

**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*

MARCH – APRIL, 2018

## **SAVE THE DATE !**

**PLEASE JOIN US IN CELEBRATING  
 THE WEEKS FAMILY LEGACY IN YAPHANK  
 SUNDAY AFTERNOON, JUNE 24<sup>TH</sup>, 2018  
 FOR A  
 TEA, TOUR AND TALK**



Yaphank's most important family, the Weeks, settled in Yaphank in 1828. For over the next 100 years, the Weeks family remained an important and integral part of our Yaphank community. The Yaphank Historical Society is honored to celebrate the Weeks family legacy and many descendants of the Weeks family will be our guests at this event. Tour St. Andrews/Little Suzy's Church, built by James Weeks in 1853, enjoy a Weeks family history program presented by Society Historian Emeritus Karen Mouzakes, and visit a new exhibit from our Weeks archives featuring diaries, correspondence, and the family bible.

**Details coming soon in the May/June Newsletter  
 and on our website.**



**Please Note: Our Spring Victorian Tea to be held on April 21<sup>st</sup>  
 is **SOLD OUT!**  
 Date and details about our Fall Victorian Tea will be published in  
 the July/August Newsletter and on our website.**

## Letter from the President

**Preservation at work in the Homan House:** This is a brief update on our work at the Homan House. Major interior progress has occurred over the past few months and our scheduled date of completion, early in 2019, looks like it may well be possible. The electric system has been installed, as well as the heating and air conditioning systems. We are now waiting for National Grid to hook up the meter so that we can get the heat turned on.

We have met with the stair builder and the plasterers. We need either the heat to be turned on or warm weather to arrive before the plasterers can do their work. Original plaster walls were saved wherever possible. Framing on the second and third floors has been necessary and additional wood lath has been installed on both floors in preparation for the new plaster walls. The stairs will be restored and/or re-built as necessary. This work will be scheduled to minimize impact on plastering efforts.

Historic paint colors have been chosen for the house. Painting is scheduled to begin soon and interior painting will be performed by Society members. We are sanding all of the trim, fireplace mantels and doors down to bare wood getting them ready for paint. Walls will be painted once the plastering has been completed. The restored windows are ready to be set in place soon, along with the front door and the leaded glass sidelights on each side of the front door.

The central chimney in the attic space on the third floor required rebuilding. The structure was unstable and was in danger of collapsing. Exterior walls were removed and rebuilt. The beehive oven and fireplace located in the basement were completely rebuilt.

*Robert Kessler*



Original doors are being sanded, repaired, and painted prior to installation.



The exterior walls of the multi-story, 4-channel central chimney are being completely replaced. Note the very old, original brickwork lining the 4 channels.



Where necessary, walls and ceilings were removed down to the studs. Plaster walls will be installed once warm weather is here. Original plaster walls were saved wherever possible.



Original lath will be retained wherever possible.

### Welcome New Members

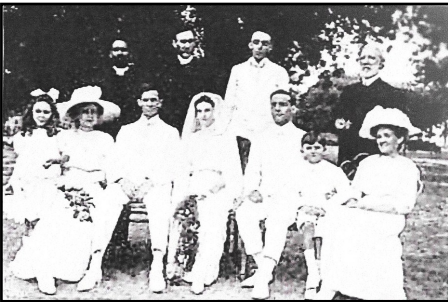
- Eileen Oakes, East Patchogue, NY

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

## Dr. Sarah Avey by Karen Mouzakes

Sarah Ellis Swezey was the daughter of Dr. Gilbert H. and Susan Swezey. She graduated high school in Jamaica, Queens with a "Scientific Degree." She attended Oneonta Normal School and Cornell University Medical School. Sarah was graduated from Denver and Gross College of Medicine in 1909. After receiving her license to practice medicine in New York, she took her internship at the New England Hospital for Women and Children in Roxbury, Mass. Dr. Sarah E. Swezey was appointed by the Board of Foreign Missions to take charge of the Sara Seward Hospital at Allahabad, India. She specialized in pediatrics and obstetrics.

