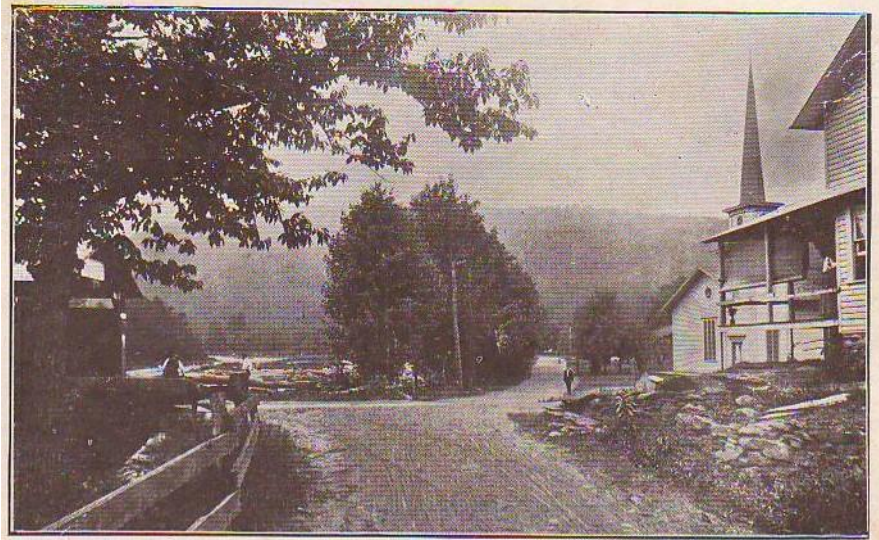


Feb. 13, 2019

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

We, today, cannot really appreciate the 'ways of old'. And, yes, it's because we live in different conditions of time but also because since those conditions are so far advanced from the early settlers – well, we've simply no concept. With this thought in mind, we came across a writing entitled Early Settlers by Fred Rogers who died in 1952. It is primarily based on Forksville, the surrounding area and the families that lived there. We'll begin with Mr. Roger's intro:



CHURCH STREET, FORKSVILLE, PA.

“The early English settlements\* on the Loyalsock date back to 1794, when the section was a vast wilderness, which was interesting because of its location, ownership, and wildness.

“Dr. Joseph Priestley, a noted Englishman, owned a large number of tracts of land on the Loyalsock and its tributaries and was greatly interested in the settlement of the Loyalsock and of the rich lands of Pennsylvania, and upon his decease, his son Joseph, together with other members of the family, came into possession of his lands in the Loyalsock region, as his direct heir at law.

“Samuel Wallis, of Muncy, Pennsylvania, purchased a number of tracts of land on the Loyalsock for colonization\*\* purposes, some of which tracts were afterward purchased from Mr. Wallis by Joseph Priestley, Jr., who was the moving spirit in the settlements on the Loyalsock which were the first permanent English settlements in what is now known as Sullivan county.

“Joseph Priestly and John Vaughn, who had purchased some of Mr. Wallis' land on the Loyalsock, together with some other Englishmen planned an English colony, as the English settlers were coming to Pennsylvania in large numbers at the time.

“The project was soon abandoned by all who were interested in the colony, except Mr. Priestley, who owned and controlled lands that formally belonged to his father in addition to those he had purchased from Mr. Wallis, these lands being located on the Loyalsock and its tributaries in which is now known as Elkland, Forks, Fox and Hillsgrove townships, in Sullivan county.”

We'll continue next week. Until then you can check us out by visiting our web site at [www.scpahistory.com](http://www.scpahistory.com) or Facebook. Appointments can be scheduled for Tuesdays and Thursdays (weather and personal schedules permitting) by emailing [museum@scpahistory.com](mailto:museum@scpahistory.com) or phoning 570-946-5020.

\*Settlement in any frontier area was primarily done by people from the same countries and regions within those countries, so that English settled together, Germans settled together, etc.

\*\*Colonization was a polite way of basically being a land owner with land for sale. Michael Meylert of Laporte Twp. did the same thing when in the 1847-50 dispute over placement of the Sullivan County seat, gave the courthouse square of ground to encourage the Harrisburg commission to then select Laporte – which prior to did not exist. Then with the seat established, Mr. Meylert formulated the town's lots to in fact sell for those people operating the new Sullivan County government.

Feb. 20, 2019

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

Continuing from last week, with Fred Roger's write-up about early settlement of Sullivan County on the western side.

"The early settlers of the Loyalsock were accustomed to many home comforts in England, which they did not enjoy in the settlement and their equipment of every kind was very scant and crude.

"The cooking was done in fireplaces; the baking in iron bake-kettles or in stone bake-ovens. Johnny cake was baked in long handled frying pans. The fires were produced with steel, flint and punk. Pine knots and splints and tallow candles were used for lights. The sweeping was done with splint brooms. Girls and boys went barefoot most of the year and work coonskin or woven straw hats. Browned grains and nuts were used for coffee.

"In brief, nearly everything was done differently than it was done now, even the spinning wheel and weaving machine were run by the mothers.

"The hunters had to contend with those old flintlock rifles, which often put them into too close quarters with the panther and wolf and bear.

"The men trained for the militia service once each month so as to be ready for their country's call at a moment's warning.

"Grandfather Rogers [that would be Samuel] was a lieutenant of the militia.

"All equipment for farming, lumbering and manufacturing purposes was scant and crude, the mills depending on water power alone for operation.

"The distances and rugged roads to any place where the common necessities of life could be secured, were enough to try the stoutest heart, but still they persevered."

The first mail carrier from Muncy to Towanda was a Mr. Montgomery on horseback who remarked "They were alright in Sullivan county, but not the mud holes. I traveled through one mud hole nine miles long and have another one to go through that is longer". The next time you come across a pot hole, wet section or wash out on paved or dirt road; you may want to remember Mr. Montgomery's ordeal and thank your lucky stars that you're sitting in a vehicle – with wheels, shocks, heater or air, and a roof. In other words, it could be worse.

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