



**Robert Hawkins House**  
**P.O. Box 111**  
**Yaphank, NY 11980-0111**  
[www.yaphankhistorical.org](http://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:**

Welcome Back	... 1
President's Message	... 2
Eugene T. Dooley	...3
Summer Pastime	4-5
Stanley Sulzynski	....5
Upcoming Events	...6

**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

# YAPHANK HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

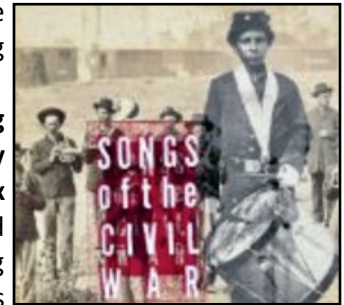
*Historic Yaphank - Where the Past Greet's the Present*

JULY, AUGUST, SEPTEMBER 2021

## Welcome Back!! See You Soon.

The Yaphank Historical Society is happy to announce that we are slowly getting back to normal after this long and lonely extraordinary year.

**Please Join Us at our first in-person General Meeting on Thursday, August 19<sup>th</sup>, 7:30pm, at the Swezey-Avey House.** Our speaker for this meeting will be **Max Rowland** and his program will be "Civil War Music and Stories". We are also scheduling other events, including several yard sales and thinking about our Christmas House Tours and how to make them extra special this year. The Society has had some success hosting Zoom meetings and we may occasionally take advantage of that technology in the future, as well as hosting our in-person events. See Upcoming Events on page 6 for event details.



### Fall Community Yard Sale

**Saturday, September 18<sup>th</sup>,**

**9:00am—4:00pm**

**at the Hawkins House**

**(rain date, Sunday, September 19<sup>th</sup>)**

**Please join us—Donation: \$10 per vendor.**

**No Reservations Required.**

Bring your own table and chairs and "treasures" and set up shop. Spend some time with your neighbors and get a chance to browse all the vendors. We usually have a large crowd of customers and our location right on the main road ensures a continuous supply of shoppers. Perhaps it's the cooler weather in the fall or the approaching holidays, but the shoppers always seem to be in a buying mood for this particular sale.

## Letter From The President

I hope all of you are safe and enjoying your summer.

The Yaphank Historical Society is going to offer historic house tours, by appointment only, in July and August. We ask that you make a reservation, by either calling our headquarters number or sending an email to our website. It is important that we know the number of people in your party, especially if you are coming with a group. Please check page 6 of this *Newsletter* for details and updates. Our primary concern is the safety and well being of our members and guests.

**Some Good News.** In August, the Society is once again going to host our in-person General Membership Programs. These are on the third Thursday of every month at 7:30pm at the Swezey-Avey House. Please check our *Newsletter* and our website for updates. All of our houses have been professionally cleaned for everyone's safety.

### **A brief update of some recent Historic District work follows:**

**Hawkins House**--We have had our restoration carpenter (**Jerimiah McGiff**) continuing his work on the Hawkins House porch. He has been restoring the columns, balustrades, and the upper and lower rails. He has also replaced the steps that were compromised. We also had him repair the fencing that is on the north side of the property.

**Booth House** --We have replaced the locks at the Booth House and did some minor repairs at the house. We have repaired the fencing at the Buckingham Cemetery. We have also cleaned up the cemetery. We just need to paint the fence. We have repaired the herb garden fence that is behind the Booth House; this fence also needs to be painted.

**Homan-Gerard House**--We also have continued our work at the Homan House. We have continued to do the weather stripping and we had to take the rear door down and sand and refinish it. We also had an issue with one of the hearths that was not safe. We had to remove the bricks and the defining, replace both and shore up the underside of the hearth. We also checked the other hearths in the house and found them to be in good order.

**Hawkins Cemetery**--We are also restoring the cemetery sign. We will clean up the cemetery and put a split rail fence around it. We are evaluating getting a grant to restore the stones.

**Furniture Donations**--The Society recently received several large donations of furniture. We thank **Betty Fuka** and the **Edythe Davis Family** for their support. Among the two rooms full of furniture, there were pieces appropriate for each of our three historic houses (Booth, Hawkins, and Homan) plus a few pieces that remained to be used in the Swezey-Avey House.

