

THE FOUNDERS

Yaphank was settled in 1726 on the east bank of the Connecticut, or Carman's, River four miles north of its mouth on the Great South Bay. Until 1846, when the railroad was extended eastward through the area, the settlement was called Millville. Several sources claim that William Weeks suggested the name change to Yaphank when the post office was opened here. At the time, there were already several villages named Millville in New York State. The tract of land in which most of Yaphank is located was part of a purchase, from the Unkechaug sub-tribe by Colonel William "Tangier" Smith in 1691, under a royal grant in recognition of his previous service to the Crown as mayor of the city of Tangiers in Africa. Called St. George's Manor, the grant included all of the land from the ocean to Middle Road, and from Carman's River to the Southampton Town line. The northeast section, containing over 7,000 acres, was known as the Swamp, or Long Swamp, later changed to Longwood.

Early colonial settlers dammed the river for water power at various places, including those called Upper Lake and Lower Lake. Swezey's, or Upper Mill was built in 1739 by Capt. Robert Robertson. Two mills, later known as Gerard's Mill or Lower Mill, were built by John Homan at the lower lake: a saw mill in 1762 and a grist mill in 1771. A woolen factory also stood on the lower dam for many years. Other mills along the river included Ebenezer Homan's fulling mill north of Yaphank and Carman's grist and saw mill in South Haven.

St. Andrew's Church is located on the south side of East Main Street near the east end of the settlement and northeast of Carman's River. The church occupies one acre surrounded on three sides by the northern edge of Southaven County Park. The first 1/2 acre was deeded to the Episcopal Diocese of Long Island by James and Susan Weeks in 1873. The Weeks family cemetery was conveyed early in the twentieth century. The remaining 1/3 acre was deeded to the diocese early in the 20th century, lost through tax sale, and donated back to the diocese in 1975.

In 1818, James Huggins Weeks, of Oyster Bay, married Susan Maria Jones, daughter of Maj. William and Kezia Youngs Jones of Cold Spring Harbor. Family tradition claims that James and Susan, who was 16 years old, eloped from a formal ball. Her ball gown, in which she was married, was believed to have been on display in the museum of the Daughter's of the American Revolution in Washington, D. C.; investigation has, however, failed to prove that fact. James Huggins Weeks, son of James and Miriam Doughty Weeks of Oyster Bay, was a descendent of Francis and Elizabeth Luther Weekes who arrived in Salem, Massachusetts in 1635. They settled in Providence, Rhode Island, as sympathizers with Roger Williams, moving to Gravesend, Long Island in 1645. Susan Maria Jones was a descendent of Maj. Thomas Jones of Fort Neck, Queens County, now known as Massapequa, Nassau County. Jones Beach State Park was named for Thomas who, with his wife, Freelove, settled Fort Neck in 1697, following a busy career as an Irish pirate.

Susan's ancestors on the maternal side, the Rev'd John Youngs and his wife, Joan Herrington, arrived in Southold in 1636. An interesting bit of history, passed down through the family, tells of Susan's mother, Keziah, who was kissed on the cheek by George Washington when he was a house guest of her parents, Capt. Daniel and Susanna Youngs, at "Cove Nook", Oyster Bay, during his April, 1790 visit to Long Island. Throughout her years, according to the story, Keziah refused to allow anyone else to kiss her "Washington cheek." The Youngs' house, built in 1662, still stands today on Cove Road, Oyster Bay, across the road from the family burial ground, which also holds the body of President Theodore Roosevelt. The house which William and Kezia Jones built, in Cold Spring, is now part of the campus of the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory. At the time of the writing of Part I, it was the home of the Director, Dr. James Watson and his wife, Elizabeth, an historian and an authority on the genealogy of the Jones family.

One of Susan's sister's, Hannah, married the Rev'd Samuel Seabury, Rector of the Church of the Annunciation, son of the Rev'd Charles Seabury, Rector of Caroline Church, Setauket, and grandson of the Rt. Rev'd Samuel Seabury, first Bishop of Connecticut and of the American Church. Hannah was also related, by marriage, to the Mount family. William Sydney Mount painted portraits of many important or wealthy contemporaries, including James and Susan Weeks. Susan's sister, Eleanor, was the wife of William Sydney Smith of Longwood.

