



*Lumbering crew on lunch break amidst felling hemlock for bark in very early 1900's near Masten on the Cahill Mountain.*

Feb. 24, 3016

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

Last week we took you thru some writings of B. T. Martin, past editor of the Sullivan Review. From those writings, we promised you his rendition of the story of the Devil's Grave. This

story has been written and re-written by many people but because Mr. Martin had written his piece originally sometime while owning the Sully (1916-1959), we believe his to be perhaps the "father" of other tellings. So, from Mr. Martin's writing:

"During the time of the building of the Turnpike from Berwick to Elmira, a man named Lopez had the contract to build that portion lying between Long Pond and the Big Loyalsock. While at work cutting the right of way and grading a strange man came into his camp one evening and asked to be cared for. Mr. Lopez, said he could not keep anyone who did not work. Times were hard and grub was scarce. The stranger then said he did not expect charity but was willing to work for what he had. He was given a place to sleep and was fed with the other men in the morning and given an axe, being told what work he could do. He worked for several days and all of this time kept a close mouth about his own affairs. When being questioned by his fellow workers as to his name and whereabouts, his reply was that he was called "The Devil" where he last was known. In this it is stated by those who knew him that he was as the saying is "A devil to work".

"He continued with the axemen for a number of days and one day while felling a large tree, this tree became lodged in the branches of another tree on the opposite side of the right of way. Becoming angry at not being able to fall the tree where he wanted it he ran under the lodged tree and began cutting away the branches which hindered its fall. His companions called to him to be careful but the warning came too late. One slash of the axe and the monster trunk dropped down and crushed him to the earth, killing him instantly.

"His companions removed the body to their camp and prepared it for burial. A grave was dug beside the road in which the body was lain, and a stone placed at its head, marked with the words "The Devil". Inquiry was made far and wide to try and locate some relative or friend but was not successful. No one seemed to ever remember where he came from and the only name known for the stranger was the one he gave: "The Devil".

It may seem strange today that someone could simply show up, start work, not divulge any personal information and then suddenly die with no background. But, think about it; he didn't fill out any hiring paperwork, didn't need to qualify for the work or compete for the position, and because they worked hard their downtime was probably spent eating a meal and sleeping. So his anonymity wasn't really surprising for the short amount of time that he'd been on that job – but it does seem downright strange all the same.