

A New Home

On October 30, Howard County officials met to discuss Sykesville's proposal for long-term lease of a nine acre land parcel on the Howard County side of Sykesville. The land includes what is believed to be the former office of James Sykes. Also included are a weigh station, building foundation and a brick warehouse and patio that housed the former A.H. Renehan & Sons storage facility and apple juice production operation.

Howard County agreed to the lease terms and Sykesville will take possession of the property January 2007.

What does this mean?

The Town of Sykesville plans to host a spring charrette to discuss plans for use of the property. One of those plans is to move the Gate House Museum to a 2,000 square foot portion of the A.H. Renehan warehouse. The other 4,000 square feet would become a meeting place, and rental facility for town events, festivals and receptions.

The move would greatly increase the Museum's space. Currently the interior of the warehouse is completely open. This would allow the town to potentially build a second story in a portion of the space, to allow for offices, storage and library space. There is also a cement slab addition that could be used for archival storage. Additionally, the building would be easily handicap accessible to allow all in the community easy access to our town's rich history.

Best of all, the property is at a major entrance into the



A.H. Renehan & Sons storage facility. The Museum will potentially move to the section in the foreground.

Town, right along Main Street. It can be seen from Sykesville Road (Route 32)! Visitors would have an easier time finding us. Plus, the larger space, along with ample outdoor areas and parking, would allow for school tour groups and provide room for additional events including living history programs.

When will this all happen?

The Town will not officially take over the lease until January and as previously mentioned, a planning charrette will take place in the spring. Mayor Herman believes that we will be able to complete construction and move into our new facility approximately a year from the planning charrette.

If you would like to be part of the planning process or contribute to the project funding, please stop by the Museum or call for more information. We will give updates in upcoming newsletters.

Far Thee Well

It is with a heavy heart that we wish Curator Jaime Bradley a fond farewell and best wishes. After much consideration, Jaime has decided to further her education and work experience with a move to Kentucky at the end of December.

Jaime joined the Museum in October of 2004, and since that time has proved to be a valuable asset to both

the Museum and Town. She was instrumental in the writing process for the lease agreement with Howard County and secured a Museum Enhancement Grant through the MHT. She has created a computer collections data base and updated the collection policy and storage conservation plan.

Beyond the many tangible accomplishments, she has been a good friend and mentor to the many volunteers and visitors we receive at the Museum.

Her last day will be Tuesday, January 2.

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Curator's Corner

Conservation Advice
For
Real-Life



Tips on Storage

While you are routing through the garage, basement, or attic for space to re-store your Holiday decorations, take a look at the other “stuff” you have accumulated. What you store and how you store it can make a difference in what makes it through and what is just wasting your space.

A good rule of thumb - if you haven't used it in over a year, then you really don't need it. Give away items, such as gently used children's toys, clothing, or furniture, to charity and take advantage of their great tax deductible benefit. Antiques or collectables can be taken to one of our wonderful, local consignment shops to help you make up for those stocking stuffers.

If you come across an item that looks historically significant, bring it to the museum first. Donations to museums are tax deductible as well. Our museum is interested in items that help to tell the story of our community – such as photographs showing local buildings, farms, landmarks, or people. We are also interested in documents, such as deeds, that discuss property transactions, businesses, or other local organizations. Personal items that help demonstrate life in a simpler place and time, such as antique tools, trade items or artifacts, rail-roading artifacts, or unique items may also be historically significant.

Once you have a grasp on your “stuff,” there are things you should keep in mind for storing them prop-

erly. Try and store important items in a part of the house with a dry, stable temperature; some garages and basements will qualify, most attics will not. Families should keep important documents – birth certificates, social security cards, insurance policies, photos documenting insured property, and other valuables – in a fire proof safe. If this is not feasible, keep them in an acid-free archival box on an upper shelf in a dark, dry, well-ventilated closet.

For important memorabilia and clothing, I recommend the practical home solution of storing them in thick, opaque plastic tubs. Clothing especially can become stained or mildewy if stored in brown cardboard boxes or trash bags. Certain plastic containers, such as Rubbermaid Roughnecks, have been shown to provide protection against water and fire damage. Thin clear plastic, however, can accumulate moisture on the inside if stored in an area where temperatures vary greatly, such as an attic or crawl space, and allow light damage. For more archival storage, vintage clothing should be stored in muslin fabric bags, gently folded or hung on padded hangers. Items should be refolded and rotated periodically to prevent uneven stress. Memorabilia can be layered lightly between acid-free tissue paper sheets, which is also good as wrappers and box filling. Make sure boxes are packed tight, and filled in with tissue paper or cotton rags, to avoid shifting.

