



Nov. 29, 2023

TOURING SULLIVAN COUNTY'S HISTORICAL SOCIETY . . . while dustng

From the archive collections within YOUR museum, there is an interesting section entitled "Diaries". Individually these can vary in their content from the weather to private thoughts to genealogy background. The particular one we're about to share comes from Ruth Hild of Eagles Mere. She notes at the beginning in her own handwriting that this is from her grandfather, Dr. William Kaercher (d. 10/13/1933), whose wife was the daughter of Elizabeth Horn and John George Ficht and are all entries of 1918. They are as follows:

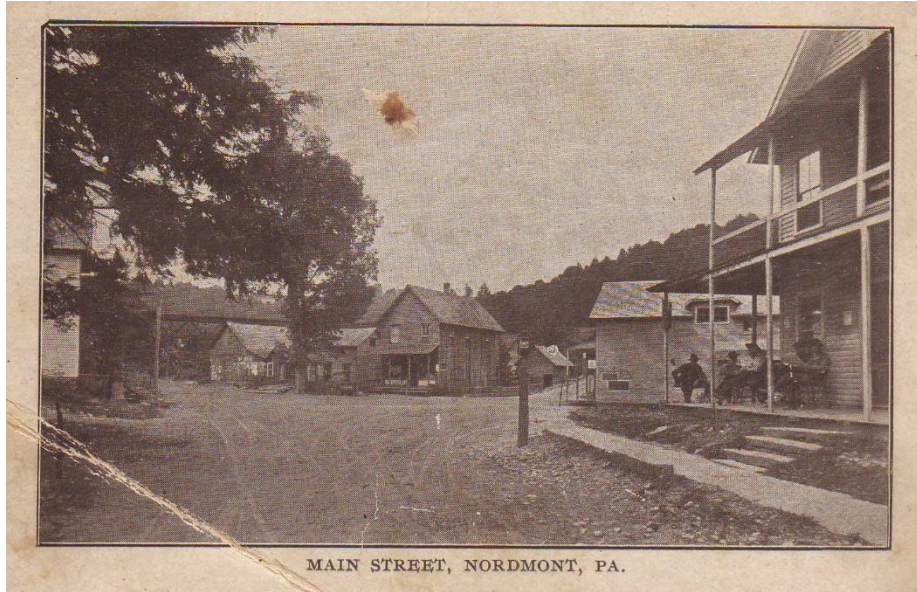
"Sep. 21, 1918 Partly clear & cloudy, slight rain at 9 p.m. Walked for milk and mail this morning. Nailed maple sticks on our frames. Chilly evening shaved today.

"Sunday Sep. 22, 1918 Frost this morning & perfectly clear weather a.m., & partly cloudy in afternoon. Visited Mrs. Fincke. Caught several Lopez children stealing apples from the Gerwin place when Charley & I walked to Finckes.

"Monday Sep. 23, 1918 Cloudy until noon, sunshine till close of day. Charley & I walked to Hunsingers & I continued my hike to Sonestown. Reached Shady No-ok 9:35 a.m., at 10:30 at M. was in Lopez and 11:40 a.m. M. arrived in Mildred, where I hunted up Rev. A.L. Smith, past of the Trinity Lutheran church, which at one time was served by Rev. Zieglbrier. Rev. Smith took one to Schaad's hotel for dinner, after which we visited the church, which still was decorated with fruits, vegetables & flowers from the harvest festival of previous day. Played numerous hymns from the Army & Navy book, and found a good reed organ. Rev. Smith is a bachelor & lives in rooms over the bank. He is a finely educated man on a lonely post. Together we walked thru Bernice & to the W.&N.B.R.R. tracks where we were overtaken by Johnson the Lopez storekeeper who invited me into his auto & at 3 p.m. we arrived at Laporte Courthouse where I left him & continued my walk. Makoma Inn and Lake Makoma & then I came to the road leading to Nordmont. From here I had to walk five (5) more miles to Sonestown. The country is red shale soil & the roads in certain places look as if painted red. The scenery is magnificent. The Gavitts live on the main street, nearly opposite the hotel, and it's a fine rooming house. Found Amanda in the summer kitchen paring & slicing apples for apple butter helped by her sister-in-law Mrs. Messenger, a widow. I was made very welcome. Lee came home & we had supper at 5:50 p.m. There is a cow, chickens & 2 pigs, and a large vegetable garden the whole property is three acres in size. The house is electric lighted. Arrived 5 p.m. Amanda & Lee look very well. Amanda is Rosie's cousin on the Horn side. There is living with them Mabel Horn a daughter of Kimber Horn of Nordmont who is a brother of Amanda. Mabel attends the (?Mildred?) high school. Mailed a postal to Edna. Sonestown has an altitude of 1500 feet & Laporte is 2200 feet above the sea."

