

TOURING SULLIVAN COUNTY'S MUSEUM . . . while dusting

On Jan. 18th an interview was done with Ruth Speary Dorkee. Ruth was born in Long Brook on Dec. 28, 1921 to father Tom Speary and Jessie Little Speary. Because of her birth year, Ruth is able to still remember things from the past. Her mother passed away when she was two from childbirth complications. Along with her siblings, they then went to live with her grandparents John and Mary Alice Little. John and Mary Alice had already raised nine of their own children and now had added their daughter Jessie's five and husband Tom.

Ruth can recall as a child, along with her siblings which included her baby sister, imploring their father to take them on Sunday afternoons to 'the ice cream parlor'. Because she remembers her sister toddling along, we could assume that this may have been in the mid to latter part of the 1920's. The other thing that is telling from this scenario is the photo included here. Route 220 wasn't dedicated until 1928, so that makes us wonder if Ruth's early memories of the trips for ice cream weren't more in line with say, 1926-27.

Where this all plays in with the previous article about the Pine Tavern (Sully issue _____) is the age of the tavern. Ruth remembers that Punk and Laura Houseknecht came from Tivoli and built the tavern in the latter part of the 1920s. And that initially there was no restaurant, just the gas station with the ice cream parlor and that they also sold candy. We do know that from a 2008 interview with Bob Meehan that Ed Meehan bought the tavern from Punk in 1940 and then installed the restaurant with a liquor license. And that from that time forward it remained having the restaurant.

This interview with Ruth came about after her reading that previous article, then relaying to her niece Darla Bortz that she knew some more details. Darla suggested the interview and now you have the culmination of that. It was a delight meeting with Ruth and hearing her stories. She's 97 years old and still lives in her own home. People of all ages have stories and background and this was just one such pleasure to be had when you take the time to listen. Not only is it fun to hear, it is so appreciated by those doing the telling. So, whether it's for something like this for the museum, or simply your own family curiosity: take the time to ask questions and then, let the fun begin.

To contact the museum, phone 570-946-5020 or email museum@schistory.com for an appointment. Meanwhile, check out our web site at www.scpahistory.com and our Facebook page.