



Oct. 15, 2014

TOURING SULLIVAN COUNTY'S MUSEUM . . . while dusting

Do you have a yearbook? Did your classmates sign the pages within it? No matter your age, do you still have the yearbook? We keep the darndest things and then over time virtually forget we have them. Then, eventually, someone else (of another generation) has to deal with the “stuff” we’ve treasured to keep. Here’s where the museum comes in: most people can recognize the value (not monetary but historic) of most given articles. And often, children of those of us who’ve kept our history, know our background of where we came from. So often, that correlation between parent and child is appreciated but perhaps not taken on to the article in question itself. Such is the case with this week’s subject – a school souvenir. Mostly these were not much bigger than your cell phone or iPod but they could be two-fold to open twice the size. What’s come in lately is this large souvenir that measures 7” x 9 ¼” of colored and raised embossed hard paper. This particular one reads “With best wishes of your teacher, Mae K Mencer, Sugar Point School, PA., April 7, 1903.” On the back the card the name Edith Fiester was hand written.

Miss Mencer eventually became Mrs. Orrin Sherman and died eight years later with the shortest of obituaries simply stating “a short illness. Death was due to a complication of diseases.” No further background given. Whereas, Edith Jane Fiester Cox who was born Feb. 7, 1891, lived until May 11, 1991: 100 years young! She was born in Laporte Township on the Fiester Farm atop Sonestown Mt. to George M. and Caroline Peterman Fiester. It states in her obituary that “Neighbors recall at age 92 she still did yard work and outside painting on her house on Muncy St., Laporte.”

Now, we’ve talked about the history of a thing, in this case a school souvenir. So why bother to tell you about this particular one? Because, this piece came from a museum purchase on E-Bay!! We cannot stress strongly enough how valued history is. But, that very value within these walls is not the monetary price put on a thing, rather it is the value to history for present and future generations. This souvenir card is the first of its size within these collections, it is in wonderful shape, and we’re able through the obituary collections we have the background on this teacher and this student to share with you. How do you put a price on that? Please folks, before you see the value of a dollar, try looking for the value of history and give thought of donating such things that you don’t want or don’t mean anything to you, to a museum for prosperity.