



April 24, 2013

TOURING SULLIVAN COUNTY'S MUSEUM

. . . while dusting

A copy of the 1932 Fox Gazette, published by the students of Fox Township High School Vol. 2, No. 3 (for a cost of ten cents per copy),

was brought into the museum. It states in the history of the school that Sullivan County needed more facilities for educating young people above the eighth grade. The year of inception of this school is obliterated from this copy. But in searching Mrytle Magargel's writings, derived also by Harry Green, she states that Jesse Williams's recollections of his remembering, along with those of Edgar Campbell: "Although there are no supporting documents available, it is generally believed and fairly well established by tradition that the earliest school in Fox Township was held in the Friends Meeting House just below the cemetery across the highway from Shunk Church.

The first schoolhouse positively identified was situated near Bud [should be Mud] Brook, a small run about a mile out of Shunk on the middle road to Wheelerville, built and known to have been used in the 1840's." The piece goes on to say that "an old-timer recently related that his father once pointed out to him at the sport a large flat rock utilized as cornerstone for the small building where he first went to school." Many schools began to then crop up around Fox Township, until upon their closings years later they totaled eight by our records. School locations shifted "whenever a few families moved and upset the district balance of enrollment, the school had to follow". Later on in this extensive historical compiling of Fox Twp. schools, Campbell and Williams state: "Early in the century John W. Frey, long time president of the Fox Township School Board, noticed that an increasing number of young people were going outside the township to further their schooling beyond the grammar grades. He began to wonder why the privilege of higher education (high school) should not be made available to other capable students who by varied circumstances were kept from attending high schools in other places. Resolving to do something about it he proposed some rather preposterous ideas to the rest of the board (J.P. Kilmer, C.V. Parrish, C.. Porter, Allen Rightmire, and A.F. Shaddock). By outlining plans, discussing and persuading he kept the issue stirring until the board wholeheartedly adopted measures to start its own school for higher instruction." He goes on "The old dance hall on the second floor of the Tripp Hotel building was promptly refitted and equipped for the purpose. The first term was held there in 1907-08 with the ambitious course consisting of English, American History, English History, American Literature, Latin, Civics, Algebra, Plane Geometry, Botany, Zoology, Physics, Agriculture and Bookkeeping."

Starting the term on Sept. 23, 1907 were the following students who'd trained elsewhere until this situation: Harry Campbell, Lenora Heinze, Jesse Williams, Jesse Salisbury and Blanche McKay. Others coming in for the eighth grade were Edgar Campbell, Harold Fanning, Belle Rightmire, Hazel Voorhees, Emily Porter, Ada Williams and Edwain Frey. The teacher was Frank Smigelsky from Mt. Carmel, engaged at a salary of \$60/month. This school was for that first year crowded into the second floor, then the following school term year moved to the first floor of the same building. By 1934 the school (now a two story building of its own) graduated a record number of 14. The multiple schools of Fox Twp. were eventually to become part of the Loyalsock School District, with the closing of the one here described coming in May of 1941.