

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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YAPHANK HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Historic Yaphank - Where the Past Greet's the Present

JANUARY – FEBRUARY, 2018

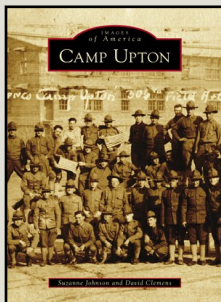


**HOMAN-GERARD HOUSE RESTORATION
RECEIVES A GRANT FROM
THE ROBERT DAVID LION GARDINER
FOUNDATION**

The Yaphank Historical Society is pleased to announce a grant awarded to them in the amount of \$300,000 for the continuing restoration of the Homan-Gerard House in Yaphank's Historic District. The matching funds grant was given by the Robert David Lion Gardiner Foundation for the project---a partnership between Yaphank Historical Society and Suffolk County Department of Historic Services. Suffolk County already contributed \$300,000 to reinstall heating equipment, framing and other work. The Gardiner grant is going directly to the historical society and work is expected to be completed by the spring of 2019.

"The Robert David Lion Gardiner Foundation Grant helps provide much needed funding to continue the restoration of the historic Homan-Gerard House," said Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone. "Preserving and restoring endangered structures such as the Homan-Gerard House, which are an integral part of our history, is a top priority in Suffolk County."

This strategy follows in the tradition of past joint efforts in restoring the Hawkins House and the Mary L. Booth House. The Homan-Gerard House is on the National Register of Historic Places. The restoration of period fireplaces, windows and doors, stairway and floors, which are unique examples of transitional Federal and Greek Revival architectural detailing, is important in saving this unique early Long Island home, an integral part of the history and culture of Yaphank. When open to the public in 2019, the house will be interpreted as it was in 1825-1830.



**Society Trustee, Suzanne Johnson co-author of
Images of America—Camp Upton. (More on page 3.)**

The Yaphank Historical Society extends congratulations to both Suzanne Johnson and David Clemens on their new book. Camp Upton was one of 16 cantonments built to quickly train soldiers upon the United States' entry into World War I in 1917. Using archival photographs, the book illustrates the creation of this military camp, living conditions, training exercises, and celebrates the lives of these brave soldiers as they prepared to go to war.

The Society sponsored this publication, and all authors' royalties produced by this book will go to the Yaphank Historical Society.

Letter from the President

I would like to wish everyone a Happy and Healthy New Year. I also want to thank everyone for their hard work and dedication in making 2017 another very successful year for the Yaphank Historical Society. The focus of our attention in 2017 was the restoration of the Homan House. The contractor that the County hired to do the stabilization has completed his project. And the electrical work and the HVAC work is close to completion. The masonry work in the basement is also almost complete.

In 2018, thanks to a grant from the Robert David Lion Gardiner Foundation, we are going to be well positioned to complete restoration of the Homan-Gerard House. This house is on the National Register of Historic Places and is an important historic structure in the Yaphank Historic District.

Restoration update and plans: The windows and the doors have been sent out to be restored and are close to completion. While the windows are being restored, restoration work will be underway on the interior and exterior window trim. At the time the doors are being hung, the trim around the doors will be restored. We have some of the original shutters from the house which will be restored and, where necessary, new shutters will be built to match the original ones. The plasterer is also ready to begin in the spring, along with the stair contractor who will be restoring and re-building the stairs as needed.

The Yaphank Historical Society, along with volunteers, will be doing all of the painting of the interior walls and the exterior of the building. We will also be addressing all of the landscaping around the exterior building and the grounds. This will include the grading, setting of the large stepping stones for each door, and the building of a handicap parking area and walkway up to the house.

The Homan-Gerard House restoration project is a major undertaking, but as you can see this project is well on its way to completion. We hope to achieve this goal by Spring 2019.

As I have mentioned in previous newsletters, we have been establishing a new library at the Swezey-Avey house. In 2017, we removed an old kitchen that was on the second floor of the house, installed floor-to-ceiling shelving, and repainted walls and floors. Construction work is now complete. This new library space will be used to properly display, store, and preserve our ever-growing collection of books, papers, and artifacts.

Special thanks once again to Parks Commissioner Ed Morris and his entire staff who have always been there for us when we needed them.

Robert Kessler

Welcome New Members

- Janet and John Cozza, Medford, NY

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

Renewal Dues Reminder

Your membership is important to us. Dues are currently payable for the Yaphank Historical Society 2017-2018 membership year. Please see current member types and dues rates on page 5. 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.

