

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 the Present

OCTOBER, NOVEMBER, DECEMBER 2022

SAVE THE DATES

DECEMBER 10 AND 11 FROM 1:00 TO 4:00PM
 PLEASE JOIN US TO CELEBRATE THE HOLIDAYS

Yaphank Historic District
Christmas House Tours

Please join us to celebrate the holiday season. On Saturday and Sunday, December 10 and 11, from 1:00 to 4:00pm, the Society will offer Christmas Tours of several historic houses in the Yaphank Historic District. Guests will register at the Swezey-Avey House and receive a ticket and directions to the historic houses and buildings that are on the Tour. Donation for the Tour is \$10 for adults; free for those 12 years and younger.

- Swezey-Avey House (c. 1843)**
- Robert and Isabella Hawkins House (c. 1850)**
- Booth House Museum (c. 1829)**
- Homan-Gerard House (c. 1790)**

All of the houses will be decorated for the holiday season and all exhibit rooms will be open for our holiday visitors. Greeters and docents will be on hand at each location to welcome you and guide you through the houses. There will be holiday music at the Swezey-Avey House provided by **Don and Susan Cerce** and you may even encounter Santa stopping by for cookies. Holiday refreshments will be available for all. We hope to see you there.



Letter From The President

The Yaphank Historical Society had a very successful summer tour season this past summer. We had all four of our houses open on Sunday afternoons during July and August. I want to thank all our members who volunteered to docent at the houses. A good time was had by all members and guests.

Our restoration of the Hawkins Burying Ground is going well. I want to thank our restoration group (**Joel Snodgrass, Zach Studenroth and Kurt Kahofer**) for all their hard work and dedication to the project. We still have some fine tuning to do in the next couple of weeks. In addition, thank you to the **Sons of the American Revolution** for donating a sign with the names of the Revolutionary Soldiers that are buried there. We will host a celebration on **Sunday afternoon, October 23**, at the Swezey-Avey House with the cemetery group that did the restoration work. The group will give a lecture and they will explain the entire restoration process. We will also produce a slide show detailing all the steps that are needed to restore these old stones. We will have coffee and refreshments after the program. (Normally, we would have the celebration at the cemetery, but the road is just too dangerous for a crowd of people and parked cars.)

I also want to thank the **Robert Lion Gardiner Foundation** for their very generous grant that made this cemetery restoration possible. Special thanks go to **Rich Verdi**, our neighbor next to the cemetery, who allowed us to use his driveway to park our truck and trailer while we were working at the cemetery.

At the Homan House, we are working on plans for the front portico of the house. We have applied to the Robert Lion Gardiner Foundation for a matching grant for this project. We hope to have an answer regarding the grant in November. We have been working on getting all the material needed to construct and install the portico. I want to thank our architect **John Ross** who volunteered to draw the plans for the portico project.

This year the Society again set up a table at the **Longwood Fair** which was held on September 24th and 25th . Two of our members joined me at this great event. I want to thank **Kayann Donaldson** and **Danielle Courtois** for being there both days and helping. We had a nice time and met a lot of interesting people, sold some books and handed out membership information. A good day for the Society.

Robert Kessler

Welcome New Members

- Elizabeth Colgan, Yaphank, NY
- Danielle Courtois, Middle Island, NY
- Jamie Reason, Mastic Beach, NY
- Matthew Hahn, Farmingville, NY

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

Election Notice

Voting for the 2023 YHS Board Members will take place at the November General Meeting, Thursday, November 17, 2022, at the Swezey-Avey House. All members in good standing are eligible to cast a vote there. Nominations can also be offered from the floor. Voting is by members only, but all are welcome to attend the meeting and enjoy the special program presented by **John Turner** and refreshments that follow the program.

A Successful Summer House Tour

Our popular summer house tours returned this year after a two-year hiatus due to Covid and the tours were a resounding success. Our docents shared the history of Yaphank and the history of our four historic houses with nearly 350 visitors on Sunday afternoons in July and August. (We had a total of 16 docents who spent a total of 96 hours conducting tours.) The successful summer season culminated with a celebratory dinner for the docents hosted by our President, Bob Kessler, at the Millhouse Inn Restaurant, located on Willow Lake in Yaphank.

