

Carroll County Times "Carroll's Yesteryears" Articles

" The Death of James Hope"

Carroll County Times Article for 19 February 1995

by Jay A. Graybeal.

In last week's column, I wrote about James Hope, a Westminster barber who once worked as Edwin Booth's valet. Hope died suddenly on May 10, 1900 and newspaper and estate records provide some details about his life and death. His obituary appeared in the May 12, issue of the Westminster American Sentinel newspaper.

James Hope, who had for about twenty-seven years had been the proprietor of the City Hotel barber-shop in this city, died very suddenly of apoplexy, about nine o'clock Thursday evening. Some one who entered his shop found him lying on the floor, breathing stertorously. He was past relief and death speedily followed the discovery of his illness. He leaves a widow, but no children. He was a skillful barber and his shop always enjoyed liberal patronage. He was also skilled in the waiter's art and was often employed as chief in that department on important occasions. It was a source of great pride with him that he was once the valet of the great actor, Edwin Booth, whom he ardently admired. His age is not known to us, but he was probably about fifty-five.

Westminster undertaker Frederick A. Sharrer handled the funeral of James Hope. His account books, which are part of the Historical Society's manuscript collection, contain a wealth of information about local funerals and the specific services provided for the Hope funeral. William A. McKellip, the administrator of Hope's estate, ordered a "Black cloth casket & services" at a cost of \$50.

Shortly after Hope's death, P.A. Gorsuch and Gustavus W. Crapster appraised Hope's personal possessions. The inventory of personal possessions reveals that the Hopes lived in a modestly furnished room and that they raised birds. Hope's barbershop had three chairs and a corresponding number of spittoons.

4 Pictures, 1 stand	.20	cts.
1 Students Lamp, Ice Pitcher, one reflector	.75	
1 Sofa, 1 Rocking Chair, 1 Picture	1.25	
1 Tin Combines Cupboard, 4 chairs	1.25	
Corner Lounge, one wood stove	1.00	
2 Settees, 2 Rocking Chairs, 1 Office Chair	1.00	
1 Book Case	3.00	
1 axe, Maddock, Coal Sifter, Spade and Dung forks		
	.25	
1 Churn, 1 Incubator and Brooder	.50	
2 Bird Cages, 2 Bedsteads	.35	
3 Stands, 1 Stove, a lot of picture frames	.35	
A Lot of Hay in Stable	1.00	
	\$10.90	
Office Furniture & Fixtures		
3 Looking Glasses, 2 lamps, Water Cooler	2.25	

Carroll County Times "Carroll's Yesteryears" Articles

1 Table, Bucket, Wash Boal [sic] and Stand	1.00
1 Towel Case, and 7 Pictures, 1 Stool	.75
1 Barber's Chair, 1 Stand and 6 Office chairs	3.60
1 Clock, 3 Spittoons	1.25
2 Barber Chairs, 1 Stand , Lot of Bottles	3.00
1 Cot, 2 coal Buckets, 1, 5 Gallon Keg	.50
1 Schreen wire Doors, 1 Lantern	1.00
1 Barber's Sign, One Lot of Bottles	.10
\$13.45	

Additional estate papers reveal that Hope's modest assets proved insufficient to pay his debts and costs which amounted to \$36.96. His household and barbershop furnishings were sold at public auction and his widow apparently received only \$6. His funeral expenses were apparently paid by William A. McKellip.

Photo Caption: [None]