

**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*

NOVEMBER – DECEMBER, 2018

**The Yaphank Historical Society**  
 In conjunction with *Curtain Up Entertainment*

**Presents**

## *An 1855 Christmas at the Hawkins House*

Join us for a Victorian Christmas celebration at the Hawkins House.

**Saturday, December 8<sup>th</sup> or Sunday, December 9<sup>th</sup>.**

The house will be decorated for Christmas and the Hawkins family will be busy with holiday tasks, having tea with friends, wrapping gifts, and enjoying the season.

**Reserved Ticket Prices - - Adults: \$15; Children 4-12: \$8.00**

**Presentations will run from 12 noon to 5:00pm each day.**

Reservations are required. Order form for timed tickets enclosed.

Tickets must be picked up at the Swezey-Avey House prior to the show.

Complimentary refreshments will be served at the Swezey-Avey House.



**Open House, Sunday afternoon, Dec. 9th  
 at Swezey-Avey House, 12:00-5:00pm**

Please stop by  
 for holiday refreshments and music.  
 Music provided by Susan and Don Cerce  
 from 2:00—5:00pm.



## Letter from the President

### Homan house update

The major construction portion of the Homan House restoration project is done. We have been painting the outside of the house. We have also begun to paint the interior. The basement Bee-Hive oven, fireplace and brick walls have been completely rebuilt. The chimney in the attic was taken down and re-built and the chimney above the roof was flashed and completely built as new. The brick work inside the house was repaired as needed. There was also a new hearth put in the fireplace in the meeting room.

Most of the stone work around the house was installed as new and where it could be saved, it was repaired and re-pointed. All of the windows trim and woodwork has been restored. We only had a few existing shutters and the rest were made to replicate the original. There were some doors missing on the interior of the house and they also were made to replicate the original doors.

We have a few incidentals to finish up on the interior and the exterior of the house before we can say it is complete. Our next step with this restoration project is to furnish the house. Meetings to discuss this effort have been scheduled to review and evaluate our existing furniture in storage as to its appropriateness for the house. We will also create a list of furniture to be acquired.

I want to again thank all of the people who worked on the house. Special thanks once again go to the Gerry Charitable Trust and the Robert Lion Gardiner Foundation without whose support we could not have completed this project.

*Robert Kessler*

### Welcome New Members

- Coleen Pecorella, Centereach, NY
- Dorothy and Fred Potts, Medford, NY
- Gary Rempel, Greenport, NY

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



*Happy Holidays*

*To All*



We are nearing the end of another busy year and welcoming the fast approaching holiday season. We are all looking forward to spending time with family and friends at Thanksgiving time and then enjoying the Christmas season before a new year begins.

**The Yaphank Historical Society sends best wishes to all for a Happy and Healthy Holiday Season.**

## A Victorian Custom-- Calling Cards

At the height of the Victorian era, your name always preceded you. No proper lady or gentleman paid a social visit without first presenting a host's servant with a calling card. As is the case with most things Victorian, there was a distinct and complex etiquette surrounding the use and look of calling cards. These cards were capable of conveying all kinds of information and meaning. How they were folded, the font used to print the name, whether or not address information was included, whether any hand-written names were included, what time of day the card was presented, whether you personally knew the recipient, and even the style of container to hold these calling cards was important and special rules for all were rigorously followed. The required card not only preceded you, but you were judged on the appearance of the card. Should you use too fancy a font, it was often considered a tad garish. Discreetly adding an address was acceptable for city dwellers, but just a single name line was the preferred fashion.

The calling card etiquette was established and followed by the aristocracy and upper-class Victorians. The middle-class adopted the calling card customs, although they followed a less formal code. However, mingling with the Victorian elite was the social goal of the enterprising middle-class and the use of calling cards was a way to introduce themselves and perhaps garner a meeting and thereby accomplishing a step up the social ladder.

