



Nov. 22, 2023

TOURING SULLIVAN COUNTY'S MUSEUM . . . while dusting

From a recently recovered new article of the Republican New Item dated September 16, 1897 comes the following:
"Nordmont Swept Away By Angry Flames. Disastrous Blaze Threatened the County Cover Bridge. Flames started in the rear of store building where corn was stored The origin not known.

"Nordmont was visited by a most destructive conflagration Saturday night in which many dollars worth of property was destroyed.

"The fire broke out at 9:30 o'clock in the rear of the store building owned by M.C. Botsford in which the Peterman Bros. were conducting a mercantile business. The two-story building which had a depth of about 40 feet, in a short time was a mass of flames. The fire was of the hardest kind to fight as the flames led by grease and corn pith, sent out great volumes of smoke that baffle every effort to reach the centre of the conflagration. The origin of the fire is at present a mystery which A.D. Lundy, Insurance Agent of Williamsport, was investigating Monday afternoon in company with Mr. Botsford.

"There was a picnic in the grove but a short distance from the place, held under the auspices of the P.O.S. of A, which was at the outbreak of the fire, in its highest ebb, but in the excitement of the alarm given strong men flew from their sweet companions to show their valor in subduing flames.

"The First Alarm Given – Lucius Fritz was the first to discover flames issuing forth from the rear of the store building which had shortly been locked up by Mr. Peterman who had closed his doors for the evening and gone home. Mr. Fritz at once sounded the alarm of "fire" which immediately brought crowds from the picnic ground, each eager to their part toward extinguishing the fire that threatened the whole town.

"The fire spread rapidly after the explosion of a large quantity of powder and the dense smoke that at once filled the store room rendered it impossible for any further battle. The flame rapidly found its way to the second story and ate its way through the roof, then spreading its brands on the P.O.S. of A. Hall which adjoined but a few feet, it too, was soon wrapped in flames. From here the fire swept to the residence of J.C. Newman which was also devoured with most of its contents. It was at this point that it looked as though the county bridge would go up in smoke. Water was thrown upon it freely which evaporated almost instantly from the intense heat.

"The post office which was kept in the store had all its belongings consumed including \$60 worth of stamps. The railroad station is now used as a temporary office to distribute mail. The P.O.S. of A Hall burned all its contents along with 22000 cigars belong to Milton Botsford, went up in smoke. The new residence of J.C. Newman which he recently purchased had but little furniture saved; the insurance carried was \$600. Mr. Botsford carried \$500 insurance on store

building. Mr. Peterman \$1200 on merchandise. The hall had been insured in a Mutual company of Williamsport which failed but a short time ago. The loss to this order is over \$600.

“This once thriving town of a large hotel, two stores, hall and dwellings now presents a deplorable appearance as nothing but the bare walls and a blacksmith shop and one barn can be seen. Fire visited the hotel and other property some time ago, and the flames of Saturday night swept the remaining portion of the town out of existence.”

The covered bridge the article is referring to was past Vandine’s store and going straight up the hill. That bridge was demolished in 1954 and replaced with a modern road bridge. The Hall referred to is the Patriotic Order of Sons of America. The places mentioned, in comparison to what Nordmont has in it today, is much different. But, the resilience of people is also depicted in that the town of Nordmont and its history are still present today.

For this and more on your own areas of interest in Sullivan County, you can contact us by phone at 570-946-5020 or email at museum@scpahistory.com for an appointment. Meanwhile visit our website at www.scpahistory.com and like us on Facebook.