Special Thanks go to Kitty Daniels, organizer extraordinaire, who ensured that docents were in place and ready for tours at each historic house every Sunday.



Kathy Schmidt, Hawkins House docent on Sunday afternoon, August 28th, shares the following: During our summer house tours day we had a special visitor, **Marge Niesen**. Marge is a cousin of Olive Archer and a descendant of Judge Neuss, formerly of Yaphank. Marge is visiting her Yaphank relatives and currently lives in Ohio. She was thrilled to see that we gratefully accepted her donation of parlor furniture and have put it center stage in the main parlor of the Hawkins House. The furniture dates back to her earlier years living in Yaphank.

From the Curator. . . .

Several years ago, Janice North, a resident of Blue Point, attended one of the Society's Victorian High Teas at the Hawkins House and was impressed by the tea itself and the need for period furniture. At that time, we were firmly in the Hawkins House and working on restoring the Mary Louise Booth House. Mrs. North had an appreciation for the décor of the time periods involved and had been coincidentally acquiring pieces appropriate to our houses. She invited Trish Foley and me to see the items she thought would be useful to the Society. Fast forward--- a few months ago Janice moved to Connecticut and one of her daughters had the list of furniture that we agreed upon. A few adjustments were made to the list, and one Saturday morning we went to retrieve these treasures and each historic house now has a few of these great pieces!

The Booth House has two maple chairs, one mahogany small chest of drawers with brass pulls, and an adjustable dressing mirror. The Hawkins House has the beehive clock, another adjustable dressing mirror and a maple washstand/chest. The Homan Gerard House has a parlor mirror, mahogany triangular chair, full-size rope bed, iron lamp, two irons, one woven basket and a candle snipper.

We thank Janice for her faithful generosity and support of the Yaphank Historical Society. We are pleased to have her trust in preserving these items of our history and wish her all the best in her new community.

Helen Kalbach, 2022



Henry Blonsky---Early Yaphank Resident of Note

By Karen Mouzakes

Henry V. Blonsky was Postmaster at Yaphank at the beginning of the 1900s to 1906. The salary for that job was \$528 a year. He also did plumbing, roofing and tinsmithing at his shop on Main Street. He was civic minded and popular in the village. He served as school clerk in 1909. Three letters that he wrote in 1901, 1909, and 1913, are on file at the Yaphank Historical Society. They provide some local news of the time. Excerpts are printed below:

On the birth of his daughter Helen in 1901---“Baby has blue eyes and I think it looks like Mabel did by her picture when she was young. I hope it looks like Mabel, as is would be terrible if a girl resembled me.”

Items of interest from a different letter---“Chas Gerard is the proud possessor pf a new motor-cycle, and goes the limit”

“Mrs. Geddes, the dog woman, leaves here for good day after tomorrow. To this we say ‘good riddance’, with the neighbors’ amens, I guess.”

“Mrs. R. F. Hawkins had the misfortune to dislocate her wrist by falling on the kitchen floor of her home.”

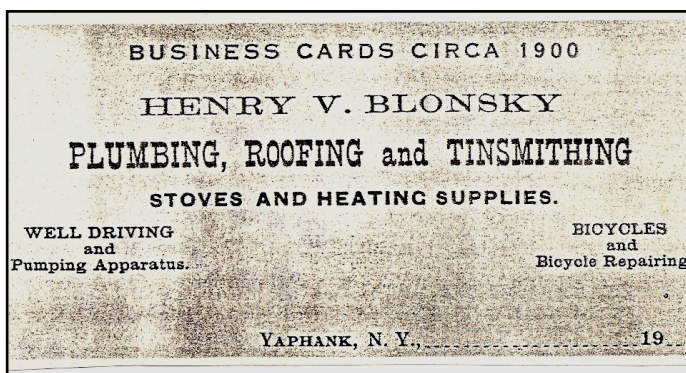
“Edwin Benjamin is laid up with mumps and Dr. Sidney Smith has the measles in Brooklyn, and is sporting a trained nurse.”