Once again, I want to thank **Sherriff Toulon** and the inmate program. The program works so well and has been a big help to us in getting much of our work done.

As always, I also want to thank **Eddie Morris** for his generous support of our Society.

*Robert Kessler*

### **Welcome New Members**

- **Jacob Witzon, Bellport, NY**

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

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

## Dearly Missed—Always Remembered



We are sad to learn of the passing of the Yaphank Historical Society's founding president **Eugene T. Dooley**. Eugene loved history which led him to purchase and restore an old home on Middle Island Yaphank Road. In August of 1974,

Eugene sent letters to Yaphank's other old-home owners, proposing that we form an Historical Society.

The night we met at the Swezey-Avey House we established The Yaphank Historical Society with Eugene elected as our president and so began Yaphank's journey toward preservation. Eugene presided for many years. He first led the Society in its efforts to save the Robert H. Hawkins House. As a result, the Society began a partnership with Suffolk County to preserve the Hawkins House. He was actively involved in the formation of the Historic Districts in Brookhaven Town. The original Guideline Book for Brookhaven Town Historic Districts is dedicated to Eugene Dooley in recognition of his efforts.

Over the years, Eugene served as Brookhaven Town Clerk and as Suffolk County Sheriff, but his first love was of history. He always kept in close touch with the Yaphank Historical Society. When moving from Yaphank he donated, to the Society, all of the historical books and maps from his personal collection.

There are many interesting stories about Gene and his preservation efforts. My favorite is when the developer Wilbur Breslin purchased the Longwood Estate. The Yaphank Historical Society was very concerned as the Longwood Estate was not listed as an Historic Property with New York State. Our Society amended our constitution to read preservation not only in Yaphank, but in "Yaphank and the surrounding area." Eugene went to Wilbur Breslin and asked if we could file Longwood with the

state as an historic property. Mr. Breslin gave his permission along with the keys to Longwood to Eugene so that he and I could photograph the interior of the house. While we were doing our survey, I found a pile of papers and Smith family memorabilia that had been swept up as trash. It now became Eugene's mission to go back to Breslin to ask if all of that memorabilia could be donated to the Yaphank Historical Society. Eugene stressed to Mr. Breslin how important the Smith Estate was to the history of Brookhaven Town.

Brookhaven Town eventually acquired the Longwood Estate from Wilbur Breslin. All of the Smith Estate memorabilia was donated to our Society as Gene proposed. Memorabilia having to do with Yaphank is in our archives. The Longwood household memorabilia we gave to the Brookhaven Town Historian's office. Eugene and I filed the Longwood Estate with New York State. Longwood is one of Brookhaven Town's Historic Districts. Eugene Dooley helped to make all of that happen.

Many people, myself included, collected the plates sold each year at the Longwood Fair in the 1980's. Each year a different historic house was featured on the plate. Those plates, to honor the old houses, were Eugene's idea.

With Eugene's passing the Yaphank Historical Society is not only losing a staunch preservationist, but a great friend. Though he is gone, he has left us many fine examples of how to preserve our heritage. A video interview with Eugene is in our archives.

- **Karen Mouzakes**  
**2021**

## Summer Pastime in Early Yaphank (1935-1938)

by Peggy Judd

During the summers of 1935 through 1938, the local sports pages were full of praise for the very successful Yaphank baseball team. Yes, they lost once in a while, but they usually won their game, even if only by a hotly contested single point in the last inning. Several players remained on the team's roster throughout all four years, but new members joined, obviously wanting to join a winning team. The *Mid-Island Mail Newspaper* sports coverage always included the players' names and positions along with detailed game stats for the current game. It seems the team had a variety of team names over the earlier years, but during the period discussed here, they were known as The Yaphank Nine.



This mid-to-late 1930's picture from the Society archives shows one of The Yaphank Nine teams.

The following teams were part of the Firemen's League: West Patchogue, Hagerman, Yaphank, Brookhaven, Bayport, Holtsville, Medford and Center Moriches. Having this many teams ensured that our Yaphank Nine always had a busy season. In the June 26, 1935 issue of the *Mid-Island Mail*, an article entitled "Middle Islanders and Guests Have Great Time at Field Day", much coverage was given to a ball game---"the Yaphank boys had it all over their opponents. They piled up 27 runs while the Middle Island boys were treated to a goose egg." The following issue (July 3, 1935) ran this headline "Bayport Downed by Yaphank 14-6" and detailing that it required three Bayport pitchers while the Yaphank pitcher went the entire game. The following year saw continued wins for the Yaphank Nine.

