



# SYKESVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT NEWS

Spring, 2003

## History Walk Looks at Home and Industry

Join the Spring History Walk on Sunday, March 16 and explore two parts of town that were originally part of William Patterson's estate, Springfield. Participants can take a guided tour of Springfield Avenue or the site of the Springfield mines.

In 1849 Isaac Tyson, Jr. opened a mine on the estate, which by then had passed in ownership to William's son, George. The Springfield Iron and Copper Mine operated until 1869, then reopened briefly in 1881 and again in 1916. Iron ore was sent by train to Baltimore to make car wheels for the B&O Railroad. Laborers came from Cornwall, England since the mines there were depleted and there was no work. Town historian Dorothy Schafer is descended from Scottish ancestors who came to Sykesville to work in the mine.

When the mine was reopened in May of 1881 the *Westminster Democratic Advocate* reported, "A switch has been put in at Sykesville for the use of the Sykesville mines...The old shafts are being secured by new timbers...miners tools were found just as they were left 15 years ago. A pick with a new handle in it was found, looking as new as it did the day it was put in.

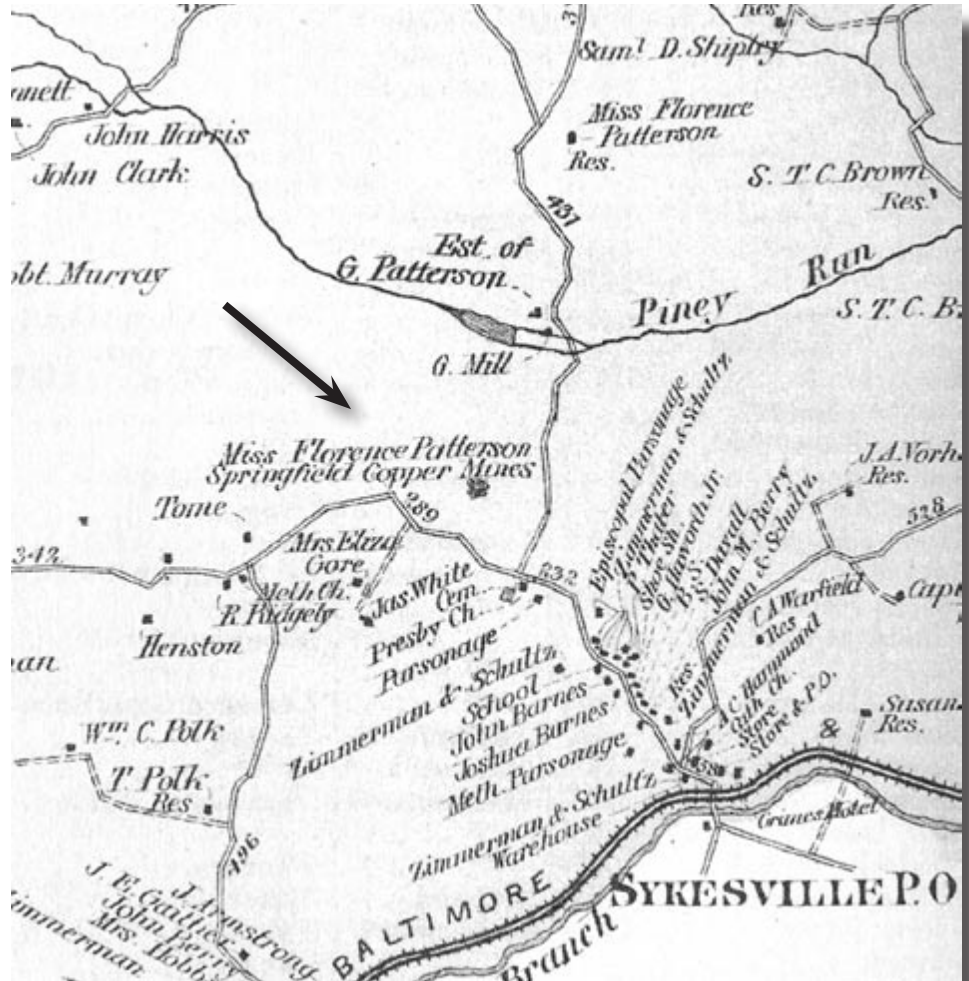
*The 1877 Atlas of Carroll County shows the Springfield Mines (see arrow).*

A steam drill will be put to work this week, the first one that has ever been run here. The progressiveness of the age has left its stamp on mining as well as on other industries and...the superintendent...will use all the improved methods in developing the ore that is supposed to abound here."

