

AT THE GATE HOUSE

More Light on James Sykes

The Museum has a few members and some friends who, in the course of their personal researching, are alert to new information of interest to our archives. Recently, Christine Cohn discovered this newspaper clipping from May 22, 1822 (several years before Sykes became interested in our area).

“Beautiful specimen of extra-super American blue broadcloth, manufactured at Franklin Mills, about five miles from city, by James Sykes, had been sent for examination to American office, which competent judges said, for texture, material, and finish was equal to any ever made in America, and would not suffer in comparison with extra super-Saxons of Britain; it sold for much lower prices than foreign fabric of same description and quality.”

From Sue Bundy and Bruce Greenberg: The 1880 census lists James Sykes living in Elysville, Howard County in the household of his cousin. This fact, together with no record of a will, seems to indicate that the once wealthy Mr. Sykes ended his life in virtual poverty.

Upcoming “Member Only” Events

“A Visit with the Shipley’s of Maryland”

Christine Cohn recently attended the annual meeting and brought back to the Gate House Museum, a gift of the recently published, 3-volume set of the *Shipley’s of Maryland* Book. In February of 2002, the governing body of the “Shipleys” voted to place their archives here in our Museum. William S. Shipley and his family were Gate House residents for about forty years and his descendents still have a strong attachment to the Gate House and their memories of it. They have donated wonderful artifacts and books to the Museum. Ms. Cohn will tell us about the organization, discuss the future of the Shipley archives, and show the new books and other memorabilia. This meeting will be held on the upper level of the newly opened Sykesville Post Office and Visitor Center (the inter-locking tower), in downtown Sykesville, on Sunday, January 19 at 7:00p.m.

“Sykesville Caught on Film”

We will be showing two old films of Sykesville/Eldersburg. One is an anniversary film produced for Southern States in the 1940's. The other is a compilation of family movies and official film produced by the Strawbridge Home for Boys, narrated by former Strawbridge boys and their wives. We hope to have a former “Strawbridge Boy” or two to add zest and to answer questions. No reservation needed; just show up. This meeting will be held on the upper level of the newly opened Sykesville Post Office and Visitor Center (the inter-locking tower), in downtown Sykesville, on March 28th at 7p.m.

Photo Archaeology Continues

As a result of the untiring work of some Museum members and a few others, we now have what amounts to a huge family album of Sykesville in the late 1940's and early 1950's. About twenty volunteers have invested roughly 110 hours, viewing, cataloging, and archivally preserving well over 1,600 photographs and/or negatives. These photographs and negatives cover virtually every aspect of community and private life including babies, weddings, parties, parades, streets scenes, car wrecks, animals, children, funerals, and dead bodies. How amazing!

The work continues with Keely Saslow and Kimberly McLeod preparing a catalog of each individual's and family's name. Amazingly 98% of these negatives and prints from Roland Gillis' Sykesville Photo Center came to us with envelopes bearing the names of the subjects. The donors are the Gillis' of Appalachian Mission Store.

Now, while there are still “Old Timers” around who lived in the Sykesville area in those days, we want to start collecting some oral history about the subjects. We'd like to gather such experts, no more than three at a time, for a series of one hour sessions, where they can give information about these subjects, to preserve posterity, at our Museum. If you believe you qualify and would be willing to attend one of these sessions, give us a call. We hope to begin this last phase of “Photo Archaeology” in February.

- * Don't forget our popular **Spring History Walk**, sponsored jointly with the Friends of Old Trinity Cemetery. This will be Sunday afternoon, March 16th. We will be leaving the Gate House at 2:00 p.m. and finish around 4:00 p.m. All are welcome, no charge, but an offering is taken at the end. This year's walk will include a choice of two topics. The first is a stroll down Springfield Avenue, accompanied by Dorothy Schafer and Kari Greenwalt, looking at the houses (outside, not inside) and hearing about some of their former residents and stories. The second walk is a

tour of the site of the Springfield Mines led by Mining historian/engineer, Johnny Johnson. Please mark your calendars.

- * **Remember:** Museum Holiday Open House, Sunday December 29th from 2:00 to 4:00p.m. Food, fun, live music and friends. Our two vintage Electric Trains will be operating each time the Museum opens from December 8th through January 2003.

- * **Remember your 20% Museum Members Discount** in the Museum Shop. Two books all about Sykesville, matted enlargements of old Sykesville postcards, and 8 X 10 reprints of an old postcard of a snowy scene at the Railroad Station would make wonderful presents of home. All these marvelous holiday presents-at 20% off!

From everyone here at the Gate House, we wish you and yours a wonderful holiday season! We hope to see all of you at our open house. Hope you have a safe and happy New Year!

Sincerely,

Kari & Jim