The 1913 letter is to a Dr. Woodruff and describes Blonsky’s throat ailment----“My throat is so sore in the evening that I could not talk over the wire as I would like to. Today I am feeling fine and am looking for good results from the treatment I am taking, though I know it will take some time to heal. Let me know the result of the sputa examination, be it good or bad, as the saying ‘forewarned is forearmed’ applies in my case. Enough about myself except that the ‘dope’ pills came in Mabel’s letter and I had a good night’s rest.”

Postage was only two cents in those years, which seems a small price to pay to keep friends and family abreast of the good news, the “goings on”, and the bad news in the small village that was Yaphank.



Blonsky's Bicycle Shop, circa early 1900's.



A man of many talents ...



Sad News—In Memoriam

Long-time member and supporter of the Yaphank Historical Society, **Anna Engelhardt**, recently passed. Anna was always at our Hawkins House Spring and Fall Teas with her friends and family. She also participated in our Community Yard Sales, offering a wonderful and beautifully-curated selection of vintage linens and antique buttons. Anna was a gracious lady who will be dearly missed by all.

Marie Desch, 2022

Sag Harbor Field Trip



On a recent beautiful Fall day, several members of the Yaphank Historical Society toured The Whaling Museum and quaint Village of Sag Harbor. A delicious lunch at The Corner restaurant was followed by ice cream at a local creamery.

Marie Desch arranges several field trips each year and both members and friends are welcome to participate. Notice of upcoming field trips will be announced at our General Meetings and details and contact information will be posted on our website and in the *Newsletter*.

Bank of The River Shoppe---Special Offers

For lovers of vintage furnishings:

1. We have an antique clawfoot tub for sale. It comes complete with faucet and all the necessary plumbing accessories.
2. Also, a wonderful grandfather clock with all accessories. And our President, Mr. Kessler, can provide you with its provenance.
3. Last but not least, there's a really nice Highboy dresser in great condition.

Let's talk----call Kate at 631-924-3401



YAPHANK HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OCTOBER, NOVEMBER, DECEMBER 2022
UPCOMING EVENTS

October General Meeting

In-person meeting.
Thursday, **October 20th, 7:30pm**, Swezey-Avey House
Guest speaker will be **Diane Schwindt**, Historic Cook at the Ketcham Inn, Center Moriches, NY
Program: "The Timeline of Food"
Refreshments will follow the program.

Hawkins Burial Ground Restoration Celebration

Sunday, October 23rd, 1:00— 4:00pm,
Swezey-Avey House.
Guest speakers: **Burying Ground Preservation Group**
Program: "Restoration Techniques at Yaphank Site"
Refreshments will follow the program.

- **No January 2023 General Meeting**
- **No February 2023 General Meeting**

November General Meeting

In-person meeting.
Thursday, **November 17th, 7:30pm**, Swezey-Avey House
Elections for Society Board Members will be conducted prior to the program.
Guest speaker will be **John Turner**, environmentalist and member of Open-Space Council
Program: "Cranberry Industry on Long Island"
Refreshments will follow the program.

Yaphank Historic District Christmas House Tours

Saturday & Sunday, **December 10th & 11th, 1:00—4:00pm**, Swezey-Avey House.
Donation \$10 adults; children under 12, free.
Swezey-Avey Exhibit Rooms Open.
Holiday Music and Refreshments.

Bank of the River Gift Shop at the Hawkins House

Hours: Thursday Afternoons, noon—4:00pm
Phone: 631-924-3401

We wish you a Happy and Healthy Holiday Season

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please enroll me as:

_____ \$25 Individual _____ \$150 Business \$_____ Additional Support
_____ \$40 Family _____ \$300 Life Member TOTAL ENCLOSED \$_____

Thank you for your Support !

Make check payable to Yaphank Historical Society.

Please complete and mail form & check to : Yaphank Historical Society, P.O. Box 111, Yaphank, NY 11980

Name _____ Phone Number: _____

Address: _____ Email: _____

Town: _____ State: _____ Zipcode: _____

Yaphank Historical Society is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. Donations are tax-deductible as allowable by law.