

At the Gate House

Membership Newsletter

Winter 2003

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The Gate House Museum staff would like to wish everyone a happy new year. This year has certainly started out bitterly cold, but the museum remains toasty warm. Our annual open house was a huge success, many old friends stopped by, but lots of newcomers came to see the exhibits. The food was great; thanks to all who contributed snacks. The dulcimer music by Elaine Breeding, Charlotte Monroe and Faye Smith was enchanting; the melodious strains warmly filled both floors of the building. We were able to raise a large box of canned food items for Carroll Food Sunday, so again, thanks to all.

Our annual Spring History Walk, sponsored jointly with the Friends of Old Trinity Cemetery will be **Sunday, March 16**. 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, a stroll down Springfield Avenue, accompanied by Kari Greenwalt and Dorothy Clarke Schafer. They will look at the houses (outside, not inside) and tell about some of the homes 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.

Thelma Wimmer Day will be held Sunday, April 6, 3:00 – 5:00 p.m., to honor the official Town of Sykesville Historian and matriarch of the Gate House Museum on her 94th birthday. Come wish Mrs. Wimmer a happy birthday and enjoy refreshments, music and best of all – Birthday Cake!

Last year the museum embarked on its first ever membership drive to honor Mrs. Wimmer. We thank everyone who signed up as members during that time. For many of our members, it's now that time of year to renew your membership with the Gate House. Simply look at your mailing address label, next to your name will appear the date your membership expires (those with an "L" are life members and do not need to worry about renewing membership). Remember, with your membership, you receive our membership newsletter, four members-only activities and 20% off all museum store merchandise.

Flower Power is coming to Sykesville the first Saturday of May. “Main Street will be in bloom” May 3; during the day there will be a community wide yard sale and locally grown flowers for sale at outdoor vendors on Main Street. The Gate House will host a tea on the Town House lawn at 3:00 p.m. “High tea” will be available with advance tickets (for \$5.00 per person), and proceeds will go toward the museum expansion project.

Speaking of flowers, the Dorothy Clarke Schafer Garden will be in full bloom this spring. Thanks to several donations and museum purchases, new flowers and bushes will be bursting forth this year. In addition, the original five rose bushes and several clematis vines are already firmly rooted in and beginning to show signs of new growth. As the garden plaque says, “a thing of beauty is a joy forever; it’s loveliness; it will never pass into nothingness.” So, stop by and enjoy the tranquility on the garden bench or museum porch. You’ll be glad you did.

Recent Accessions

We have two electrically wired kerosene lamps that now grace the dining room and parlor. One is the gift of Thelma Wimmer, with milk glass font and shade, the other, a museum purchase, with a clear glass font and milk glass shade.

A portrait of one of the Jones sisters as a young girl, possibly Fanny, was found by the donor, Rachel Mercer, behind a furnace in a former Jones sisters home (see attached *Carroll Sun* article by Debbie Young).

Betty Jean Maus came to the annual holiday open house, bringing as a gift to the museum, two Jones sisters hand-colored photographs, which she had received as a wedding present; “Star of Bethlehem” and “Yellow Roses.” The museum’s in-house collection of Jones sister’s material has grown to a very respectable level.

More photographs have arrived from the former Sykesville Photographic Studio through Gina Gillis Bailey. Also in with the photographs are numerous slides and two 8mm reels of film (what is on the film, is yet to be determined).

An often overlooked aspect of the museum is our library, for which we recently received as gifts these books:

Maryland's Mining Heritage; A Guide by John R. Park

B&O Railroad Employees 1842 and 1852, 1855 and 1857 by Edna A. Kanely

Main Streets [Photographs and Text Across America] no author listed

Historic Bridges of Maryland by D. Legler and C. Highsmith

Completed Projects

Kristin Chapman has completed a massive undertaking to organize the World War II Civil Defense collection of Fred Church. Some previously unnoticed artifacts came to light, including a map of vulnerable areas for attack in Sykesville and a chart of all emergency supplies, including oxygen tanks, gas masks and boats (Sykesville had one!) in all Maryland cities.

Keely Saslow and Kimberly McLeod finished transferring descriptions of pictures and negatives from the SPC collection notebook to individual cards.

Kimberly, Keely and Kristin cleared the attic storage room of debris and old, unusable computer equipment and transferred the bound *Sykesville Herald* newspapers (from 1930 – 1982) onto shelving in the attic room, which will now be used for temporary archival storage. The *Herald's* from 1913 – 1929 are now housed in the archive room and are on limited access due to rapid disintegration of the papers.

Andrew Collins sorted and organized the museum train collection, which is also stored in the attic room.

**Sincerely,
Kari & Jim**

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