YAPHANK PIONEERS

In 1827, James Weeks purchased nine thousand acres of land, mostly East of Yaphank, from Susan's brother-in-law William Sydney Smith, of Longwood. One year later, James and Susan, along with their six year old son, William, moved into their new home in Yaphank, which was later called "The Lilacs". In 1839, James bought 56 additional acres from William Smith, east of Yaphank, in an area called Wampmissic. According to one historian, Camp Upton and its successor, Brookhaven National Laboratories, is located in Wampmissic.

A major part of James Week's business was logging. As a result of the difficulties faced in shipping his products, he was active among the early promoters of a railroad from Brooklyn to Greenport, running along the center of the island. From 1847 to 1850 he served as President of the Long Island Rail Road. He also served as a Brookhaven Town trustee and as Commissioner of Roads, but was primarily concerned with the management of his commercial operations. Logging was a major business at that time. Dr. Edgar Fenn Peck, writing of his travels on Long Island wrote in 1842 that the yellow pine trees "...stood so close together that a horse could not pass between them." He added that the same held true for the oak, hickory, locusts, spreading chestnuts and white dogwood. (Dyson: Anecdotes & Events...)

Frequent articles in "The Long-Islander" newspaper referred to the business activities of James. In 1836, William Sydney Smith, Robert Gerard and James Weeks purchased the old Homan Mills at Lower Lake and built a much larger structure. On March 17, 1848 a meeting of the board of directors of the Long Island Rail Road was concerned primarily with a dispute between two stage coach lines, both claiming to have the contract to carry passengers between Cold Spring and Huntington. The article concludes with a compromise resolu-

tion signed by James H. Weeks, Pres't.

A writer traveling on the L.I.R.R., July 20, 1849, described his trip, from Brooklyn Depot to the eastern terminus at Greenport, marveling over the lush fields of wheat, rye and corn around Yaphank, "...where but a short time since all was wild and desolate." At Wampmissic, he reported that the lumbering operation was "extensive" and there was a building large enough to shelter 800 cords of wood. "In this vicinity and a little north of the road, is the estate of James H. Weeks, Esq., President of the Company." At the promotional festivities in Greenport, Pres. Weeks presided and William Sydney Smith of Longwood, extolled the potential value of the area for clearing and farming. Serving with James Weeks and Wm Smith as a railroad trustee was Charles Jeffrey Smith who, 24 years later, would contribute the \$500. needed to clear the debt on the church.

Not everyone in Suffolk County shared the enthusiasm of these men for the railroad. Livestock killed by the engines and fires started by the belching of their smoke and sparks, not to mention the noise, brought on what we would now call poor public relations. Add to that the fact that the company was very reluctant to acknowledge responsibility or to pay damages. Protests escalated into station burnings, derailings and ambushes. One engine even fell through the Peconic River bridge after local people sawed through the timbers.

From the book "Steel Rails to the Sunrise", we read: "One old woman, who lived along the track near Yaphank, lost her cow under the wheels of the "Boston." When the railroad refused to pay for the animal, the woman established a daily ritual of taking a large bucket of soap over to the grade, and, a few minutes before train time, coating both rails with the slippery liquid. After the train had stalled on nearly every passage, the railroad reconsidered and paid twenty dollars for the cow." By the 1860's, the problems had increased to the point that "...two thousand people, many armed, met with railroad officials at Manorville to work out a truce whereby the railroad agreed to pay for half the damages which it caused."

One interesting coincidence: The L.I.R.R.'s tenth locomotive was named the James H. Weeks, bought in 1844 from the Baldwin Co., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The company later moved to Eddystone, Pennsylvania where its president, Samuel Vauclain, built St. Luke's Church as a memorial to a family member. Fr. Chapin was ordained priest in St. Luke's and served there as vicar for five years.

Four armed men who knocked on the front door of the "Lilacs" on a dark night in the 1870's must have thought that it was a locomotive which hit them! Declaring their intention to rob the elderly couple, the men were not prepared for the reaction of James Weeks, then in his 70's. According to all accounts, he lunged at the intruders with fists flying, knocked the first man through the parlor window and threw the second man off the front porch, knocking down the others as well. They fled for their lives and never returned.

