



Dec. 4, 2013

TOURING SULLIVAN COUNTY'S MUSEUM

. . . while dusting

It's deer season, Sullivan County's "national holiday". Our population of people increases for this period of time, while the population of four-footers dwindles. A long time ago a hunter told this writer: "The fun stops

once you pull the trigger." And being a hunter, that's pretty much the truth because the work begins as the excitement wanes. . . the gutting, the dragging, the cleaning, the butchering and then eventually the cooking. Very often you'll hear the complaint from the wives of hunters "oh, it smells!", or "I wouldn't cook it in my house, let alone eat venison!". Well, there's a reason for that: take care of your carcass if you're not too sure of the weather being right to hang it outside. Don't let it lay on the hood or tailgate trailer of your vehicle while you stop to show off to every Tom, Dick and Harry on the way home. Don't dally getting it to the butcher or to do your own butchering. At our house, we butcher our own and it's usually in the freezer or the jars within a day of being killed. Yes, I said jars – a canning jar. Many is the time that I've gotten a canning jar of venison off the cellar shelf that a guest will be standing in the kitchen with a scrunched up nose asking "What in the world is that?!?" Okay, it isn't the most pleasing appearance but then no canned meat really is. If you don't believe me then check out the canning section at the Sullivan County Fair and ask to be shown the canned meat section with venison, beef, pork, chicken or any other form of meat. All these and more can be canned not only safely but also taste quite good. You know what a roast looks like when "you can cut it with a fork"?, well, that's what canned meat is like and the flavors are to melt in your mouth. How To canning books will tell you to pressure cook and if you're new to preserving foods then that is probably the route you should take. But for me; my mother and grandmother were both afraid of pressure cookers so I learned with a boiling bath and continue to do so today. It takes about four hours but we have a wood cook stove so setting the canner on the back burner on butchering day is really quite simple. Eight quarts to a canner and two canners a day. Can be repeated the next day if you refrigerate and then parboil the meat before filling the jars. And, the only thing to add is a teaspoon of salt. It isn't like going to the store and reading words on the label that mean nothing to you or seeing high sodium contents that we really don't need. All in all it's quite an experience, old fashioned though it may seem.