



**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**

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# YAPHANK HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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

APRIL, MAY, JUNE 2019

PLEASE JOIN US

for a

**Special Book Signing Celebration!**

The Yaphank Historical Society  
 Invites you to a Book Signing with the author  
 and Birthday Celebration for Mary L. Booth  
 April 20<sup>th</sup>, 3—5pm @ The Mary L. Booth House Museum  
 East Main Street, Yaphank  
 Rsvp: [webmaster@yaphankhistorical.org](mailto:webmaster@yaphankhistorical.org)

*Mary L. Booth*

THE STORY OF AN EXTRAORDINARY  
 19th-CENTURY WOMAN  
 by  
 TRICIA FOLEY



Mary Louise Booth, author, editor, translator, women's rights advocate, and abolitionist was an esteemed figure in the worlds of publishing in America and Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This is her story. Visit the website ([www.marylbooth.com](http://www.marylbooth.com)) for more information about Mary L. Booth, as well as publishing information. Book is available from Amazon, Kindle, and the Yaphank Historical Society.

## Letter from the President

I thought I would use my letter this month to go over what I know about the cleanup of Lily and Willow Lakes. After serving on a Lakes Committee for seven years, the decision was finally made in 2014 to dredge Willow and Lily Lakes. (The DEC permit reads hydraulic dredging of Willow and Lily Lakes in Yaphank followed by Diver Assisted Suction Harvesting--DASH). Although the dredging went well to remove invasive aquatic species and debris, there were problems with turbidity in the water and the inability of the dredging company to control the turbidity when they were doing Willow Lake. (Turbidity is muck that is suspended in the water, resulting in cloudiness.) When work at Willow Lake was finished, the decision was then made to halt the dredging of Lily Lake while the consultants came up with a solution to control the turbidity.

Fast forward to 2019, and Brookhaven Town has finally decided to clean up Lily Lake using Town equipment and Town employees. They are going to build a temporary dam across Lily Lake at the rear of the Chase Bank building and then install a pipe to channel all of the water from Willow Lake and all of the water from the upper reaches of Lily Lake around the lower portion of Lily Lake. This lower portion of the lake, as it dries, will now become a work area for the machines to go in and clean up the Lake bottom, removing the invasive species of plants and debris. Because these Lakes are 95% spring-fed, the Town will still have to deal with the water that is coming into the Lake from the springs. All of the muck and plants that are coming out of the Lake will be taken to the landfill as cap material.

In the meantime, Suffolk County is going forward with implementing a fish ladder at Lily Lake. They have to deal with some archeological problems because this entire area is on the National Register of Historic Places. The fish ladder will be on the East side of Yaphank Avenue and will run through one of the existing culverts that are already under the road.

Meanwhile this past year, the Town has re-built the dam at Willow Lake and installed a fish ladder just to the East of the spillway. They have also installed a boardwalk from the spillway to the parking area of the Swezey-Avey House. The entire area has been re-landscaped, using mostly native plant choices. The successful rehabilitation of Willow Lake, along with major improvements to the spillway area and Town Park and beach, has resulted in all-season use and enjoyment by many community residents and visitors.

You can always find information on the Coalition to Save the Yaphank Lakes website, ([www.savetheyaphanklakes.org](http://www.savetheyaphanklakes.org))

*Robert Kessler*

### Welcome New Members

- Mary Jean Murphy, Coram, 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 2018-2019 membership year. Please see member types and dues rates on page 6. 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 dues, your payment is much appreciated, thank you.

