

Rocky Gap Gifts — “The Six Mile House”

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Rocky Gap Gifts and Furnishings offers a variety of unique merchandise in the historical setting of the Six Mile House, a former stagecoach inn built by Jeremiah Plummer. Current owners, Linda and Frank Gerwig, opened their business in 2002 at the former inn, having moved it from Ft. Ashby, West Virginia, the previous year. The new location along the Baltimore Pike, Maryland Route 144, has proven to be successful because a wider variety of merchandise can be offered in larger showrooms. The Gerwig’s success at the Six Mile House follows a 200 year tradition of merchants offering goods to travelers along the primary east-west corridor of Western Maryland.

To many residents the Six Mile House is associated with Edward Habeeb, who operated a flower shop and nursery adjacent to Baltimore Pike from the late 1940’s into the 1970’s.

Unfortunately, after Mr. Habeeb’s ownership, the former inn eventually fell into a state of disrepair and remained vacant for several years. Despite its dilapidated condition, Linda and Frank Gerwig saw the building as a business plan that included the selling of wooden furniture and quality gift items. The timing was right as Linda retired from school teaching to devote energy to the family owned business. Frank, owner of Gerwig & Associates, a Certified Public Accounting firm, is also directly involved in the enterprise. “I spend as much time as I can helping out in the evenings and on weekends.” As the Gerwigs began renovating in March of 2002, the building’s rich history unfolded through the structural features that have been familiar to travelers and residents for six generations.

The Six Mile House appears to date from the early 1820’s because its style is typical of other inns that were



The “Six Mile House” on National Road long before it became Rocky Gap Gifts and Furnishings.

built at the time. Overnight accommodations and related services became necessary when the Baltimore Pike, a road stretching from the port of Baltimore to Cumberland, Maryland, was approved by the state legislature in 1804-1805. Banks provided financing for the roadway that was sometimes referred to as the Bank Road in its early days. Private turnpike companies were responsible for constructing sections of the corridor at various times. Completion of the road to Cumberland became a key factor in the selection of that city as the starting point for the National Road, America’s first federally funded highway that would eventually continue to Vandalia, Illinois. The Six Mile House name was similar to many inns that prospered along the Western Maryland corridor because they were conveniently located and named in relation to their distance east or west of Cumberland.

Original construction of the facility included a two and one-half stories high brick building with large fireplaces at both ends and a gable roof. The principal facade incorporated six bays with the main entrance being the third one from the eastern side. Modifications occurred over the

decades including a slightly larger roof overhang, porches, and other additions. Interesting items of the building's early years revealed during renovation included hand hewn wooden ceiling joists, marked with Roman numerals to assist in the assembly of the roof and large chestnut timbers.

The Gerwig's found that many interior changes were necessary due to deterioration of wooden features. Fortunately, they were able to accomplish much of the work themselves and according to Frank Gerwig, "What we couldn't do, we hired workers to finish the job. A friend, Brian Largent, helped us a lot. He can do anything."

Work was completed by December 2002, enabling Rocky Gap Gifts and Furnishings to once again be a destination point for travelers and residents. The gift shop features quality solid, wooden furniture from local Amish craftsmen and antique reproduction furniture. Other gifts include country craft items, seasonal gifts, floral arrangements, pictures, specialty items, and a wide assortment of home accessories. 



Top: Rocky Gap Gifts and Furnishings as it stands today, after restoration.

Inset: The building before restoration began.

Left: Interior today showcases many splendid hand crafted items in a relaxed atmosphere.

Right: Various items of quality solid, wooden furniture — finished and unfinished.



Rocky Gap Gifts & Furnishings is located at 16000 Baltimore Pike. Traveling East of Cumberland, MD, take Exit 50 off I-68, Rocky Gap State Park Exit. Turn West and travel approximately one mile on Rt. 144, Baltimore Pike.

Call 301-724-7554
or visit their web site at www.rockygapgifts.com