Mining historian and engineer Johnny Johnsson will lead a tour to the mine site, which is off of Obrecht Road on the property of the appropriately named Copper Ridge assisted living facility at Fairhaven.

The second tour will take in early houses of Sykesville on Springfield Avenue. Life-long resident Dorothy Schafer and Gate House Museum cura-

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# Architectural Salvage Opens in Baltimore

Looking for stained glass windows, old doors and floors or claw foot tubs? Try Second Chance, the new salvage store in downtown Baltimore near



*A small section of the B&O stained glass window.*

## Walking Tour ...cont'd.

tor Kari Greenwalt will pause outside the houses and recount the history of the homes and the homeowners.

In the 1880s Frank Brown, then owner of Springfield and later governor of Maryland, laid out a portion of his land for residential development that is now Springfield Avenue. Many of



*Left: Houses along Springfield Avenue.  
Right: Dorothy Schafer and Kari Greenwalt will lead the Springfield Avenue tour.*

Ravens stadium with 40,000 square feet of warehouse space filled with treasures for your next renovation project.

Second Chance works with builders, contractors and homeowners to recycle materials that might be headed for the landfills. They can send in a team to deconstruct a building and salvage everything that is reusable. "Not only do we rescue architectural elements for re-use but we also create jobs in the process," said director Mark Foster. Operated as a non-profit, the organization provides job training in the building trades for lower-income workers.

If you want to own a piece of Baltimore's history, Foster has some grand offerings including the terra cotta façade from the demolished Tongue Brooks Insurance Company building on St. Paul Place, a marble staircase from the interior renovation of the Muncey Building on Calvert Street and the entire board room and a skylight from the long gone B&O Building on Calvert Street.

the houses near Third Avenue and also between Walnut Avenue and Jeroby Road date from the late 1800s.

Find out where a man who owned most of Main Street at one time ended his days renting a house after some financial misfortunes. Or where school teachers used to board in the 1940s and 50s. Try to identify which house used to be a harness shop. Ask which house had a sunken garden. Or where the blacksmith



*The board room door at the old B&O Building in Baltimore.*

Second Chance is open week-ends from 9:00a.m. to 5:00p.m. or by appointment at 1645 Warner Street. You can reach them at 410-385-1101.

shop was. Dorothy and Kari have lots of stories to tell.

Both walks benefit the projects of the Gate House Museum and the Holy Trinity Cemetery and a free will collection will be taken. Meet at the museum at 7283 Cooper Drive at 2:00p.m. to begin both tours.





## At The Museum

House cleaning on Springfield Avenue produced a wonderful find for **Rachel Mercer** who was preparing to move. From behind her furnace came a portrait of a young girl, thought to be Fanny Jones, a previous resident. Fanny was one of the three Jones sisters known for their hand-colored photographs.

Two more Jones sisters photos were added to the museum's collection when **Betty Jean Maus** donated "Star of Bethlehem" and "Yellow Roses."

Museum members are invited to a Members Only event at the Old Main Line Visitors Center in March when two old films about Sykesville will be screened. Not a member? Sign up now and join the party. Benefits of membership include four Members Only events

per year, the museum newsletter and a 10% discount at the museum store. Please contact curator **Kari Greenwalt** for more information.

The annual tribute to town historian **Thelma Wimmer** is scheduled for Sunday afternoon, April 6 from 3:00-5:00p.m. Stop by to wish Mrs. Wimmer a happy 94<sup>th</sup> birthday and have a piece of birthday cake.

