

At the Gate House

Membership Newsletter

Summer 2003

Volume 2 number 2

This spring has produced several changes at the Gate House. Most noticeable is the “new” bionic archivist – Jim Purman. Jim now has a new hip and after a month of rehabilitation is flying through the building faster than a speeding bullet. We are ecstatic that he is back and better than ever.

Alpha volunteer Justin Tims will graduate from Liberty High in June. He came to the museum at age 12, becoming the first volunteer. We know he is off to bigger and brighter things...his future has no limits! However, we here at the museum won't be the same without his expert supervision and quiet leadership of the Sunday volunteers. We will miss him dropping by to “check up” on us. Kristin Chapman graduate's from Liberty this June, too. Although here for less than a year, she has proven to be invaluable. Her dedication, skill and good humor are remarkable for “one so young.” She will head off in August to Cedar Crest College in Allentown, Penn. to pursue her interests of all things history. We will miss her greatly.

May 6 marked the passing of a longtime friend of Sykesville – William Frederick Church. Mr. Church touched the lives of many in the community and will be deeply missed. A brief history of his life is on page 2.

All of this marvelous rain is causing the gardens to sprout new blossoms like mad. The weeds, too! But thanks to the tireless efforts of the *Dream Team* (Kimberly McCloud and Keely Saslow) and Kristin, the weeds are slowly disappearing. Keely and Kimberly have also been hard at work organizing files and photographs. Hans Vreeland is keeping the museum in ship shape condition.

Archivist volunteer Helen R. Gaither donated some beautiful summer flowers from her personal garden and we eagerly await the results. We are also awaiting the delivery of four ‘Nikko Blue’ hydrangea shrubs for a border along the porch in the Dorothy Clarke Schafer garden. They produce Wedgwood blue blooms that are nearly a foot across throughout mid-summer. The garden will also gain a flowering Okami Cherry tree, which produces delicate, light pink blossoms in the spring and early fall, but no cherries, and turns vibrant red in mid fall.

The Gate House is gaining its third college intern this summer. The two previous interns worked last summer on research projects. This year's intern, Luke Beam, will focus on the creation of a docent's guide and organization of the Sykesville Bonn-ette collection in addition to numerous odds and ends.

Thanks to a wonderful reunion of “Old Eldersburg residents” orchestrated by Anna Rose Beasman Anderson we have met many new friends. Some have even agreed to oral histories of their experiences growing up in and around the town of Sykesville. We look forward to staying in touch with all of these knowledgeable past and present residents.

After a heated bidding war between a museum volunteer and a Sykesville Historic District member (neither knew who the other was!), the museum is the beneficiary of a “new” postcard. The card shows a panoramic view of the town from the hill west of Norwood Avenue. The educated guess of our archivist, Jim Purman, is that it was taken between 1907 and 1909.

Also received in the archives is a new book on the Jones family, “Growing with Maryland,” by Jane Ward (it includes information on Sykesville's most famous photography trio), a history of Patapsco Valley mill sites by Jim Pierce (a future speaker), a fascinating collection of Bicentennial ephemera and an old engraving of General George Washington.

Throughout the summer the museum has scheduled a number of events to coincide with the Sykesville tourism event schedule. Be sure to check the listings on page 3 and mark your calendar!

Earlier this month the town of Sykesville lost a legend, William Frederick “Fred” Church. Church was truly a self made man. Born March 17, 1913 in Maryland, he was adopted by Mr. And Mrs. William Samuel Church. He grew up in Sykesville on Spout Hill Road, just past the Dinky Bridge on the right. His father pulled him out of high school before graduation to go to work at the *Sykesville Herald* offices. From that point on Church was a self-educated man; he never had the opportunity to attend college.

Major Albert M. Hall started the *Sykesville Herald* September 18, 1913. Hall employed William Samuel Church as shop foreman. After 1918, the *Herald* became a stock company, and over the years various people held a controlling interest, including Church’s father.

In 1936 he married the lovely Jane Lucille Iglehart, who passed away in 1993. They eventually purchased a home on Carter Road, the first housing development in Sykesville. Church served as editor of the newspaper for 35 years, beginning in 1936; he became the sole owner of the *Herald* and its printing company in 1951 and operated both until 1971. Church sold the newspaper but continued with the printing company. The *Herald* newspaper eventually wound up under Landmark Publishing Company (owner of the *Carroll County Times*), and was closed in December 1983.

During World War II Church acted as the local director of Civil Defense in Sykesville. He oversaw the hiring and training of locals to defend the town against enemy invasion. He regularly reported to officials in Baltimore. In addition to his Defense duties, Church corresponded with local men fighting on the battlefronts, and published their accounts of the war in the *Herald*.

In addition to his thriving newspaper career, Church found time to participate in numerous local civic organizations. He was a charter member of the Sykesville-South Carroll Rotary Club and served as their 16th president from 1955 to 1956. Over the years he was a treasurer, trustee, deacon and elder of the Springfield Presbyterian Church. He later attended St. Paul’s United Methodist Church, with his wife (who was already a member), for 30 years where he eventually acted as head usher and historian. He served as president of Springfield Cemetery Association from 1961 to 1977 and remained on their board until his death.

Church was the last surviving charter member of the Sykesville-Freedom District Fire Department. He served as a former secretary and past president of the department. When the Fire Department decided to purchase the land and construct its current building, Church was the first charter member to endorse the decision. A forward thinking man, he immediately saw the benefits of the new location on Route 32. Church also served as president of the Carroll County Fireman’s Association from 1937 to 1938.