When one went to pay a call, it wasn't necessary to actually see the one you were calling on. You could leave a card announcing your presence in a new town, or that you had just returned after a trip. If you were leaving for an extended time, you would drive around, stopping and leaving a card announcing your departure at each house you wished to notify. Cards were also used to introduce an unmarried daughter to someone with an eligible unmarried son in the family or other male relative. When making a call with daughters, their names would be handwritten on the card below the name of the primary holder of the card. In addition to the names listed on the card, the physical appearance of the card also relayed meanings. For instance, a folded down lower-left corner symbolized condolences, while a creased upper-right corner indicated an in-person wish to visit.

All of these cards would be placed in a special container on a table or the mantle by the butler or maid

for future inspection by the lady of the house. These containers were often fancy glass dishes, silver trays, or even an ornately carved box. Calling cards of all styles were often carried in elaborate cases by their owner. These cases could be sterling silver, leather, or even gold and were specially made just for this purpose.



**Fancy calling card table.**  
**Courtesy: Country Living.com)**



**Antique embroidered leather calling card case.**  
**(Courtesy: Marie Desch.)**

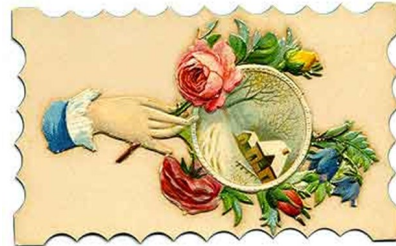
When a caller came in person to pay a call, they would be shown into the parlor to wait while the butler would see if the lady of the house was "at home". The lady might be out paying calls or she might not be receiving visitors. The caller would wait to hear back from the butler, often taking the opportunity to look through the other cards to see who else had paid a call. A tray full of calling cards was like social media for the Victorian era, a way to advertise who was in one's extended social circle. After receiving a card or a visitor, the lady of the house was obligated to return the call, either in person or with a card.

During the afternoon, calls to known acquaintances took place: if you were not well acquainted with your hostess, calls were from 3 to 4; if you were a close acquaintance, calls would be from 4 to 5. These types of visits would take place in the drawing room, located on the first floor (second story of the house). Ladies parasols and cloaks would be left on the ground floor, but gentlemen took their riding crop and hat with them. A proper call only lasted 15 minutes. Conversations were fairly formal, staying comfortable in the areas of the weather, and without mention of people who were not acquaintances of everyone present. Refreshments were not served until the last half of the

## A Victorian Custom-- Calling Cards (continued)

19<sup>th</sup> century when “teas” became popular. The Victorians, true to their attention to detail, created a complete new complex etiquette covering clothing, food, times, participants, and serving presentation associated with the teas.

The looks of calling cards evolved over time. Text only cards were traditional, but in the late 1800s, some people had an additional set of cards that featured their portrait. These were used for close friends only. New printing technologies allowed more colorful and decorative designs. Images of birds, flowers, and landscapes were popular. The calling card started as a simply written name on a plain card before evolving into a highly embellished, full color art piece. Calling cards fell out of favor in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century as penny postcards became popular. However, the lavish Victorian designs can be appreciated as the carefully crafted and lovingly shared objects they were. In today’s world the calling card has all but been replaced by the standard business card.



Late 1800s Victorian Calling Cards. (Courtesy: Victoriana.com)

Resources: Marie Desch, Yaphank Historical Society;  
[hobancards.com](http://hobancards.com); [victoriana.com](http://victoriana.com); [countryliving.com](http://countryliving.com)

## Special December Program

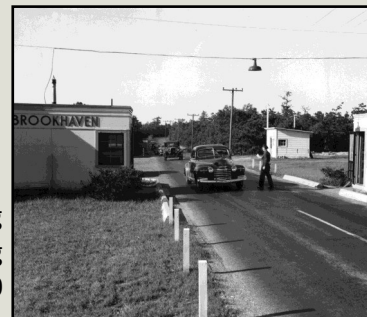
Please join us for a special December General Meeting, jointly sponsored by The Yaphank Historical Society and the Longwood Public Library.