Her father, Dr. Gilbert H. Swezey had not wanted her to pursue a career in medicine. Sarah credited the prayers she listened to during her childhood at the family altar as a factor in deciding her life's work. She sailed for India in 1910, a year after her father's death. While in India, she met Harry Thompson Avey, a mechanical engineer, who was also active in missionary work. They married in 1913 at Allahabad, India.



**Wedding Photo, Dr. & Professor Avey.**

In 1920, the Aveys returned to the United States with their children H. Thompson Avey and adopted son, Charles Avey. Harry T. Avey, took a position at the University of Wisconsin, teaching mechanical engineering.

Professor Avey and Dr. Sarah Avey occasionally visited Yaphank, staying for a few weeks at a time. They always stayed at the Swezey Homestead. The house had been closed since 1920 when Sarah's mother, Susan E. Swezey, and Sarah's sister, Charlotte, moved to Bayside, Queens. Swezey family members vacationed at the Swezey Homestead for extended periods of time. Sarah's sister, Lillian Swezey Webber, lived nearby on Patchogue Road.

In 1944, Professor Avey retired from teaching and the Aveys took up permanent residence at the Swezey Homestead. They continued to live in Yaphank, where they became active in community life. The *Advance*, employed Dr. Avey as a reporter for the village of Yaphank. Sarah continued to be active at the Yaphank Presbyterian Church where she had attended as a child. She was also active in the Yaphank Cemetery Association. Professor Avey made a cemetery plot map to hang on the pump house at the edge of the cemetery. Dr. Avey started a lending library at her home. Adults and children could borrow books on any day except Sunday from 2 until 5 pm.

Dr. Sarah Avey passed in 1963 while she and Professor Avey were visiting their son, Dr. H. Thompson Avey, in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. She was buried in Norman, Oklahoma. She was 82 years old. Professor Avey remained with his son in Oklahoma. Professor Avey passed in 1966, at the age of 87. In 1963 the Swezey Homestead was sold to Brookhaven Town. The Town intended to burn down the house. The Yaphank Chamber of Commerce was successful in saving the house from demolition. The Swezey-Avey House was used as a recreation center and Willow Lake was used as a Town Beach.



**Yaphank Cemetery Association**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser**  
 Saturday, April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2018 @ 3:00pm  
 The Yaphank Fire House  
 Donation: \$15 per person  
                   \$5 per child (8 and under)

Tickets must be pre-ordered by sending a check to:  
**Yaphank Cemetery Association**  
 PO Box 1, Yaphank, NY 11980  
 Please include names of the attendees.  
 Pre-ordered tickets will be given out at the door.

### Events

- Door Prize
- Chinese Auction
- 50-50 Raffle

**Editor's Note: The Swezey-Avey House** officially became the headquarters of the Yaphank Historical Society in August 2014; that date coincided with the celebration of the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Society. The Swezey-Avey House is one of the oldest structures in Yaphank (the original Swezey Homestead started out in the early 1700s). As noted in the Sarah Avey article, the House remained in the family from when it was built until 1963, when it was sold to the Town of Brookhaven. The Society negotiated a special contract with the Town: The Society would renovate the house and in return, the Town would lease the building to the Society to serve as its headquarters. The very first meeting of the Yaphank Historical Society was held at the Swezey-Avey House in 1974. The Yaphank Historical Society was happy to return to their home, forty years after that first meeting in the house. The Swezey-Avey House is now Society headquarters, home to our administrative offices, several exhibit rooms, a library, reading room, and is also now home to our extensive historic archives.

## General Meeting Programs

### *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 15<sup>th</sup>, 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.

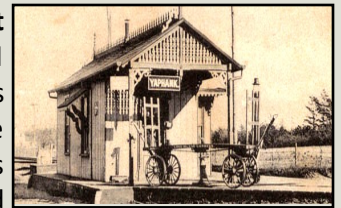


### *Long Island Railroad—Main Line, East End*

**A presentation by Dave Morrison**

**April 19, 2018**

Please join us at our April General Meeting to be held on **Thursday, April 19<sup>th</sup>, at 7:30pm, at the Swezey-Avey House**. Our guest speaker will be Dave Morrison, author, historian and preservationist. Morrison is an expert on the 182-year-old Long Island Rail Road and is currently helping with restoration efforts at the old Oyster Bay train station. When the restoration is complete, the station will house the Oyster Bay Railroad Museum. His program will focus on the eastern end of the main line—starting at Hicksville and proceeding to Greenport.