The August 26, 1936 issue of *Mid-Island Mail* ran this headline "Yaphank Cuts Loose on Medford and Wins Ball Game by 6 to 1". Winning ball was played by our Yaphank team throughout 1937 and in the first part of the 1938

season, this headline appeared, "Yaphank Defeats Bayport to Gain First Place Tie" and in the same issue (*Mid-Island Mail*) this headline announced—"Yaphank and Brookhaven Tied for First Place in Firemen's League ". The July 20, 1938 issue reports—"Yaphank Whips Blue Point Nine" and we learn that---"The Yaphank Nine, title winners for the first half-season in the Brookhaven Firemen's League, started the second half-season last Sunday by applying a generous coat of shellac to Blue Point. The score? 17-2." The following names, positions, and stats for this game appear below:

Yaphank	ab	r	h	e
W. Tillinghast, c .....	4	1	3	1
H. Scesney, 2b .....	2	0	0	0
M. Tillinghast, p .....	6	0	3	0
Davis, ss .....	6	1	1	0
J. Scesney, 3b .....	4	3	1	0
Zebrowski, 1b .....	6	4	2	0
Kuzmech, 2b, c .....	4	2	1	0
E. Glover, cf .....	2	1	1	0
Raimond, lf .....	3	2	2	0
K. Glover, rf .....	5	2	2	0
Hoeffner, cf .....	5	1	0	0
<b>Totals .....</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>1</b>

Early Yaphank citizens loved baseball, establishing several teams to compete with each other and with teams from the surrounding area. A circa 1906 photo shows one of our very early baseball teams.



All of our early baseball teams and our Yaphank Nine team were following a long tradition of competing using a ball and bat. Information about the history of the game of baseball indicates a wide variety of early dates and names given credit for creating and/or revising the game. Most accounts seem to agree that our American version of baseball evolved from a game called "rounders" played in the mid 1700's England and brought to America by immigrants. The game was known by other names, e.g., "town ball", "goal ball", "round ball", or simply "base". Confusion and controversy surround deciding who created the American game of regulation baseball.

## Summer Pastime (continued)

For instance, many, but not all accounts, credit a 20-year old named Abner Doubleday, from Cooperstown, NY, for “inventing” the game in 1839. Others call Henry Chadwick the “Father of Baseball” for his reporting and for publishing the first written guide sold to the public.

Regardless, the rules surrounding the game evolved and popularity of the game continued to increase, and by the mid-1800’s, professional sports leagues were developed and baseball had become the national sport of the United States. Growing interest in baseball resulted in national competition and in 1903, the first World Series was held and in 1905, the World Series became an annual contest. Many of us have fond memories of singing “Take Me Out to the Ball Game” and rooting for either the Yankees or Dodgers, listening to the radio announcer describe each ball or strike. And waiting for him to scream “it’s a home run”, and hoping it was your team that was at bat.



### Sad News---In Memorium

We are sad to announce the passing of **Stanley Sulzynski** this past spring. Stanley was a beloved and dedicated long-time member of the Yaphank Historical Society. Stanley joined the Society early on, working as part of the team that saved the Hawkins House from demolition. He loved his community and its history and wanted to help preserve this important historic house.

Stanley was interested in history and antiques throughout his life. He was a collector of beautiful pieces of furniture and interesting items from the past, and as a collector he always kept an eye open for something that would be appropriate for one of our historic houses. The recent acquisition of a gentleman’s shaving mirror from the Victorian era being a perfect example. Stanley donated that mirror to the Society and it now hangs in the master bedroom of the Hawkins House.

Stanley remained a life-long active member, dedicated to helping out at our semi-annual yard sales, Christmas house tours, and other fund-raising events. He almost always attended our General Meetings, bringing cookies or other goodies to share with attendees at the end of the program. One of his favorite events was our Victorian Tea. It was at that event that Stanley’s personality really shone. Stanley, appropriately garbed in black tuxedo, gloves, and top hat, served as our esteemed butler. Our butler stood on the front porch of the Hawkins House welcoming our tea guests, helping them up the front steps, and then accompanying them to their tea table.