## A Small Town Girl, Her Work Remembered

**By Karen Mouzakes**

Back in 2006 or so, I was thumbing through an old program from The Players Club, which presented “Nothing But The Truth” at the Yaphank Grange Hall in the 1920’s, when I came upon this advertisement:



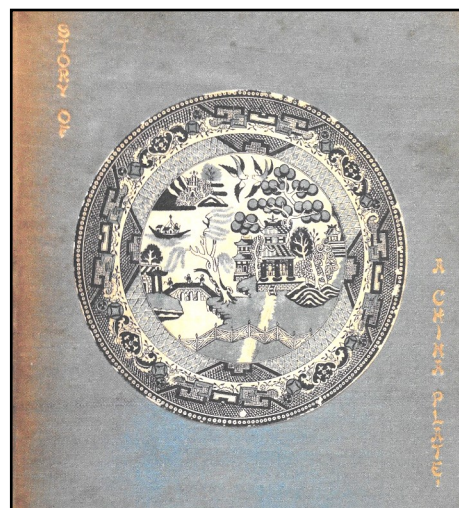
I was immediately interested. Clara was the daughter of William Jones Weeks, a prominent Yaphank resident who attended Yale, chose Yaphank’s name, and lived in an Octagon House. Young Clara Weeks was artistic and won prizes for her work at the Suffolk County Fair. She was lively and very popular with the young men in the village, but Clara never married. Instead she opened a boarding house on East Main Street at “The Lilacs”, a home she inherited from her grandparents.

In later life, she became known as Aunt Clara, a character who long after the 1890’s clung to that style of clothing. She rode a bicycle all over Yaphank. After her daily run to the General Store and the Post Office, she could be seen peddling home with her groceries hanging out of a large basket attached to the back of her bike. Clara had a love of children. Her nieces and nephews summered with her at “The Lilacs.” She held parties for neighborhood children. Gus Neuss fondly remembered those parties and was sure that Aunt Clara could cut one hundred slices from any cake! Clara Weeks taught Sunday School and raised four children from the Suffolk County Children’s Home.

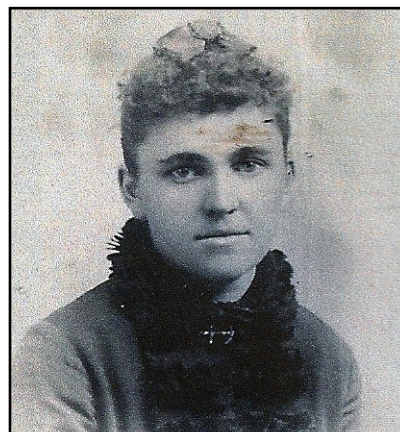
What was the “Story of the Old Willow Pattern Plate?” I decided to see if I could learn something more. I “googled” Clara Winslow Weeks not expecting to find a thing. To my surprise, I was led to a Target book site. Her book was listed! I went to Amazon and they had it, too. I ordered a paperback copy for \$10.85. Trow Press originally published, *Story of a China Plate*, copyright 1913, by Clara Winslow Weeks. Kessinger Publishing did the reprint as a part of its *Rare Reprints*. The original book

was small and measured 5½” x 6½”. The cover title was printed to resemble Chinese characters, reading up and down rather than left to right. The title page shows the familiar Blue Willow Pattern Plate. Thereafter, the circle of the plate contains the printed love story as retold by a young Clara Winslow Weeks. Clara did all of the illustrations which include a cup and saucer, a soup tureen, a pitcher and two lovebirds all in the Blue Willow Pattern. The publisher notes, “We have chosen to reproduce this title . . . because this work is culturally important, we have made it available as a part of our commitment to protecting, preserving and promoting the world’s literature.”

Since first learning of the book, the Yaphank Historical Society has acquired two original copies. One copy is on display in the Weeks Room at the Swezey-Avey House.



*Story of a China Plate* was first published in 1913.



