

[Sykes, Frederick Arthur]

F. A. SYKES DIES AT FARM HOME

Grandfather Heber Sykes, One Of First Canton Settlers
Dr. J. M Atwood Officiated At Funeral Services Held Sunday.

Death came to Frederick Arthur Sykes on Thursday at midnight in the same house where he was born 84 years before, Aug. 5, 1853, the old Sykes homestead on the road leading from the County House corners over to the Olin Corners. It was his satisfaction to have lived out his life on the farm where, except for a comparatively few years he had remained since childhood. In failing health for several years he had helped as he could with the duties about the farm.

Funeral services were held from the home Sunday, at 2:30, Dr. J. M. Atwood officiating, and burial being in Evergreen Cemetery.

Fred Sykes came of one of the earliest of Canton families. It was back in the days of the first settlement of the town that Heber and Candace Ingersoll Sykes came here from Vermont, to be followed shortly afterward by another Vermont family, the Brewers. Heber Sykes broke the land and built a house between what is now the County House Corners and the County House. It was his son, Edwin Jones Sykes, the father of Frederick A. and Dr. Richard Eddy Sykes, who built the present home on the old Westcott farm. Edwin's first wife was a Westcott.

Edwin Sykes, whom many still living well remember, later married Louisa Brewer, a sister of Sheldon Brewer who in turn was the father of the late Charles S. Brewer, of Utica and Herkimer and for many years a trustee of St. Lawrence University.

Of the first marriage Edwin Sykes had two children, Harland, who was to lose his life in Canada, and Louisa, who died about two years ago in New Hampshire. Of the second marriage there were three children: Frederick Arthur, just deceased, Nellie, who became Mrs. J. D. McKindley, of Duluth, Minn., and Richard Eddy Sykes, who was to become President of St. Lawrence University, and now as President Emeritus of the University, resides here in Canton. Mrs. McKindley died some years ago.

It was twenty and more years ago that the writer visited the Sykes' farm to call upon the elder Edwin Sykes, then a man close, or beyond his ninetieth year. Though bent over with age, he was found out in a pasture bringing the cows in for the evening milking. Whimsically he looked over the surrounding acres and with a chuckle recalled how as a boy he had driven cows from that self same pasture at evening time, and how in his bare feet, for shoes were to be spared in those days, he would hop from stone to stone, when the chill of the evening was falling and the stones still carried the heat of the day.

[Sykes, Frederick Arthur]

It was on this farm and in the companionship of this father and mother whom every one loved and respected, that the Sykes children were reared. The family spent seven years, from 1870 to 1877, in the village, while Mr. Sykes served as steward at the University. Fred Sykes spent a year or two as a student at St. Lawrence in the class of 1873. Leaving college he taught school at Hagerstown, Md., and later at McGregor, La., and it was there that he met and married Miss Julia Gilchrist Benjamin. With her he returned to Canton to join with his father in operating the home farm.

Scores upon scores of people, Cantonians, Laurentians and neighbors, can recall the hospitality of the Sykes home. Mrs. Sykes was one of those choice, and delightful companions. The doors of her home were always open to all. Many a college student vouched that her pastries and meals could not be equalled. Fred Sykes found as much pleasure in these friendships as did she. With a merry twinkle in his eye and a quiet word of welcome he loved the social life which came to his door. He enjoyed companionship and as a member of the Canton Club for many years liked nothing better than an evening at cards or playing pool or billiards.

The death of his wife, March 12, 1919, was a tragic hour for him, a loss that remained constant in his mind. Following her death he turned the management of the farm over to his son, Edwin G. Sykes, who returned home to carry on in the footsteps of three other generations. There in the old home Fred Sykes lived out these last years, quietly.

He was a member of Silas Wright Grange, of the Universalist church and of The Club. Surviving are one son, Edwin G. Sykes, who now occupies the home farm; three grandsons, Frederick, Allan and Richard Eddy Sykes, 2nd, and one brother, Dr. Richard Eddy Sykes, all of Canton.

St. Lawrence Plaindealer, Canton NY, Tue. 23 Nov 1937

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