Susan Maria Jones Weeks was active for many years looking after the poor and needy as well as providing a Christian education for the children of the area. She was untiring in her zeal for the Faith, teaching Sunday school lessons to children for most of her life. According to the account written by Eleanor Jones Smith, on the occasion of her own 50th wedding anniversary, her sister Susan

was her most devoted friend.

One letter written by Susan, dated 1879, strongly urges her granddaughter Harriet ("Hallie") to bring her husband Charles Hawkins, of Bellport, to the church for baptism. In an 1858 note which has been preserved, Susan tells of a 20/. gold coin which was found in the churchyard. Since it was found on consecrated ground, the coin was dedicated to sacred use through the church treasury. On Ash Wednesday, 1872, she copied a prayer for Christian discipleship and added a statement of faith and service marking her "threescore and ten years".

There are several material objects which once belonged to Susan and are now part of our heritage. The first is a set of four cherry and oak chairs from the Early Federal period which have been a part of the chancel and nave furniture since before the turn of the century. Though the armchairs were seriously damaged through carelessness, they have been restored to their original beauty, re-upholstered, and have become a valued part of our landmark building. Another is Susan's sewing basket, which now belongs to a family member. We also have several christening gowns and hats, a tuft of hair, parts of baby shoes, and other memorabilia, including letters and photographs.

WHY AN ANGLICAN CHURCH?

St. Andrew's Church was built for several reasons. For almost twenty years, the Weeks family worshiped at the Fireplace Neck Church, later known as the Southaven Presbyterian Church. James Weeks was serving as an elected officer of that congregation when a controversy developed among the members regarding the management of pew rentals. He and his family withdrew and attended services, when possible, at the Middle Island Presbyterian Church. However, they felt separated from a home church. The second reason for St. Andrew's was that William and Mary Weeks, who were married in 1848, lost their first child in 1850. Susan Maria Weeks, 23 months, was buried next to the road, west of the octagon house, on St. Andrew's Day (November 30th) 1850. Subsequently, the family decided to build a church, in the Anglican tradition, as a memorial to "Little Susy". Up to that time, Susan Jones Weeks (Mrs. James) was the only member of the family who was a confirmed Episcopalian.

Soon after selling an acre of land to the Presbyterians for their proposed meeting house on the north side of the road, half way between the lakes, James and William measured out a half acre lot west of the octagon house and on the south side of the road. Little Susy's grave was moved to the southerly part of the lot, which was to be reserved as a family cemetery, and the church was planned for the section along the road. Edmund Petty was contracted to build the church and the specifications called for a replication, with minor changes, of Grace Church, Fort Neck (Massapequa), the home parish of Susan's ancestors. We have the original handwritten agreement, dated December 4, 1852, including the payment receipts of \$600. upon signing, and \$650. upon completion November 19, 1853.

In a beautiful tribute to her husband, Susan wrote down some thoughts in the summer of 1853: "He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed: for he giveth of his bread to the poor." - Prov. xxii. "How entirely does the above text apply to my dear husband. He hath a bountiful eye, he doth not turn away his face from any poor man, and he giveth of his bread to the poor, and God hath blessed him.

Blessed him with health, blessed him with talents to acquire knowledge, and the means of doing much good. This day, the 28th of July, my dear husband is 55 years of age, strong and vigorous, and now engaged in the most noble work in which man can do, the building of a place to worship God. This is the best of all his doings...". We strongly suspect that the church was built in response to her desire to worship according to the Book of Common Prayer, to have a church of familiar architecture, and to provide a sacred memorial for "Little Susy."

Another touching note in Susan's hand read: "This rose was presented to me by my husband; he picked it up at Trinity Church (New York City) on the 3rd of June, a few days after it had been consecrated to the service of Almighty God, 1845. It was lying in front of the church on consecrated ground." The note was signed "S.M.W." and the same rose is in the archives of St. Andrew's Church at this writing.

After the funeral of James in 1879, Susan wrote to Bishop Littlejohn, asking for a synopsis of his funeral sermon. Her son William had noted that the bishop said that James was a man of decided opinions & that he was an honest man. Susan wrote that she wished the bishop to know also that during sixty years of marriage, he was a faithful and devoted husband. Along with the copy of his sermon, the bishop requested that Susan deed over to the diocese added land for the churchyard, including the family cemetery. She wrote that she was sorry she could not consent because her late husband had desired that the family burial ground remain as is. She added, however, that if more land were ever needed for a "parsonage", it could be bought or conveyed to the east side of the church.