Remember, a few moments of planning now can save grandma's china from becoming a carton of broken promises after a few Holiday box shuffles!!

Help Wanted

With all the changes taking place, the Museum needs a few good volunteers for some long term projects.

1. Photograph Storage - Assistance re-housing many of the Museum's diverse photographs.
2. Data Entry - A computer savvy person to help log collection data into Excel.
3. Tour Guides - Someone to learn a tour route for the Spring History Walk, as well as tour guides at the Museum.

If you or someone you know is interested, please contact Kari, 410-549-5150.



A snowy view of the Baldwin's Train Station, Sykesville from Mellor Avenue, taken by Helen R. Gaither, c. 1948.

Recommended Readings...

Any SGHM member or volunteer can submit a review. Please send your review of a historical non-fiction book, with no more than 300 words, to the Museum and we will publish at least one each newsletter.

This quarter's review is from Jaime M. Bradley, SGHM Curator.

Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England

By William Cronon

Hill and Wang, Updated 20th Anniversary Edition
Copyright 2003

History and nature come alive in this groundbreaking work highlighting the influence of human habitation on the natural landscape of New England. In *Changes in the Land*, William Cronon not only places the land at the center of the story, but sees the landscape itself as the main character.

Through clear and enjoyable prose, meticulous research in historical records and ecological sources of all kinds, Cronon tells the story of New England's colonization. He brings readers along on a tour of forest, field and parish while demonstrating how humans and the environment influence and apply force on each other.

Most importantly, Cronon describes the profound purposes behind the delicate hunter-gather culture of the Native Americans, and shows how they altered the land-

scape, actually creating a non-virgin setting for the Europeans. Furthermore, he shows how Europeans misinterpreted Native practices and animal behavior based on biases and perceptions stemming from their own European ecological origins as they attempted to recreate their own idea of pastoral beauty in a European way.

Changes in the Land is considered a premier text on the intersection of ecology into economic and social history; breaking the model of traditional thought on Native American use and manipulation of the landscape and European colonization.

Other recent publications, such as *1491*, follow in the footsteps of Cronon and *Changes in the Land*. Anyone who enjoys history or nature will benefit from this title.

Volunteer Notebook...

- Rob Singleton is hard at work assisting computerizing the museum catalog.
- Fran Midkiff and Victoria Walls are working on a library database and by early next year, the library will be housed according to the Library of Congress and browse-able by computer database.
- Ann and George Horvath donated a copy of research on James Sykes that they used for the recent Old Trinity Cemetery Visitation.
- Claudia Purkey once again organized and designed the House Tour Guide, brochures and tickets.
- Tracy Cox volunteered her expertise to design the WWII Dance ad and ads for the House Tour guide.
- Dave Greenwalt assisted with the set up and break down of the WWII Dance.
- Howard Smith has continued to assist visitors with research questions and covered the museum several times during meetings.
- Mark Franz of the S&P Railway Club built a new 1920s style train tunnel and got our MM&J up and running this year.

Comings and Goings...

- On November 4, the Museum hosted its fifth annual WWII Dinner Dance at the Sykesville Fire Hall. This year saw several new veterans in attendance, as well as many old friends. The event was a huge success and netted the Museum \$2,955! Next year's event will be held at the same location, on Saturday, November 11.
- Thanks to gracious homeowners Dana Alonzi, Stacy Link, Dan & Eloise Stinchcomb, Pat & Ray Greenwald and Chrissy & Bill Elliot, the 5th Bi-Annual Historic House Tour was a resounding success. Over 100 attendees visited the four private and four public buildings on December 3. The Museum raised \$1,521.85 during the event.
- **December 16 our good friend and former Archivist Jim Purman turned 81 years young. For those who might wish to send New Year's wishes, his address has temporarily changed, while he recovers from a fall. You can send a card to: Jim Purman; Good Samaritan; 1320 Wheat Road, Room 311; Winfield, KS 67156.**

Sykesville Gate House Museum
7283 Cooper Drive
Sykesville, Maryland 21784

Happy New Year!

The Museum will be closed:

- ⇒ Friday, January 12 at 5:00PM
- ⇒ Friday, January 26
- ⇒ **The Museum will open at 11:30 AM on Wednesdays for the month of January.**

Upcoming Events

- ⇒ Sunday, March 18, 2:00 - 4:00PM; Annual Spring History Walk

For information: 410-549-5150

Museum Open

Wednesday thru Friday 10:00am – 6:00pm
1st Sunday of the month 1:00pm – 6:00pm

Kari A. Greenwalt, Director