



October 2, 2013

## TOURING SULLIVAN COUNTY

... while dusting

Sometimes we have a tendency to take things for granted. And we're not just talking about things from the past that are no longer there but also things in our present. Case in point: the Sullivan County Library, located on Center Street in Dushore across from the Post Office. While looking through some old papers there, we came across a booklet published in 1966 called *Rural Fare/A History of the Bradford-Sullivan-Wyoming County Libraries*

by Dawes Markwell. Mr. Markwell had been appointed librarian to the Rural Library Services Assoc., as it was called, for Bradford County in May of 1941. The program was dependant on a bookmobile which did come to fruition the week before Thanksgiving and a celebration dinner for all those involved was held on December 8<sup>th</sup> – the day after Pearl Harbor was hit. Everything affects the success of any program and the history leading up to that county's library program is an interesting read. At one point in time there was a hope to expand the bookmobile to Sullivan County but this failed because of an impending legal development which threatened to put an end to Bradford County's own library system. By 1945 this snafu had been ironed out between county libraries, state and federal laws and contributions and the county's commissioners. By 1945 their bookmobile was extended to Sullivan County.

Mr. Markwell's 1966 writing for Sullivan County tells of a meeting he had with the then Superintendent of Schools for Sullivan County, Mr. John Lumley. Meetings and discussions were held and with the opening of the school year in 1946, the Bradford-Sullivan County Library was established to incorporate the bookmobile into our county. Mr. Markwell began to look for deposit stations and to "search out elusive one-room schools. They were often hidden in the most inaccessible corners of the county and I doubt that there was a road in the area that I did not explore in my attempt to locate the best routes. When I asked the school director for directions, he advised me to look for the steepest, rockiest, bleakest knoll in the county. "There," he said, "stands our school!" Sure enough, he was usually right." These small schools were eventually closed and children were bused to the Laporte School. There was from 1947 a deposit station in the office of the Red Cross. "Mrs. Ruth Arey, who was Secretary of the Red Cross, managed to find a little time between her professional chores to encourage readers. We worked hard to set up this station, wanting Sullivan County to get full returns on their investment in library service."

"The Tuesday Book Club [still in existence today] sponsored the Dushore Library and, with rare disinterest, has always remembered that this is a public service and not only a club program. The members work very hard to keep the town aware of its library. They were finally successful in persuading the Borough Council of it value to the community. After a few years in abandoned stores, the Council gave the women a vacated fire hall for quarters. What was done with that unpromising site is an example of perseverance, good taste and enormous energy." That location is the present day Sullivan County Library building.

Today our library is supported by state funds and the Sullivan County Commissioners. But, it is still in need of community support to keep abreast of current needs. Their funding efforts continue with the Tuesday Book Club and also with the Friends of the Sullivan County Library. The Friends group solicits library membership

on an annual basis of \$5 per person. You can visit the library site at [www.sullivancountylibrary.org](http://www.sullivancountylibrary.org) or call for more information to 570-928-9352 about the many services and activities. It is said that you won't miss something until it isn't there: can you just imagine what it would be like if all those past efforts to bring library services to Sullivan County hadn't taken place?

For this and more information on Sullivan County history, you can contact the museum either on line at [www:scpahistory.com](http://www:scpahistory.com), or email [museum@scpahistory.com](mailto:museum@scpahistory.com) or call 570-946-5020 or visit us on face book at [sullivancountypahistoricalociety](https://www.facebook.com/sullivancountypahistoricalociety)