When Susan died, her son William wrote to his daughter Harriet:

Yaphank, Jan'y 25th. 1888

"Dear Hallie,

Your grandmother died yesterday afternoon, about 4 o'clock.

The funeral is appointed for Saturday at 12 o'clock. You can see her before that hour at the house - will not be seen at the church.

In haste, Your affte [affectionate] father

In an age when the deeds of men often eclipsed the accomplishments of their womenfolk, Susan should be recognized as the nurturing center of her family, the prime mover of the founding of our parish church and the dedicated teacher of the children of Yaphank in her time. One touching remembrance of Susan was loaned to us for a time by her great-great granddaughter Jean Crosswell Rogers Cahn. The antique sewing box contained a note: "This Work Box was presented to me by my husband a few months previous to our marriage and has always been highly valued by me. After my decease I give and bequeath it to my dear granddaughter Harriet P. Weeks. December 10th 1818" The box contained a number of treasures, including a piece of lace from her wedding dress. An inventory of the contents is in our archives.

A UNIQUE HOUSE OF GOD FOR YAPHANK

Among the many original documents which have survived, one is the contract, dated December 4, 1852, between Edmund Petty and James Weeks, witnessed by William Weeks, "for the building of a church." The specifications call for a church "of the size and dimensions and of the same style of architecture and

finish as the Episcopal Church at Fort Neck in Queens County, Long Island.” The completion date was to be August 1, 1853 and the total price was \$1250.

For background, we understand that for almost 150 years, the Jones family, and other Anglicans who settled in Fort Neck, had traveled to St. George’s Church, Hempstead, to worship. In 1844, Gen. Thomas Floyd-Jones, a great-great grandson of Maj. Thomas Jones, donated land and a committee was chosen to raise funds to build a church. Ambrose George, a carpenter from Farmingdale was contracted, for \$1,000., to build a frame church which was, in many respects, like the Presbyterian Church in Freeport. Renovations and additions over the years have been extensive, but the side walls, six side windows, and the roof of the main section remain intact. The original specifications, and an 1845 order to the treasurer to pay the builder, have survived. The Historical Society of the Massapequa’s maintains Old Grace Church, which is listed as a State and National Landmark. Officers of their society have visited St. Andrew’s in recent years to learn details of the original architecture of their church.

We have very little information at this time concerning Edmund Petty, the builder of St. Andrew’s, except that the 1850 census lists him as a 40 year old carpenter, married, with two children, owning property worth \$1,000. William Weeks wrote that he walked to the grove in front of Petty’s to participate in the July 4th observance. Elsewhere he records that the Petty home was just east of the lot on which the Presbyterians were to build. One warrant to survive is the piece of siding signed and dated by Edmund Petty and uncovered when the 1960 addition was annexed to the church.

From the records of Ralph Howell, a principal in the E. W. Howell construction firm of Babylon, we know that the Petty and Howell families were related and that the skill of carpentry seems to run in both. Lucille Stroud’s mother, Dorothy Kauffmann DeLappe, lived in what was known as the Petty house on the north side of Main Street east of the Presbyterian Church. The name E. Howell is penciled in on some repair work to St. Andrew’s bell housing, dated November, 1902; this we now know to be Edmund F. Howell, of Babylon, who frequently visited his family on their Mill Road farm. The bell itself was made by T.F. Secor & Co., New York in 1843. It is interesting to note that the Howell’s, who later established one of the more productive home and commercial building firms on Long Island, were related to the Edmund Petty who built the church.

A brief summary of the landmark nomination rationale follows: “The Weeks family not only desired to import a rather distinct architectural style, but they had the means to do so. They brought to Yaphank a rather surprising sophistication in the form of the church, as well as in the design of the two other buildings (i.e. the octagon house and school, not to mention the alms house, all now demolished) which they managed to erect in the same period. The architecture represents the introduction of a rather cosmopolitan style in a rural setting. The use of vernacular Gothic embellishments in a building with basic Greek Revival lines distinguishes the building in this area. The suggestion of an Egyptian influence, in the form of “battered” casings on the doors and windows, further emphasizes the ability of an affluent Victorian family to import new styles and to embellish their buildings.” A complete copy of the technical architectural description appears in the appendix.