

[Griswold, Ellie Sykes]

CANTON WOMAN IS MOURNED BY MANY

Mrs. Ellie Sykes Griswold is Laid to Rest

Came of One of Canton's Pioneer Families, Her Father Born in This Town in 1818

As a devoted mother and wife, as a coveted neighbor and friend, as one who all her life had been a loyal worker in her church and in the Order of the Eastern Stars, and as one of a family whose ancestry reaches far back into the very early days of this community, the death of Mrs. Ellie Sykes Griswold, wife of Gaylon Gilbert Griswold, last Tuesday at the Hepburn Hospital in Ogdensburg, is mourned by many, both here and at a distance. The esteem and affection in which she was held was best shown by the large number, both young and old, who were present at the funeral held from the Universalist church Thursday afternoon. Words of comfort and respect were spoken by both her pastor, Rev. Emerson H. Lalone, and her cousin, President Richard Eddy Sykes, of the University. In beautiful Evergreen Cemetery a final tribute was paid as her body was laid to its last rest. The bearers were Edwin Sykes, Warren and Clyde Abernathy, Prof. F. W. Storrs and Lauren Stiles.

Mrs. Griswold's death came as a great shock to her family and friends. Taken suddenly ill a week ago Saturday she was removed to the Hepburn Hospital suffering from an undiagnosed abdominal illness. Though her condition was obviously serious no immediate cause for alarm was felt and the hospital authorities did not believe it necessary to send for her children, although her son, Sykes Griswold, of Malone, was with her Sunday. Tuesday morning her condition became suddenly acute and her death occurred at eleven-fifteen due to the rupture of an artery leading from the heart.

Mrs. Griswold was a woman who found her greatest joy in her home, in the life of her children and their many friends, in her neighbors and in everything which pertained to Canton and the University. For years the hospitality of the Griswold home has been traditional and it was the warmth of friendship and interest in all who came there which won for Mrs. Griswold the affectionate regard of so wide a circle of friends.

In speaking of her passing one is moved to go far back into Canton history, for the Sykes family, of which she came, goes back to the early days. Her father, Bingham Sykes, was born in this town as far back as 1818, but [only] thirteen years after the first settlers had arrived. Bingham's parents were Heber and Candace Ingersoll Sykes, who made their way from Vermont by ox team through the then unbroken forest of the North Country.

It was down on the present Morely road, on the farm now owned by Harold Perkins, that Heber Sykes hewed out his home acres from the wilderness. Others came to live there as his neighbors... Those were rugged days. Heber Sykes became one of the influential men of the town. It was through Heber's wife Candace Ingersoll that the Sykes family had their connection with the late Robert Ingersoll, famous orator and agnostic exponent.

From his warm friend and neighbor Edwin Jones, Heber named one of his sons Edwin Jones Sykes, the father of President Richard Eddy Sykes and Fred Sykes, both now living here.

It was amid such pioneer surroundings, with the ring of axe on virgin trees, the lowing of toiling oxen, the whirr of the loom making the family clothes, a primitive life in primitive days, that Bingham Sykes was born to grow up in... He grew to manhood and in the year 1841 took as his wife Lydia Aldrich, daughter of another old Canton family.

[Griswold, Ellie Sykes]

The Sykes farm on the Morely road had broadened to over 400 acres. Bingham's brother, Edwin, had taken up the present Sykes farm on the Olin's Corner road. It was on the old home farm that Bingham and his wife Lydia, whose family came from Shrewsbury, Vt., raised their family of six children. To them came Heber, Luther, Candace, the mother of Mrs. George Sahlin, of Benton Harbor, Mich., Mary, now of this village, and Ellie, just deceased, who was born October 6, 1862.

In the year 1871 a terrible typhoid epidemic swept this section. Three of the Sykes family were its victims: Bingham the father, Heber his son, and Melvina, a daughter then attending St. Lawrence University in the class of 1871. Melvina was the first student to die at the University while an undergraduate and there is today a plaque in Herring Library in her memory. Luther had died at thirteen years of age.

For ten years the mother and the remaining children stayed on the farm and then moved to this village, where they bought the present Griswold home on Park street... Elm street neighbors to the Sykes family were the Griswolds, and it was thus that ere long the son of David and Harriet Brigham Griswold, Gaylon, fell in love with, and on May 19, 1887, married Ellie Sykes. They took up their abode at the Sykes home which thenceforth became the Griswold home and has continued as such to the present.

Gaylon as a young man was associated with his father in the painting and paper hanging business. On April 11, 1899 he entered the postoffice and remained in uninterrupted service until last July when he retired on pension, holding the record of being the longest in the postoffice service in this village of any of the staff.

During these many years the Griswold home became a place where many found a warm welcome. As their five children: E. Kenneth, Mildred, Alice, G. Sykes and Eleanor, grew up and entered the University, there was a constantly increasing number of their friends who found a joy in the hospitality of the Griswold home and in the motherly woman who presided over it and who took such a great pleasure and interest in them. Little wonder that by these she was esteemed.

Down through the years the Sykes family had been ardent church people, being of the number who organized and founded the Canton Universalist church. They were devoted workers and their interest never lagged. In the church work, in the Ladies Circle and the Mission Circle Mrs. Griswold gave of herself in full measure. When the church paid its tribute to the long years of service of its organist, Miss Carrie Storrs, Mrs. Griswold and the late Mrs. A. S. Bedell were the committee in charge of procuring the beautiful memorial window. Mrs. Griswold was also a loyal member of Empire Chapter, No. 68 Eastern Stars, and a patroness of the Pi Beta Phi chapter at St. Lawrence, of which her three daughters are members.

Her death is the first break in her immediate family circle... Of the immediate surviving family besides her husband are her five children: F. Kenneth, of Elmhurst, N.Y.; Miss Mildred, of Port Washington; Miss Alice, of Patchogue, N.Y.; G. Sykes Griswold, of Malone; Miss Eleanor, of New York City; the sister, Mrs. Mary Stevens, and a grandson, John Sykes, son of Mr. and Mrs. Sykes Griswold of Malone.

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[slightly abridged]

Transcribed on 29 Aug 2008 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY