

Nov. 20, 2013

## TOURING SULLIVAN COUNTY'S MUSEUM

### . . . while dusting

Recently Darrel and Elaine, Duane and Sharon Reibson gave to this museum a Dalton Adding, Listing & Calculating machine. This piece was used by Vernon C. Reibson who was born in Proctor in 1918, died in 1977 and was for many years the Elkland Township tax collector.

With today's modern instruments, this machine would appear to be a dinosaur. But at the time of its invention in 1902, people would have welcomed this time saving device for the work of doing office figures. It is a ten key instrument featuring a two bank keyboard. Originally called a "listing machine", it requires a hand crank to advance the entered figures. About 1927 the Dalton Adding Machine Co. was purchased by the Burroughs Corp. who, once taking ownership, then discontinued all the Dalton models (152 of them) thus eliminating their

competition. This particular one is in excellent condition. While researching for this article we found that there are still models available out there but in much less desirable condition, to the point that one offered was clearly stated "useful for completing keyboard only". In another case the seller stated that all casting had been sandblasted with apricot pits and repainted using 3 stage automobile paint to closely resemble the original Japaning finish. All the artwork had been carefully and professionally duplicated and covered with at least three clear coats of lacquer. The mechanism was cleared with high pressure air and also oiled with a very light mechanical oil. The fact that this one is without pits or blemishes of any sort to original finish, leads us to believe that the care taken of it while in use and the storage of it since have lent to its longevity.

The maker, James Lewis Dalton, hailed from Missouri. Born in 1866, he made a working replica solely from the wood of his mother's sewing machine at the age of 14 (1880). He first patented the Adding, Listing & Calculating machine in 1904. Within ten years he had a going factory for the manufacture of these machines. In 1926 he was stricken with acute appendicitis at the age of 59 and passed away.

Today we may see this invention of Mr. Dalton's as a forerunner to what eventually was referred to as a comptroller's machine. This writer worked on one in the late 1960's to the later part of the 1970's and the "board" had hundreds of keys with print out sheets the width of three feet (or more) and the paper was side punched for continuous feed. With the programming available for computers today, none of these mechanical machines is necessary any longer.

To see this and more you can phone for an appointment to 570-946-5020 or email us at [museum@scpahistory.com](mailto:museum@scpahistory.com). Meanwhile check out our website at [scpahistory.com](http://scpahistory.com) and visit us on facebook.