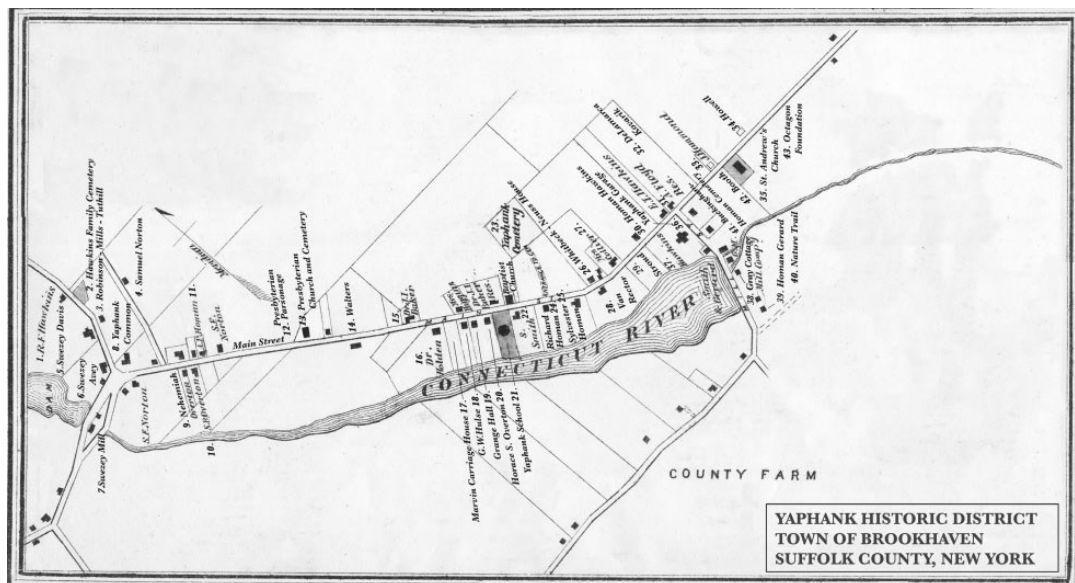
A young Clara Winslow Weeks.

## Working Toward National Register Recognition for the Yaphank Historic District

The Yaphank Historical Society is considering applying for State and National Registers Historic District designation for the Yaphank Historic District. These Registers are the official lists of buildings, structures, districts, objects, and sites significant in the history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture of New York and the nation. Early initial contact with the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation indicated that our unique history and our historic resources make Yaphank eligible for State and National Register status. Part of our hamlet has already been designated as a Brookhaven Town Historic District (1984). (see the map below).

It is important to note that several historic homes in our hamlet, the Robert Hewlett Hawkins House, c. 1850 (listed in 1986), the Mary L. Booth House Museum, c. 1829 (listed in 2014), and the Homan-Gerard House, c. 1790 (listed in 1988) have already been listed on the National Register of Historic Places, as has St. Andrews Episcopal Church, c. 1853 (listed in 1988). The many other historic homes and buildings (more than 30 homes, several cemeteries, historic markers) that are located in the Yaphank Historic District are featured in our *Walking Tour Guide and Map*. All of the historic resources that make Yaphank eligible for State and National Register Historic District designation will be part of the survey to ensure that the final boundary for the District is appropriate and inclusive.

On March 17, 2019, the Society hosted a community outreach meeting, inviting all property owners in the Historic District to learn about this proposed project, to ask questions, to offer opinions, and to express any concerns. Zachary N. Studenroth, Historic Preservation Consultant, was available to answer questions, as was Richard Martin, Director of Historic Services, Suffolk County Parks. Several residents attended and expressed concerns and questions. More work is needed before an application can be submitted, and projects at this level often take a year. The Yaphank Historical Society is committed to preserve Yaphank's historic houses, properties, and historic documents and we feel that obtaining this state and national recognition is a significant step forward in our efforts.



**Annotated Walking Tour Map showing historic structures along Main St.**



### Spring Community Yardsale

**Saturday, May 18<sup>th</sup>, 9:00am—4:00pm @ The Hawkins House  
(rain date, Sunday, May 19<sup>th</sup>)**

**Please join us--- Donation: \$10 per vendor. No Reservations Required.**

## YAPHANK HISTORICAL SOCIETY APRIL, MAY, JUNE 2019 UPCOMING EVENTS

### Special Film Presentation

Sponsored by the  
Miller Place—Mt. Sinai Historical Society  
**Monday, April 8<sup>th</sup>, 7pm**, Rose Caracappa Senior Center  
739 Route 25A, Mt. Sinai

Guest speaker will be **Leah Dunaief**, Executive Producer

**Program: "One Life to Give"**

In the early days of the American Revolution, two best friends find themselves forced to make an impossible decision. This is the story of how one friendship can alter the course of human events.

