

Oct. 23, 2019

Postcard of Oct. 28th, 1911
with raised subjects on paper

TOURING SULLIVAN
COUNTY'S MUSEUM . . .
while dusting

We've done articles in the past on the history of the Muncy Valley Power plant (begun in 1900, in operation in 1904), power to Dushore in 1906 and also to Bernice, Mildred and Lopez in 1920. But, another modern-day convenience that we take for granted is the telephone. So when we discovered a certificate issued to a newly formed corporation named the Williamsport and North Branch Telephone Co. it was a bit of a surprise. Said certificate was recorded on Dec. 7th, 1882.

One of its articles is "Said corporation is formed for the purpose of erecting , maintaining and operating a telephone line or lines in the Borough of Hughesville, in the County of Lycoming and other points along the line of the Williamsport and North Branch Rail Road in the counties of Lycoming, Sullivan and Bradford . . . and the said company shall receive and collect such compensations from its patrons for the use thereof as may be agreed upon."

From Wikipedia: The Williamsport and North Branch Railroad was a short line that operated in north-central Pennsylvania between 1872 and 1937. After a long struggle to finance its construction, it was completed in 1893. It derived most of its freight revenue from logging and to a certain extent from anthracite coal traffic. It also carried many passengers to mountain resorts in Sullivan County, Pennsylvania. With the decline of the logging industry and increased accessibility of the region by automobile in the 1910s and 1920s, the railroad's business rapidly declined. The economic blow of the Great Depression proved insurmountable, and it was abandoned as unprofitable in 1937.

Can you imagine living your life today without a telephone, or should I say, cell phone? But back in that time, letter writing and visiting one another was the mode of communication and this writer feels fairly certain that a new fangled thing such as a telephone would have been quite a luxury item. And to think it began here with a railroad's needs!

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