

FREE STATE REGION TOUR ALONG THE CIVIL WAR TRAILS OF CARROLL CO.

If I had one and if I were able, I could have rode a skateboard to meet the Free Staters at the Park and Ride on Springfield Avenue in Sykesville, MD. Saturday, March 21, 2009 was a clear chilly day for this historic tour.

Turning off Route 32 onto Springfield Avenue, if you made the first right you would practically be in my living room. If you made the first left, you would be at the Park and Ride with our Tour Guide and chair of this trip, Ed Cluster in his '57 Bel Air, Ginny and Dave Boyer in their '55 Bel Air, Franklin Gage in his '66 Impala and passengers, Jean and Bob Wilhelm and Mary Fuhrman. We also had Dottie and Janis Miller, Grace and Bill Baldwin, Linda and Wayne McDaniel, and Bill Scott carrying Charlie Lewis and Bernadine.

Ed Cluster was very organized and gave everyone a beautiful portfolio of our tour, following the route that some of the Union Forces traveled through Carroll County to Gettysburg during the Gettysburg Campaign in 1863. We would be covering about 144 miles.

We drove through the old town of Sykesville down to the old train station. I have eaten at Baldwin Station but never noticed the first marker on our Tour, "Capturing Joe Hooker". Thanks to Ed I learned more about General Joseph Hooker. Traveling on, we came to Hoods Mill where General J.E.B. Stuart entered Carroll County from Cooksville, damaged the tracks and bridge of the B&O Railroad at Sykesville and marched on to Westminster and Gettysburg. From there we stopped in Mount Airy and reviewed the marker at Pine Grove Chapel. It was first called Ridge Presbyterian Church and served as a barracks while the Infantry guarded the railroad.

We entered New Windsor in daylight but the Cavalry entered the village by moonlight and one cavalryman said it was the prettiest place he ever saw. On to Union Bridge - Reynolds' Lost Journey. It was here the Western Maryland Railroad shops were established in 1862.

Even the first day of Spring started the day before our Tour, we had freezing weather and poor Ginny Boyer almost shivered herself to death with no heat in their car. Franklin had a good deal of heat in his but Ginny refused to leave their igloo. However, we saw daffodils blooming in Uniontown, our next stop. This is almost unbelievable, but Bob Wilhelm said we were on roads he had never been on before.

The next marker we encountered was in Uniontown. "Patriotic, but paralyzed". A New Yorker observed that "Uniontown is a pretty secluded village, patriotic, but paralyzed just now by the nearness of the rebel army". That was then, but for travelers today just driving through these small towns, it seems more like "Mayberry". A big stop was in Westminster where Kathy and Jack Anderson joined our group. During the Gettysburg Campaign, the citizens of Westminster cared for dozens of wounded of both sides and the Union Meeting House became a makeshift hospital. When you read about Corbit's charge and the terrific battles that took place on Main Street and Washington Road, plus where you have eaten in restaurants and have friends who live nearby, it really gives you a special meaning. So much history has taken place where we travel every day and after reviewing all the markers and places of interest we had seen so far, we were now ready to stop for a bite to eat. Ed made a good choice when he picked the Taneytown Tavern on Taneytown Pike. The food was excellent

CIVIL WAR TRAILS OF CARROLL COUNTY (continued)

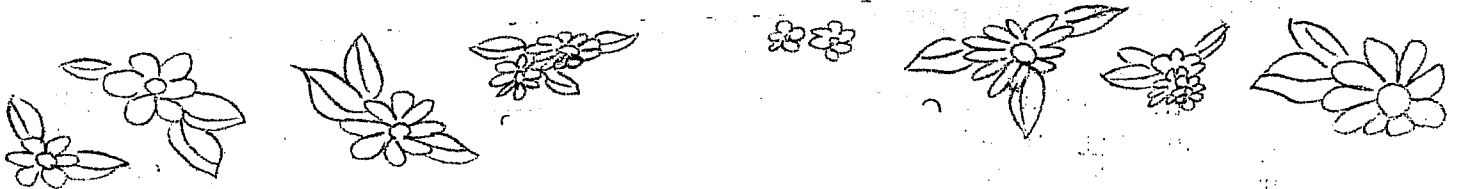
and the staff was so anxious to please the "antique car club". Even the chef came out of the kitchen to see if we were all satisfied and encouraged us to come back again when he would be glad to promote a showing of our vintage cars. Many battles took place in Taneytown but we were now headed toward Union Mills.