Images of America, Camp Upton Notes from Suzanne Johnson, co-author...

During the many years I worked at the Longwood Public Library, print information about the nearby World War I training camp, Camp Upton, was scarce. All we had was a brief pamphlet by Thomas R. Bayles, written in 1977. However, we had an extensive collection of postcards but few of them were collected in a publication. Whenever someone wanted to know about “Yip Yip Yaphank”, there wasn’t much we could give them. People would ask about Irving Berlin’s role there and the camp was mentioned in many of his biographies. But I thought the camp itself, now the home of Brookhaven National Laboratory, would make a good topic for a book. For years I encouraged several others to write it but got no takers.

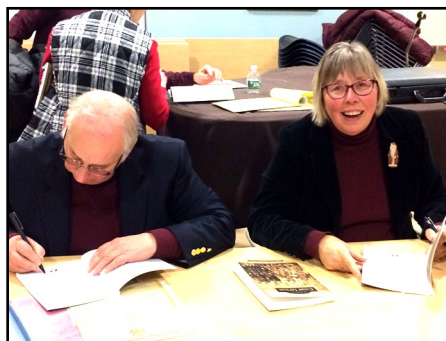
Several years ago, the Yaphank Historical Society included a chapter about the camp in their book, *Images of America—Yaphank* by Karen Mouzakes and Tricia Foley. With the 100th anniversary of the United States entering the war this year, my interest was stirred anew. Since I had recently retired, I decided to give it a try myself. I was familiar with the popular local history books put out by the Arcadia Publishing Company, in fact the Yaphank book is published by Arcadia. They are instantly recognizable for the vintage photos featured on the cover. The books always include about 200 photos with brief captions. I searched the website and developed a proposal for the Camp Upton book. I thought it would be easy since we had terrific resources at the library to choose from. Writing captions would be a cinch. My proposal was accepted by Arcadia in February and we agreed on a deadline for submitting the photos and captions by mid-May.

As it turned out, it was much more difficult than I expected and I was worried about that looming deadline. Some days I would sit in front of the computer and nothing would appear on the screen. I did more research and discovered more interesting aspects about Long Island’s role in World War I. I watched the terrific PBS series “The Great War” in April. But, I was still having a tough time. Then I had a brilliant idea: recruit my fellow director and historian David Clemens to help me. It took a while to convince Dave, but once we got going we enjoyed the process of working together again. In the meantime, I learned that Paul Infranco had collaborated with Donald Bayles and they had published their own *History of Camp Upton*. That book is available for \$15.00 from the Longwood Alliance and at the Yaphank Historical Society. Their book is full of detailed stories thanks to Mr. Bayles’ firsthand knowledge and photos and postcards from his father’s collection.

Both of these books about Camp Upton will provide students and anyone interested in local history with much needed information about the crucial role this area played in both world wars. Our book was published in December and is available on Amazon and from Arcadia for \$21.99 as well as local bookstores, the Suffolk County Historical Society in Riverhead, and the Yaphank Historical Society. Suzanne and David will be available to sign books at **Barnes & Noble, Smithaven Mall, Lake Grove, on Saturday, January 20th, from 1:00— 3:00pm.**



Group of drafted men aboard a LIRR train bound for Yaphank and Camp Upton.



David Clemens and Suzanne Johnson, at recent Longwood Public Library book signing.

The Buckingham Cemetery

by Karen Mouzakes

The villagers of Millville always did their part for their country. Men of the Homan, Hawkins, Tuthill, Hallock and Mills families all fought in the Revolutionary War. They are all buried in the Hawkins Cemetery in graves marked with plaques. The Hawkins Cemetery is located at the western end of Yaphank, a short distance north of the Swezey-Avey House. The grave of the only known soldier from Millville who fought in the War of 1812 can be found at the other end of town in the Buckingham Cemetery. No special plaque marks his grave. The Buckingham Cemetery stands just north of the Homan-Gerard House on Yaphank Avenue. It is a family cemetery. Homans who lived at the Homan-Gerard House and operated the Homan Saw and Grist Mill were buried there.

Daniel Homan (1748-1814) inherited the Homan Mills from his father John Homan. Daniel married Deliverance Clark and they had four children: Deborah, Hannah, Mary and Daniel Homan, Jr. By 1792, Daniel Homan wished for his eldest daughter Deborah to marry. He considered Jonas Buckingham from a prosperous Connecticut family to be a fine match. The Homan and Buckingham families already had friends in common. Urania Buckingham had

married Revolutionary War Patriot William Phillips. Not too many years later, Mordecai Homan would marry Polly Buckingham.