We have many, many fond memories of Stanley and we will all miss him.



### House Museum Status for the Hawkins House

Plans to officially designate the Hawkins House as a House Museum are finally moving forward. Our Historic District Committee recently met several times, working with Richard Martin, Director of Historic Services, Suffolk County Parks Division. At the last meeting an interpretation date of 1884 was set for the museum. Also, it was recommended that the formal name of the house be changed to the Robert and Isabella Hawkins House. Both this name change and the interpretation date correctly recognizes the history of the house and Isabella’s role in serving as owner and caretaker from 1856, following the death of her husband Robert, to 1884. The Yaphank Historical Society Board approved both the interpretation date and the renaming of the House. House museum work presently underway will focus on identifying existing current period-appropriate furnishings and noting which items that will need to be removed from the house.

## YAPHANK HISTORICAL SOCIETY JULY, AUGUST, SEPTEMBER UPCOMING EVENTS

**Special Notice:** In order to protect the health and well-being of our members, guests, and visitors, we will be following New York State Pandemic Safety Guidelines for any events hosted by the Society. Mask and/or social distancing requirements will be posted at the houses. We are hosting our first in-person General Meeting on August 19<sup>th</sup>. At this time, we are not hosting our normal summer Sunday afternoon docent-guided historic house tours. All of our historic houses may be visited by appointment only.

Please send an email request to [webmaster@yaphankhistorical.org](mailto:webmaster@yaphankhistorical.org) to schedule a visit or call 631-924-4803 and leave a message.

Please check our website [www.yaphankhistorical.org](http://www.yaphankhistorical.org) for ongoing current information about upcoming events. We may continue to host several Zoom meetings in the future and notice of those meetings will appear on the website or in the *Newsletter*.

### **How to attend Zoom Meetings:**

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](mailto:webmaster@yaphankhistorical.org). Please 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 wish to attend**. We will then email the necessary linking information to you prior to the meeting.

### **July 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, July 15<sup>th</sup>, 7:30pm.

Guest speaker will be **Paul M. Kaplan**, author & historian.

**Program:** "New York in the Progressive Era: Social Reform and Cultural Upheaval 1890-1920"

### **Yaphank Historic House Tours**

**House tours for the summer season (July and August) will be by appointment only.**

**Email our website [www.yaphankhistorical.org](http://www.yaphankhistorical.org) or Call 631-924-4803 to schedule a visit.**

Historic District Houses: Robert and Isabella Hawkins House, Homan-Gerard House, Booth House Museum and Swezey-Avey House

### **Special Historical Society Yard Sale**

**Please visit us at the Swezey-Avey House on Saturday, August 7<sup>th</sup>, 10:00am—3:00pm, and Sunday, August 8<sup>th</sup>, 10:00am—3:00pm.**

Treasures rescued from storage, including furniture and books, along with linens, toys, china, crystal, etc. from our gift shop will be on display in the house and on the porches. Stop by and take a look.

### **August General Meeting**

**Join us for our first in-person meeting!**

Thursday, August 19<sup>th</sup>, 7:30pm, Swezey-Avey House  
Guest Speaker will be **Max Rowland**, entertainer and re-enactor.

**Program:** "Civil War Music and Stories"

### **September General Meeting**

Thursday, September 16<sup>th</sup>, 7:30pm, Swezey-Avey House  
Guest speaker will be **Anthony Butera, Jr.**, Trustee, Port Jefferson Historical Society

**Program:** "Long Island Redware Pottery"

### **Fall Community Yard Sale**

Saturday, September 18<sup>th</sup> (9:00—4:00pm)  
**(Rain date: Sunday September 19<sup>th</sup>)**

**Donation: \$10 per vendor.**

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

No reservations necessary.

Call 631-924-4803 with questions.

### **Bank of the River Gift Shop at the Hawkins House**

**OPEN!!! OPEN!!! OPEN!!!**

**Hours: Thursday Afternoons, 12:00-4:00pm (weather permitting)**

**Phone: 631-924-3401**