There was so much to see on the grounds at Union Mills but we didn't expect to be able to go inside the Homestead. Ivan, who works there, just happened to be in and was delighted to give us a tour and talk about the Mill as long as we wanted to listen. In so doing, Franklin Gage found out there was a connection between this Ivan and Franklin's father.

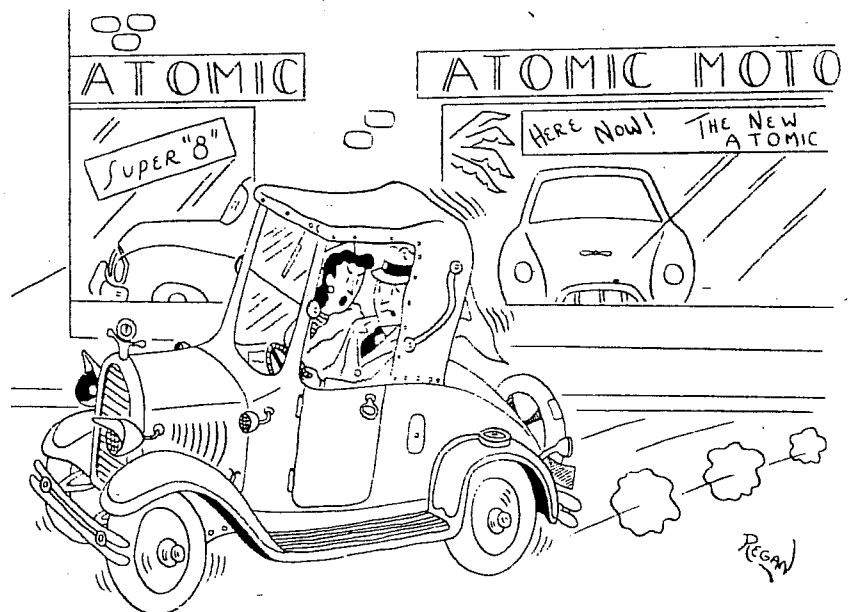
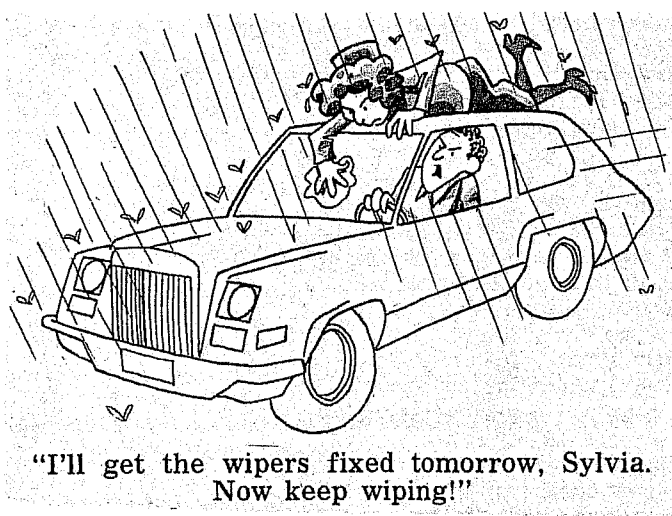
Going through Manchester, where my in-laws grew up, many memories came to mind as I thought about the troops camping there before going into Gettysburg.

We were sorry Judi Cluster was unable to make the trip but she was involved in the planning. She also has her "doll house hobby" and had another commitment. Ed deserved a very big thank you for all his planning of this terrific tour right up to the walkie-talkie history as we traveled/ History was made many years ago and on Saturday, March 21, 2009, the Free State Region relived it. Many, many thanks again, Ed.

Mary Fuhrman



FEATURED CARTOON ...



"Well, I suppose Detroit has wasted another whole year trying to produce something that would suit you!"