



Blanche Hunsinger (John) Diltz taken on Headley Avenue but undated

March 9, 2016

TOURING SULLIVAN COUNTY'S MUSEUM . . . while dusting

As it so happens here, when looking for one thing – we find another. In the Elkland Township compiling, this writer came across a copy of a write up entitled “A Horse Race”. Whenever this piece was placed into acquisition, it was not accompanied by any source reference but the copy appears to have been a published write-up

with footnotes and numbered pages. Anyone knowing of this source please contact the museum via email at museum@scpahistory.com or phone and let a message at 570-946-5020.

It beings thus: “This is a tale that cries for the telling about a horse race in Elkland, over toward Shunk, beginning at the Friends Meeting House. Such are the people and such are the events that stride across pages of my family history. [footnote Wright family]

“It was not just that the Wesleyan preacher had a good mare, the nicest piece of horse flesh around, though he would rue the characterization. Neither was it just that the Quaker farmer had a black stallion that never would he have admitted meant more to him than his wife, for the Friend was married to the only woman he possibly could image being married to. Content in marriage as were both these brethren, there was a place reserved in each man’s affections respectively for a little Morgan mare and black stallion.

“The young preacher had been horse-struck as long as he could remember: pungent odor of a well-leathered steed, pacing down a stretch of road, the feel of nuzzling velvet nostrils against his cheek! His bride, supposing his calling would displace this infatuation, had secretly come to envy the mare. His kinfolk hoped he would lose his fascination, and the church people looked for a day when he would. Wesleyans and Quakers generally eschewed horse racing.

“He had gone over the mountain to Canton and was returning. The day was clear, the air crisp, the road slightly spongy from an all-night rain. He had gotten just about to Friends Meeting House when he and the mare came into sight and smell of a black stallion tethered to a tree, pawing the earth so furiously that clods were flying as high as tree tops, his red nostrils aflame: a beauty to behold.

“Now this preacher had been reared in the strictest way, was well educated for his time, and his first parish was the Elkland charge, yet his love of horses hade led to certain doubting: for example Professor O.C. Marsh of Yale went on an expedition to Wyoming and Montana and had found and identified a small, primitive ancestor of the horse no larger than a fox, four-footed and inhabiting the river banks during the Eocene epoch, and named it Eohippus. Somewhere the preacher had read about this and had pursued the history of the development of the horse and ass. At first this study of evolving of the specie had touched raw nerves of faith and belief in the Old Testament Genesis account, but he had come to terms with the new knowledge when he realized that man’s creation was long after that of an animal kingdom, and that the horse and the ass and the dog, the camel and the

ox were ready to become domesticated when Adam and Eve were driven from the Garden of Eden. As he was driving along he was musing about these things and about his little quarter horse descended from Justin Morgan, a stallion owned by a Massachusetts school teacher back in the late 1700's. She stood 14.1 hands at her withers, weighted 1100 lbs., had the wide head and prominent eyes, small ears set wide apart, short back an broad loins, high set tail carried like her New England ancestor. She moved gracefully and effortlessly whether under saddle or harnessed to sulky or buggy. He had let her out on several occasions on a straight stretch for two furlongs or so and felt she would do a quarter mile in record time. He wished he could take her to the Forksville race course against Watson Wright's Morgan."

The rest of the story next week.