The Children's Attic has a new look thanks to hard work on the part of several volunteers. **Andrew Collins** organized the train collection while **Kristin Chapman, Keely Saslow** and **Kimberly McLeod** removed



*Keely Saslow and Kimberly McLeod dust Josie the mannequin in the museum's foyer.*



*Thelma Wimmer chats with Becky Tims who lives in Mrs. Wimmer's former house on Central Avenue.*

## Day Spa Set to Open on Main Street

This April a full service hair salon and day spa will open in a new retail space downtown. Samsara Salon and Spa, owned by Sal Tomasello, will occupy the first and second floors of 7606 Main Street and was built to reflect the original structure on the site. Constructed in 1878 by Sykesville architect J. H. Fowble, the building was destroyed in a 1937 fire. Previously, the site saw use as a drug store, a doctor's office and a grocery, with living space on the second floor.

old equipment and organized the *Sykesville Herald* newspaper collection.

Plans are under way for an exhibit on mining, which was an important part of Sykesville's

economy in the mid-1800s. Artifacts include a piece of a wagon wheel, drawings of the Springfield Iron and Copper Mine and a dynamite machine.

Volunteer **Debra Taylor Young** will begin a series of oral histories with people who have family connections to or recollections of old Sykesville. Assistant curator **Jim Purman** welcomes anyone with stories of the past to call and make an appointment.



*Future home of Samsara Salon and Spa.*

# HDC Gains Two New Members

Two new members joined the Sykesville Historic District Commission at the January meeting.

New chairman Phil Singleton is a native of England and chairs the English Department at Glenelg High School in Howard County. He moved to Sykesville's Historic District three years ago and served as a member of the

Planning Commission for the past two years. "Having seen the old heart torn out of my home town in England in the name of progress in the 1960s, I have a real interest in preserving our architectural heritage. I was invited to join the Sykesville Historic District Commission and I'm honored to have been elected chairman," Phil said.

New commissioner Pat Greenwald has just retired from teaching in Howard County and lives at Salopha, a house featured on Sykesville's Christmas House Tour. She is the author of four historic research publications for middle school students for which she won several preservation awards. Restoration of Salopha has been an ongoing effort since Pat and her husband, Ray, bought it 11 years ago.

# Interlocking Tower Finds New Life

Town residents and visitors can celebrate the opening of the Old Main Line Visitor Center and U.S. Post Office at 731 Oklahoma Road. Originally an interlocking tower near Penn Station in Baltimore, the building held equipment for controlling several switches from a central location. The tower was demolished and the pieces were bought by the town of Bowie but never erected there. In 2000, the town of Sykesville bought and reassembled it.

Now the first floor has a post office, visitor center and public restrooms with a large meeting room on the second floor.



*The new Visitor Center and Post Office.*

# Financial Incentives

The Town of Sykesville grants a 10% property tax credit for qualified rehabilitation expenditures for certain historic buildings, and a 5% property tax credit for qualified expenditures for architecturally compatible new construction, located in the historic district. In addition, grants of up to \$750 for owner-occupied residential property are available to assist residents in meeting the guidelines.

The State of Maryland offers a 20% tax credit on Maryland income taxes for qualified expenditures for the rehabilitation of a certified historic structure. The federal government offers a 20% tax credit on federal income taxes for qualified expenditures for the rehabilitation of income-producing certified historic structures.

For additional information, contact the Sykesville Historic District Commission or the Maryland Historical Trust at 410-514-7626 or [www.marylandhistoricaltrust.net](http://www.marylandhistoricaltrust.net).

# A Reminder from the Guidelines

"Before a property owner begins work, the Historic District Commission must approve any exterior alterations, new construction or changes to important landscape features.... The Historic District Commission meets the fourth Tuesday of each month to review applications for permit approval. The Town Zoning Administrator's Office must receive all application materials by 4:00 p.m. on the third Tuesday of the month in which the applicant wishes to have a review."



## HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

*Chairman*

Phil Singleton

*Members*

Dave Ashman

Paul Esposito

Pat Greenwald

Maureen McCall

Wiley Purkey

Russ Vreeland

*Ombudsman  
and Editor*

Susan Catling

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