All of these things show the dedication Church had for his adopted town. Behind these numerous activities lurked a gentle, caring soul. Church loved the Baltimore Opera. He attended numerous shows, and listened to classical music during his lunch. Family members and colleagues recall his “perfect” lunches. In addition to music, he would eat a sandwich, piece of fruit, two cookies and a drink. All was carefully laid out.

Church was known for his love of cats. He had a collection of them both at home and in the *Herald* office. They would appear at his door, knowing a friend was waiting with a warm bed and food.

Fred Church’s legacy is great. His accomplishments in the world of local news continue to inspire journalists in search of the perfect story. His work for humanities continues in the Sykesville-South Carroll Rotary and Sykesville-Freedom District Fire Department. His papers, carefully collected and stored from the years he served as Civil Defense director, live on at the Sykesville Gate House Museum of History. He saved and bound a copy of every Sykesville Herald ever published. Most of those remain at the Gate House, too. He is survived by not just nieces and nephews, but an entire community. We will certainly miss his gentle leadership.

Upcoming Events

Saturday, June 7, 1:00pm to 4:00pm, is the 20th annual **Sykesville Strawberry Festival**, sponsored by the Sykesville Historic District Commission, Sykesville Tourism Office and E.W. Beck's Restaurant! Come to the Sykesville Town House and enjoy strawberries in a variety of ways – plain, with ice cream, or the WORKS (berries, ice cream, shortcake and whipped cream). There will be raffles – for children's toys, cosmetics products and a dinner basket of certificates from local restaurants—music, face painting, and displays from Old Trinity Cemetery and the Gate House. Proceeds will be split between the Town Tourism Office and the Gate House Museum.

Trains! Trains! Trains! Calling all model railroad enthusiasts...Saturday, July 5 the Town of Sykesville will host its second annual **Model Railroad Festival**.

The Gate House Museum, open 10:00am to 4:00pm, will have its standard gauge Lionel 1926 and O-gauge MARX 1935 model trains running along with a new display diorama – the Maryland Militia breaking up a strike on the B&O Railroad outside of Sykesville in 1828.

To become a vendor or for further information, contact the Town Tourism Director, Peggy Soper, 410-795-8959.

The **Dog Days of Summer** are fast approaching! The first Saturday in August, Sykesville merchants will hold sidewalk sales and pet contests, including Prettiest Pet and Best Pet Trick (think the Dave Letterman Show).

August 2, the Gate House Museum will host a second "Tea at the Town House." The tea menu will include iced teas, cookies, and fruit. There will also be musical entertainment.

Tickets are \$5 in advance from the Gate House and will go on sale Saturday, June 7 during the Strawberry Festival. Tickets will be \$6 the day of the tea.

Historian Jim Pierce will give a lecture on "**Wars and the Patapsco Valley**," September 6, 7:00pm, at the Old Main Line Post Office and Visitor's Center (activities room on the 2nd floor).

Mr. Pierce will discuss the huge impact the river valley has had on warfare from King William's War (the Jacobite War) through the current Iraqi War. A question and answer period will follow the lecture.

Lecture is free to museum members and includes snacks. There will be a \$2 charge to the public (remember to bring your membership card).

Break out your best World War II outfit! On Saturday, October 25, the Sykesville Gate House Museum will host its second annual **World War II/ U.S.O. Dinner and Dance** at the Sykesville-Freedom District Fire Hall.

Dance to the musical stylings of the Thom Roland Band (formerly the Hunt Valley Jazz Band) with their 16-piece big band orchestra. Door prizes and contest for best-dressed couple.

Tickets, \$20 per person, will go on sale July 5 at the Gate House. All proceeds will benefit programs at the Gate House.

Sykesville Gate House Museum of History

7283 Cooper Drive; Sykesville, Maryland 21784 ~ 410-549-5150

CALENDAR JUNE – JULY – AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 2003

Sunday	Wednesday	Friday	Saturday
<u>1:00 – 6:00p.m.</u>	<u>1:00- 6:00p.m.</u>	<u>2:00-8:00p.m.</u>	<u>times vary</u>
June 1	June 4	June 6	June 7
“ 8	“ 11	“ 13	*See Note Below*
“ 15	“ 18	“ 20	
“ 22	“ 25	“ 27	
“ 29			
	July 2	July 4 - CLOSED	July 5
July 6	“ 9	“ 11	10:00 – 4:00pm
“ 13	“ 16	“ 18	*See Note Below*
“ 20	“ 23	“ 25	
“ 27	“ 30		
		August 1	August 2
August 3	August 6	“ 8	tickets required
“ 10	“ 13	“ 15	*See Note Below*
“ 17	“ 20	“ 22	
“ 24	“ 27	“ 29	
“ 31			
	September 3	September 5	September 6
September 7	“ 10	“ 12	tickets required
“ 14	“ 17	“ 19	*See Note Below*
“ 21	“ 24	“ 26	
“ 28			

*** Don't Forget These Important Dates***

June 7, 1:00 – 4:00pm ~Strawberry Festival (on the Sykesville Town House lawn)
 July 5, 10:00 – 4:00pm ~Model Railroad Festival (throughout the town and at the Gate House)
 August 2, 11:30am, 12:45pm and 2:00pm ~ Summer Tea (Sykesville Town House lawn)
 September 6, 7:00pm ~ “Wars and the Patapsco Valley” (Old Main Line Visitor’s Center – 2nd floor)
Tickets (where noted) are available for purchase at the Gate House Museum.

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