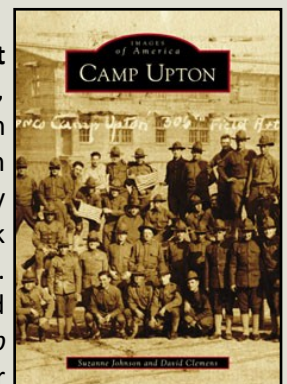


### *Images of America—Camp Upton*

**A presentation by Suzanne Johnson and David Clemens**

**May 17, 2018**

Please join us at our May General Meeting to be held on **Thursday, May 17<sup>th</sup>, at 7:30pm, at the Swezey-Avey House**. Our guest speakers will be Suzanne Johnson and David Clemens, co-authors of the book, *Images of America—Camp Upton*. Camp Upton (now Brookhaven National Laboratory) was one of 16 cantonments built quickly by our government to train soldiers for duty in World War I in 1917. The program will discuss the creation of this military camp, how our soldiers were trained and their living conditions while at camp. The book illustrates and the program discusses the crucial role our local area played in both world wars. **Paul Infranco**, author of the recently published *History of Camp Upton* will join Suzanne and David after the program. Both books will be available for purchase (*Images of America—Camp Upton*, \$22; *History of Camp Upton*, \$15) and the authors will be available to answer questions and sign books.



# YAPHANK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## MARCH, APRIL, MAY 2018 UPCOMING EVENTS

### March General Meeting

Thursday, **March 15<sup>th</sup>, 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 19<sup>th</sup>, 7:30pm**, Swezey-Avey House  
Guest speaker will be **Dave Morrison**, author,  
historian and preservationist.

**Program:** "LIRR—Main Line, East End"  
Refreshments will follow the program.

### Spring Victorian Tea

Saturday, **April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2:00—4:30pm**, Hawkins House

#### This event is Sold Out.

Details about our Fall Victorian Tea  
will be announced in the  
July/August Newsletter and on our website.

### Yaphank Cemetery Association Spaghetti Dinner

Saturday, **April 28<sup>th</sup>, 3:00pm**, Yaphank Fire House  
Donation: \$15 per person; \$8 per child (8 and under)  
Pre-order tickets—send check & names of attendees to:  
Yaphank Cemetery Association  
PO Box 1, Yaphank, NY 11980

### May General Meeting

Thursday, **May 17<sup>th</sup>, 7:30pm**, Swezey-Avey House  
Guest Speakers will be **Suzanne Johnson**  
**and David Clemens**

**Program:** "Images of America-- Camp Upton"  
Both authors will be available  
to answer questions and sign books.  
Books available for purchase: \$22.  
Refreshments will follow the program.

### Spring Community Yard Sale

Saturday, **May 19<sup>th</sup>, 9:00am—4:00pm**  
**(rain date Sunday, May 20<sup>th</sup>)**  
Donation: \$10 per vendor  
Set up on the Hawkins House lawns.  
Call 631-924-4803 with questions.

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

**Hours: Thursdays from 12 noon to 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+)**  
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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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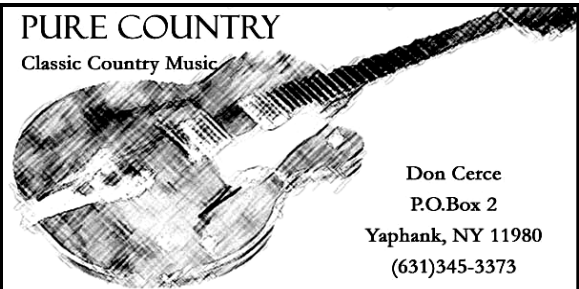
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