In 1792, Deborah Homan and Jonas Buckingham married. The Buckingham Genealogy tells us that Jonas moved to Millville where he “took charge of father Homan’s mill.” Jonas operated the mill and he and Deborah lived with her parent’s family at the Homan House. Deborah and Jonas had six children. One son, John, became a skilled mechanic and builder of flour and saw mills.

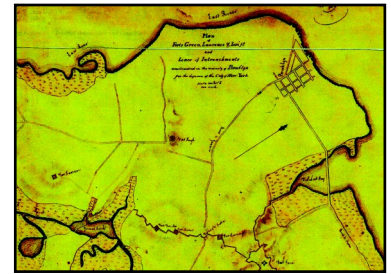
In 1809, the heir to the Homan Mills, Daniel Homan Jr., married Clarissa Overton. He was ready to take-over the operation of the Homan Mills. By 1812, no longer needed at the mill, Jonas Buckingham at 42 years old left Deborah and the children to enlist in The War of 1812. He was stationed at Fort Greene at Brooklyn where he died in 1815. His body came home to Millville to be buried in the family cemetery. Deborah’s second husband was Jonathan Jones. Jonas Buckingham and Deborah Homan Buckingham Jones lie side by side in the Buckingham Cemetery, as do some of their children and grandchildren. Perhaps this Homan Family Cemetery long ago became known as the Buckingham Cemetery to honor a man who lost his life fighting in the War of 1812.



Homan-Gerard House on
Yaphank Avenue



Buckingham Cemetery,
East Main St., Yaphank



“Map of Fort Greene and
Brooklyn, N.Y. Defences”

General Meeting Program

The Long Journey Home: Nichols' Eaglet

A presentation by MaryLaura Lamont

March 15, 2018

Please join us at our March General Meeting to be held on **Thursday, March 15th**, at **7:30pm**, at the **Swezey-Avey House**. Our guest speaker will be MaryLaura Lamont, National Park Ranger at the William Floyd Estate. Her program will discuss an historic event that occurred at the old Nichols' Estate, today known as the William Floyd Estate. In 2015, 2 bald eagles finally, finally returned to their ancient land to raise a family. This avian couple made history for a variety of reasons, and the program covers their success. At one time, bald eagles nested on most rivers on Long Island, but they all disappeared around the same time. The program will talk about the reason for their decline as well as their remarkable and long-awaited comeback from the brink of extinction.



YAPHANK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MARCH–APRIL, 2018 UPCOMING EVENTS

- No January 2018 General Meeting
- No February 2018 General Meeting

March General Meeting

Thursday, **March 15th**, 7:30pm, Swezey-Avey House
 Guest speaker will be **MaryLaura Lamont**,
 National Park Ranger, William Floyd Estate,
 Fire Island National Seashore

Program: “The Long Journey Home: Nichols’ Eaglet”
 Refreshments will follow the program.

April General Meeting

Thursday, **April 19th**, 7:30pm, Swezey-Avey House
 Guest speaker and Program to be announced
 Refreshments will follow the program.

Spring Victorian Tea

Saturday, **April 21st**, 2:00—4:30pm, Hawkins House
 Donation is \$30 per person.
 Always a sold-out event, so please reserve early.
 Reservations: call **Marie Desch, 631-874-9265**

Gift Shop Winter Hours

**Thursdays from 12 noon to 4:00pm
 (weather permitting)**

The Yaphank Historical Society Gift Shop, managed and operated by Society Trustee Kathy Schmidt, will be open most Thursday afternoons (weather permitting) through the winter season. If the “OPEN” sign is posted outside of the Hawkins House on a Thursday the shop is open and customers are welcome. You may want to call first before heading out to check that the shop is open.

(Call 631-924-3401 after noon).

Keep current with all our events and projects
 Visit our website—www.yaphankhistorical.org

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

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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.

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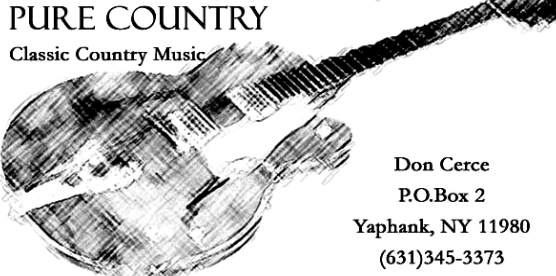
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