

Jan. 9, 2019



TOURING SULLIVAN COUNTY'S MUSEUM . . . while dusting

We very often find history within an obituary. This week's example will give you more insight than you'd usually find in an obituary so we'll hope that you enjoy its background.

This appeared in the Sullivan Review, Vol. 11, No. 49 for Jan. 31st, 1889:

"Overton Oddities. The Last Pioneer Gone. On Wednesday afternoon last (Jan. 23) the tolling bell announced to us that the last of that heroic band that braved the

hardships and dangers of the wilderness land of Overton three-quarters of a century ago, had passed from earth. Not only was this octogenarian "mother" the last of these brave men and women whose memories we shall ever cherish with deep feelings of gratitude, but she was the last of the original Heverly family – the pioneer family into Overton. "Aunt Rosina Haverly", the subject of this memorial and consort of the late Henry Heverly, was the daughter of Philip and Martha (Mullen) Kilmer. Her birth occurred January 1, 1803, near Albany, N.Y., her parents emigrating to Fox, Sullivan county, Pa., when she was yet a small girl. Here she grew to vigorous womanhood and in the 7th of January 1823 was united in marriage with Henry Heverly, of Overton. The marriage at the home of the bride's parents was celebrated according to the customs of these primitive days. A supper, the best that could be prepared from plain materials, was enjoyed by those gathered to witness the occasion. The usual "good wishes", we extended to the happy couple, and finally in the evening the exercises of that memorable day were closed by the officiating clergyman, Daniel Wilcox, who solomunized the event by a sermon. The young bride at once accompanied her husband to his wilderness home and began life's struggles in earnest, taking up their abode in a log house. She was the eighth bride to be brought to the new settlement. A home in Overton then, was not the most pleasurable one. Briefly in her own words: "the woods were full of wild beast, and it was not safe to go from one house to another without a gun. The first hog we had was killed by the bears, and we were required to go the "Forks" for another. Log pens were built for the hogs, sheep and calves to save them from destruction." Thus, surrounded as she was, under all these trying circumstances, she acted her part well in helping to improve and build up the neighborhood. Soon after her advent into Overton, she with five others met and organized the first Methodist class in this locality. "Their work shall live after them", and it is our inspiring thought to know that the good work began by them has prospered in Overton. "Aunt Rosina" was a very devout Christian. She made a profession in early life and "died in the Lord", when past her eighty-sixth year. Many times, before the days of good roads when wagons could not be afforded, she frequently went to Canton, unattended, to attend quarterly meetings.

"This good lady survived her husband over seventeen years, having since his demise resided with her son, Chauncy, who with his estimable wife have administered most patiently and lovingly for the wants of "mother" in her closing years.

“Mrs. Haverly was the mother of seven children, all of whom are yet living and all, save one, followed her to the grave on Saturday last, the funeral was largely attended fully a hundred relatives of the deceased being present. Among the humber were several grand children and great-grand children. The remains were brought to the M.E. church at 11 a.m., Reuben Rinebold, Lewis Rinebold, Thomas Strevy, John Strevy, Benj. Houseknecht and Peter Moster, acting as pall bearers. The funeral obsequies were conducted by Rev. Jos. Merring who preached from Revelations 14-13. He was assisted by Revs. Retan and Wardall. After the remains were viewed for the last time, they were borne to their final resting place, in the German Reformed Cemetery, and laid beside him whose fortunes she had shared.”

We don't think anything today of getting in the car and traveling about but if you let your mind go back to a time of this woman's experience, let your imagination view the forested lands and the wilds within them – then you can at least somewhat appreciate the struggles of early pioneers to what was then the frontier portion of Pennsylvania.

For this and more, you can visit our web site at www.scpahistory.com or make an appointment by phoning 570-946-5020 or emailing museum@scpahistory.com and please like us on Facebook.