**Q & A will follow the film.**

Light refreshments will follow the program.

### April General Meeting

**Thursday, April 18<sup>th</sup>, 7:30pm**, Swezey-Avey House

Guest Speaker will be **Bill Bleyer**

Prize-winning staff writer for Newsday and author of several Long Island history books (The History Press).

**Program: "Sagamore Hill: Theodore Roosevelt's Summer White House"**

Refreshments will follow the program.

### Mary L. Booth Book Signing & Celebration

**Saturday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 3:00—5:00 pm**

Booth House Museum

(Main St., Yaphank)

Meet the author, **Tricia Foley**

Books available at the special Society price,

\$25 (tax included).

Light refreshments will be served.

### Spring Victorian Tea

**Saturday, April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2:00—4:00pm**, Hawkins House

**This event is SOLD OUT**

Date and details about our Victorian Harvest Tea will be published in the next Newsletter and on our website.

### Flowers and Lace Tea Party

Hosted by The Davis Town Meeting House Society

**Saturday, May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2:00—4:00pm**

Old Coram Fire Department, 303 Middle Country Road

Donation: \$30 per person; reserve by April 20th

**Reservations: Call Barbara Hoff, 631-698-0038 or**

**Email: [barbli495@yahoo.com](mailto:barbli495@yahoo.com)**

For Reservation Form or more information,

check the website: [davistownmeetinghouse.org](http://davistownmeetinghouse.org)

### May General Meeting

**Thursday, May 16<sup>th</sup>, 7:30pm**, Swezey-Avey House

Guest Speaker: **Karen Mouzakes**,

Society Historian Emeritus

**Program: "The Swezey-Avey Family and Home"**

Refreshments will follow the program.

### Spring Community Yard Sale

**Saturday, May 18<sup>th</sup>, 9:00—4:00pm**

**(Rain date: Sunday, May 19<sup>th</sup>)**

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

Set up on the Hawkins House lawns.

No reservations necessary.

Call 631-924-4803 with questions.

### June General Meeting

**Thursday, June 20<sup>th</sup>, 7:30pm**, Swezey-Avey House

**Program: To be announced.**

Refreshments will follow the program.

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

**Hours: Thursday Afternoons, noon—4:00pm**

**(weather permitting)**

**Phone: 631-924-3401**

Keep current with all our events and projects. Visit our website—[www.yaphankhistorical.org](http://www.yaphankhistorical.org)

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

Please enroll me as:

- Active Member**                      **\$20.00/person - \$17.50/Senior Citizen (62+)**  
    **\$25.00/couple - \$22.50/Senior Couple (62+)**
- Contributing Member**            **\$50.00**
- Life Member**                         **\$100.00/person - \$75.00/Senior (62+)**
- Patron Member**                      **\$300.00**
- Benefactor Member**               **\$500.00**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone # \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Town \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank You To Our Supporters**

If you are interested in having your business card printed in the Yaphank Historical Society newsletter, you may do so for a \$50 donation per year. Please leave a phone number message at the Swezey-Avey House, 631-924-4803. Our members support our local businesses.

YAPHANK CEMETERY ASSOCIATION  
P.O. BOX 1  
YAPHANK, NY 11980-0001  
For grave sales and questions, please call  
Steve Trusnovac, Administrator  
631-924-9042

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**St. Andrew's Episcopal Church**

244 E. Main Street  
Yaphank, NY 11980  
631-924-5083  
**Sunday Services: 8:30 & 10 A.M.**  
**Sunday School at 10 A.M. Service**