



High Knob overlook

Nov. 16, 2016

## **TOURING SULLIVAN COUNTY'S MUSEUM . . . while dusting**

As the colors of fall have passed us by in this area and we prepare for winter, an interesting observation has come to light. Ray and Linda McDonald noticed in different places references to what is referred to as Indian Summer and that the phrase was being used in what they

thought was totally wrong. So, they did some research on the subject and came up with the following:

From an undated article in the Daily Review by Margaret Coolbaugh of Towanda: "The Legend of Indian summer – Just a passing reference to all this talk of "Indian Summer". It seems that according to our weather men of today, this phenomenon can last from the first of September until after Thanksgiving.

"The beautiful days and warm nights of late fall are "October's Bright Blue Weather", written about by poets, and enjoyed by all.

"Indian Summer" cannot come until after "Squaw Winter", and lasts but a few days.

"Toward the end of October we will have a time of cold winds and some falling snow. This is "Squaw Winter". Then about the first of November will come the few warm and pleasant days of "Indian Summer".

Legend says that the Indians, even as you and me, lazed through the pleasant October days, and didn't get their winter chores done. Then the biting winds and swirling snowflakes of Squaw Winter awakened their senses to the coming winter, and the Great Spirit favored them with the few days of Indian Summer to finish their preparations for the long, cold winter ahead.

"We should be more aware of the stories and legends of folk-lore, and endeavor to preserve them as accurately as possible. They lend an innocent and pleasant aura to our stark and demanding world."

Then from the 2016 Farmers Almanac comes this: "Indian Summer (November): A period of warm weather following a cold spell or a hard frost, Indian summer can occur between St. Martin's Day (November 11) and November 20. Although there are differing dates for its occurrence, for more than 200 years the Almanac has adhered to the saying "If All Saints' (November 1) brings out winter, St. Martin's brings out Indian summer". The term may have come from early Native Americans, some of whom believed that the condition was caused by a warm wind sent from the court of their southwestern god, Cautantowwit."

Linda writes: "When I asked my father about smelling wood smoke on a clear lazy day in Nov., I looked every where for the fire but I couldn't find any. He told me that was a sign for Indian Summer. According to the Old Folks the smoke came from Indian camp fires."

Believe what you may but this clearly puts the term in the right usage for a short spell in fall and not all encompassing of the turning of the leaves.