We'll continue next week with the balance of this diary except. Note that weather is important to the writers of the time, and since you've realized by this writing that he is walking for his daily travels, it is quite understandable. He is probably also noting reminders to himself also of those he has visited and how they were faring.

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Dec. 6, 2023

TOURING SULLIVAN COUNTY'S MUSEUM . . . while dusting

Continuing with Dr. William Kaercher's diary. Dr. Kaercher and his wife lived for this time period in Bella Sylva. He passed away Oct. 13, 1933 in Philadelphia. His writings for this diary show his visits in September of the year 1918.

"Tuesday, Sep. 24, 1918 Cloudy a.m., with several drizzles in morning. Cleared in the afternoon & sun shone brightly. Chilly night. Mother Gavitt smokes the pipe & is over 80 years old. Grand mother Horn also was a pipe smoker, Lee does not smoke. In the forenoon I visited the clothespin factory and saw the manufacture from the log to the finished product. Amanda made apple butter in her field, assisted by Mrs. Messenger. At 2:30 p.m. I bade farewell to Mother & Lee, Amanda rode me in her Ford to Nordmont church from whence I walked the balance of the way (3 miles) to Marcus Horn's farm. Found Eunice, daughter-in-law Dora & she two grandchildren at home, baking by the women. Marcus & Roland came home from the buckwheat field & we had a pleasant evening. The crops are good on the farm. Marcus & family autoed to Hunsingers las summer to visit Hilda & Elsie. Retired to bed after 11 p.m.

"Wednesday Sep 25, 1918 Light frost, cloudy, rain from 9 a.m., windless, on phone for a few moments toward evening. Arose at 6 a.m. & enjoyed a chicken breakfast & some sweet meats. Bade goodbye to Marcus & family, who intended to auto to Hughesville Fair, and at 8:50 a.m. I started on my hike to Bellasylva. Shortly after leaving Marcus rain set in & continued until I had reached Lopez, fortunately I had an umbrella. At the Nordmont store I purchased a couple of Phila. made cigars. My tramp was for three miles up the Elk Run road to the junction with the Sonestown-Laporte road. Walked the five miles in one hour and a quarter to the Laporte P.O., where I wrote a postal card to Edna & to Amanda, this was at 10:45 a.m., then I resumed the lonely tramp to Bernice, nothing but wooded hills to be seen for eleven miles, beautiful, even though it rained copiously. I was overtaken by an Atlantic Refining Co. truck & was given a lift for three miles, so that I reached

Bernice at 2:50 p.m. The Murraytown coal breaker I passed 1:30 p.m. & Lopez was reached at 1:50 p.m. One hour afterward I sat down at Shady Nook & made few notes in my pocket diary and despite the muddy condition of the pond I arrived at the Schrage cottage at 4:15 p.m. tired & hungry. Emma gave me a lunch and coffee & afterward felt again refreshed. Retired to bed 8:30 o'clock, and slept soundly.

Thursday Thunder and lightening & heavy rain hours before daylight. Emma's bread got tough & we are teasing about such hardtack. Partly cloudy in the afternoon. Fished in . . ."

So there ends the travels of Dr. William Kaercher from this segment of his diary. Today we would go out and hop in our vehicles to go where ever we please or need to be. But then, for people to 'get around' meant predominately on foot or if you were more well off to use a horse. When you think of the miles, and the doctor's time tables, it seems quite impressive that despite what ever weather he was in, that he doggedly made his ventures. This piece only covers 6 days from the diary and at the time, the man was approximately 57 years of age (born 1861 – died 1933 at age 72).

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The attached Touring articles are for 11/29 and 12/6/2023. The photos are of Nordmont, 1902. And Lopez, 1907: All of the buildings seen burned in 1982. In the photo you are looking west and the creek runs thru where the people are standing on the bridge. Hotel Lopez is on the left and the railroad station is out of site. At the time Andy Decker's barber shop would have been the theater.