



Typical horse and buggy, taken in Sonestown. This one is reproduced by glass negatives of Chris Kelley's, most of which are around 1900, but have no persons identified.

March 23, 2016

TOURING SULLIVAN COUNTY'S MUSEUM . . . while dusting

To continue from last week, this article is entitled "A Horse Race".

"The black stallion was a spirited animal, obviously not so gentle as the little mare. Preacher heard about the stallion, 15 hands high and lean 1300 lbs. There in the

sunlight his gleaming coat rippled, his tail arched, and he turned his powerful neck towards the oncoming pair. Preacher's impulses stirred.

"The Puritan of every era has eschewed frivolity even though St. Paul introduced to Judeo-Christianity the concept of Greek sportsmanship: "I have won the good race", but nowhere in the Old Testament is there a similar reference. Most Puritans thought of Greek culture as pagan body worship, and the Jew was horrified at the spectacle of the Greek races.

"The preacher and the mare drew even with the Meeting House just as the plain clothed, black hated Quaker appeared. The latter untethered the stallion, leaped onto his buckboard, took off like greased lightning towards Batten's Corner. Aroused from his musing and canter, the startled preacher and mare were caught by a sudden impulse as though shot with adrenaline. The straight stretch of road, never yet traversed by automobile or tractor and deserted save for the two coursers, was the best race track between Forksville and Canton. No spectators lined the stone walls of that down. No signals started that race. The stallion had the advantage of half a furlong but was hitched to a heavier cart, and gradually the little mare began to overtake.

"Nobody would have known about that contest had it not been that just before Batten's Corner the right front wheel of buckboard buckled against a stump and the Quaker careened into the wall, leaving the stallion free-reined trailing the wrecked cart.

Perceiving the situation, preacher reined in his mare and turned his attention to the blooded comatose Quaker. Succoring the man as best he could, he drove on to Theodore Hess's farm for help. They already knew something was amiss for the stallion had dragged the crippled cart into the barnyard. As quickly as possible they hooked up a wagon and returned to find the groggy Quaker sitting up wondering what had happened.

"They took him home to his wife, who received him stoically, and it is recorded she said, "Thee are good neighbors to help my man", brushing aside solicitations and explanations while ministering to her crestfallen husband and sputtering injunctions to stay put while she accompanied them to inspect the damaged buckboard, which she allowed would take longer "a-fixin'" than her man "a-mendin'". Evidently things worked out well for Quaker went on to sire a large and vigorous family and a blood line was established from a filly out of the little Morgan mare from that black stallion.

"Chastened in spirit and convicted in conscience preacher went on to Millview. Arriving home, he was of the mind to say nothing but knew full well the whole affair would get out. He had been married long enough to be sensitive to his wife's moods and he was aware of his own spiritual struggles and was deeply concerned about his witness before the people. Often they prayed together for grace and strength. Scant record has been kept except that the Word was preached and the church grew, and he officiated at weddings and funerals around.

It is alleged that the preacher became known for his physical strength, that his wife ministered to the sick and those in childbirth, but no explanation has been give why they remained only one year on the Elkland charge.”

Footnote – “The record we have is that Rev. J.A. Clark and his wife served the Elkland Charge in 1874. The Rev. and Mrs. Sylvester Bedford (my maternal grandparents) [no record here of who is speaking] served the same charge in 1877-1889.”

Many times as generations evolve each younger one wonders what those before ever did for fun; this examples not only the fun available (and often the mishap outcomes as exempld here) but also that fun both then and now knows no age limit.