Thursday, December 13<sup>th</sup>, 7:00pm, at the Longwood Library

**Speaker: Tom Williams, Vice-President of the Post-Morrow Foundation.**

**Program: “The Manhattan Project: From Los Alamos to Brookhaven Lab”**

In 1946 as World War II drew to a close, Camp Upton, the US Army training center, closed down. Los Alamos, center of the US atomic energy initiative during the war and home of The Manhattan Project, was now expanding to 10 government sites around the country. Camp Upton, in the rural area of Yaphank, Long Island, was a natural location for one of these facilities, a new research center for peaceful uses of atomic energy. In 1947, Brookhaven National Laboratories was born. Former Los Alamos physicists as well as scientists from around the world came to Brookhaven and Bellport and settled here during the years following the war. Tom Williams’ father, Dr. Clarke Williams, was one of them. A nuclear physicist and authority on neutrons, he was also the deputy director of the lab for many years. Tom will speak about growing up here, his father’s career and his reminiscences of life in this important chapter of our local history.



## A Successful Victorian Harvest Tea

A **special thank you** to all of our board members and Society members who helped make our fall tea a success. The Hawkins House was decorated for fall and we had a house full of happy tea guests enjoying a beautiful afternoon tea. Many of the ladies were wearing elegant hats. Several guests wore their Victorian gowns and we had one very dapper gentlemen guest. Of course, our very own well-dressed butler was on the front porch waiting to welcome our guests. After all the scones and sandwiches were enjoyed and numerous pots of tea were consumed, our happy guests visited the gift shop for some early holiday shopping. We thank all our guests who support the Society by attending our Victorian Teas.

## YAPHANK HISTORICAL SOCIETY NOVEMBER---DECEMBER 2018

**November General Meeting**

Thursday, **November 15<sup>th</sup>, 7:30pm**, Swezey-Avey House  
 Guest Speaker will be **Karen Mouzakes**,  
 Society Historian Emeritus  
**Program: "The Swezey-Avey Family and Home"**  
 Refreshments will follow the program.

**Fall Cleaning and Dusting  
 Volunteers Needed!**

Saturday, **November 17<sup>th</sup>**, 10:00am—4:00pm  
 Help get our historic houses ready for the holidays.  
 Spend a few hours during the day cleaning and share a  
 wonderful pasta supper.  
 Supper served at **5:00pm** at the Swezey-Avey House.

**An 1855 Christmas at the Hawkins House**

**Saturday, December 8<sup>th</sup>, noon to 5:00pm,**  
**Sunday, December 9<sup>th</sup>, noon to 5:00pm,**  
This is a timed presentation and reservations are  
 required. Details and Ticket Order form enclosed.

**December General Meeting**

Thursday, **December 13<sup>th</sup>, 7:00pm**,  
Longwood Public Library  
 Guest Speaker will be **Tom Williams**,  
 Vice President, Post-Morrow Foundation  
**Program: "The Manhattan Project:  
 From Los Alamos to Brookhaven Lab"**  
 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**

**No January 2019 General Meeting.**

**No February 2019 General Meeting.**

**General Meetings resume in March, 2019.**

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**

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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.

**YAPHANK CEMETERY ASSOCIATION**

P.O. BOX 1

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For grave sales and questions, please call  
Steve Trusnovec, Administrator

631-924-9042



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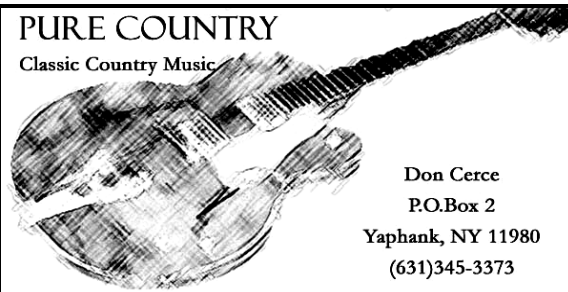
## St. Andrew's Episcopal Church

244 E. Main Street  
Yaphank, NY 11980  
631-924-5083

Sunday Services: 8:30 & 10 A.M.  
Sunday School at 10 A.M. Service

### PURE COUNTRY

Classic Country Music



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