

COUNTY OF SUFFOLK

KATE BROWNING
County Legislator, 3rd District
Public Safety Committee, Chair



COUNTY LEGISLATURE

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Yaphank Historic District Receives Grant from Legislator Browning

\$14,000 Helps Yaphank Historical Society Improve Hawkins House & Booth House



(Pictured standing in front of the Robert Hawkins House: First row-Peggy Judd, Robert Kessler, Legislator Kate Browning; Second row-Olive Archer, Liz Horan, Sandy Hausman, Mindy Hausman; Third row-Jim Vavrina and Audrey Kessler)

Yaphank, NY – On Friday, October 4, 2013 Legislator Kate Browning (WF-Shirley) presented the board members of the Yaphank Historical Society with a check for \$14,000. Legislator Browning secured monies from Suffolk County's hotel/motel fund, which was created to help increase tourism through cultural arts and historic preservation. The grant is being used by the Yaphank Historical Society to make important improvements to both the Robert Hawkins House and Marie Louise Booth House in Yaphank.

The Booth house, dating from circa 1823, was the birthplace of Mary Louise Booth, in 1831. Miss Booth was an author, translator and the first editor of Harpers Bazaar. The home is now used as a museum.

Robert Hewlett Hawkins, born in 1817, was a seventh generation descendent of Robert and Mary Hawkins who arrived in Charlestown Massachusetts, (now a part of the city of Boston) in 1635 from London, England. At

an early age, James H. Weeks, an influential businessman from Yaphank, gave Robert a letter of introduction to a prominent mercantile firm in New York City and thus began Hawkins successful business career. In a short time he amassed a fortune allowing him to form many ongoing personal and business relationships with a number of honorable businessmen. The Robert Hawkins house was constructed in 1850 by Robert Hewlett Hawkins on Yaphank Avenue in Yaphank. It was the only early Victorian home in the area and the house remained in the Hawkins family until 1887. It is now owned by Suffolk County and is part of the Parks Department Historic Trust.

“Yaphank has a rich history and a very active historical society,” stated Legislator Kate Browning. “Decades ago, many of the historic homes in Yaphank were in jeopardy of being demolished, but through a strong partnership with Suffolk County and the Yaphank Historical Society, these homes are being restored and attracting visitors as museums. It’s been a pleasure to see a rebirth of the historic district, and these monies will assist with these ongoing efforts.”

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