civil War Music and Stories"

Refreshments will follow the program.

June General Meeting

Thursday, **June 18th, 7:30pm**, Swezey-Avey House

Guest Speaker will be **Allison McGovern**, Senior Archaeologist

Program: "Archaeological Investigations at the Weeks Family Site in Manorville"

Refreshments will follow the program.

Yaphank Historic House Tours

July and August, Sunday afternoons, 1:00—4:00pm.

Hawkins House, Homan-Gerard House, Booth House Museum, and Swezey-Avey House. Docents will be on hand for tours and to answer questions.

July General Meeting

Thursday, **July 16th, 7:30pm**, Swezey-Avey House

Guest Speaker will be **Anthony Butera**, Trustee, Port Jefferson Historical Society,

Program: "Long Island Redware Pottery"

Refreshments will follow the program.

August General Meeting

Thursday, **August 20th, 7:30pm**, Swezey-Avey House

Guest Speaker will be **Bill Bleyer**, Author and retired prize-winning Newsday reporter.

Program: "Long Island Whaling", covering whaling industry on LI from Native American era to the discovery of oil.

Refreshments will follow the program.

Bank of the River Gift Shop at the Hawkins House

Hours: Thursday Afternoons, 12:00-4:00pm.

(Weather permitting.)

Phone: 631-924-3401