



The Sullivan County Fair first grandstand (left). Postcard is divided, so this is after 1907 but has no identities. A donation request card for a church extension (right), has handwritten on the back "Whose cake was the best? Friday, Nov. 1st, (18)89."

Aug. 24, 2016

TOURING SULLIVAN COUNTY'S MUSEUM . . . while dusting

The Sullivan County Agricultural Society maintains the Sullivan County Fair and the grounds it is held on. The history of this Society and the fair held here is most interesting all by itself. From a publication we have available here at the museum in Laporte entitled *Pioneering with Sullivan County Pioneers, by Many Authors* comes the following:

"Leading the list of citizens bringing agricultural interests to the high position occupied by local tillers of the soil through the years are the farm agents and their office workers. Under the name of the Farm Bureau, this service started in the Fall of 1917. The foundation was built on an organization known as the Sullivan County Agricultural Society which fostered the Sullivan County Fair and with groups of interested farm families held farmer's institutes and small agricultural meetings in cooperation with the Farmers Alliance and the Patrons of Husbandry through three decades. The Bureau met opposition from a group of citizens who evidently placed a wrong conception upon its motives. Under the sponsorship of the Pennsylvania State College, a group of farm leaders and their wives raised funds for emergency use, and an office was established at Dushore in 1918; for its maintenance the County Commissioners allotted the sum of \$50.00 monthly. Paul Korb was appointed by State College as the first Farm Agent, serving until 1920. He was succeeded by Raymond Waltz, who was called to a bigger and better paying position in 1924. The service has grown in popularity and use. Eugene Hamill assumed leadership and the Bureau name was changed to Agricultural Extension Association. In 1927, J. Walter Learn accepted the appointment and established his home in Dushore, giving eleven years of undivided attention and service to a cause which was his ideal. His foresight and energy made the Association indispensable to all citizens of Sullivan County and removed the last opposition. A talented musician, he endeared himself to the youth by helping whenever their bands needed his assistance. His service is remembered and his untimely death in 1948 mourned by all who knew his sterling worth. It can well be said of him: Gone, but not forgotten.

"His worthy successor, W. H. Gregory, vocational agricultural teacher in the Sonestown High School, later instructor in the G. I. Agricultural Training Program, was already known and respected before assuming the duties and responsibilities to which he became heir. Carrying forward the policies of his predecessor and introducing improvements, under his management, has won the

confidence of all branches of agriculture as a teaching service; in demonstrating better ways of doing things on farms; better varieties of seeds; of fertilizers; and better farm practices in general, with instruction by specialists from State college. The service has changed the county life from dependence on manufacturing to a just appreciation of agricultural pursuits as the leading dependable industry of the county.

Aug. 31, 2016

TOURING SULLIVAN COUNTY'S MUSEUM . . . while dusting

Continuing from last week from the publication of *Pioneering with Sullivan County Pioneers*:

"In recent years notable progress has resulted in the grassland type of farming necessary to the rapidly growing dairy industry, scientific application of methods in rotation of pasturage and better quality of hay, grass and legumes.

"The Extension Service enters all phases of farm life, particularly in the breed and breeding of dairy and beef cattle, both natural and artificial. Also the care, adjustment and use of farm machinery, in which dealers cooperate.

"The over-all extension program includes Home Economics. This valuable service grew from small beginnings in 1922 when Mrs. Blanche Coit from State College spent alternate weeks in the Extension office in Dushore. Her work was not connected with High School programs. She reached her pupils through demonstrations and meetings with youth through 4-H Clubs and adult rural groups of women. Since she left in 1935, an extension representative has been available at all times. It is stressed that the entire extension program is education in which rural dwellers are encouraged to help themselves through organization and cooperation. The kind greeting and cheerful service of office assistants through the years has contributed to the efficiency of the services. The following well remembered names merit recognition in records of Extension achievements: Home Economics Extension Representatives – Miss Mary K. Rissinger 1935-41, Miss Geraldine Cornish 1941-44, Miss June Mertz 1944-47, Miss Mary Metzger 1947-49, Miss Mary Musser 1949-52, Miss Josephine DeRaymond 1952-[left blank because print date of publications was 1953] Office Secretaries – Agnes Carroll Saxer 1920-28, Madelyn Foley 1928-29, Mildred Murphy Marshall 1929 –[same as previous].

Aiding the State's assistance to agriculture and animal husbandry, the Federal government provides the equally valuable services of the Agricultural Conservation Association with a central office in Dushore of which George Bahl is the chairman of the county committee. Other members: Frank Rohe, Vice-Chairman, and Foster Myers.

"Members of this committee are elected annually. Fertilizer and seed are purchased in bulk and distributed to members at cost. Assistance is given in marketing produce and in planning acreage of vital crops, with reliable information as to the general needs to balance supply and demand."

Today much has changed in the governing of agriculture and the various details and available equipment for farmers. And there are far less farmers in Sullivan County but the adherence to good farming practices continues today. For that reason the Sullivan County Historical Society has reinstated the Century Farm awards like those awarded in the 1960's. Applications are available here at the museum in Laporte or the Sullivan County Conservation District. Criteria is that the farm must have been in the same family for at least 100 consecutive years, farm buildings (if present) must be in good state of repair, farm must contain 25 contiguous acres and some portion of that land must be agriculturally maintained but need not necessarily be worked by the landowner. Deadline for applications is Sept. 1, 2016 for awards at the Conservation District annual dinner in Oct. Each eligible farm will receive a certificate and a sign with their family farm name (last name only) at the time of awards.