

Apr. 5, 2017

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

About two years ago this writer was at a Community Relations dinner held at Red Rock Job Corp Center and after passing through Lopez on the way to the dinner, began to wonder about the little settlement of cabins just beyond Lopez on Route 487. For the life of me, I just couldn't remember its name. Arriving at the dinner I ran into Ferdie Merek who instantly said "Lesterville". Well, that answered its name but the curiosity to know more prompted more inquiry of Ferdie, who was more than happy to share what he knew since he'd come here in 1945. He remembered a Cortez Lester who ran a store in Lesterville and that what I'd thought were simply cabins, had at one time been homes. What he also said that the store was a combination gas station and had a phone booth outside.

The museum had put up a historic sign using funds from the Endless Mountains Heritage Region on the right hand side of the road going towards Red Rock to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the closing of Ricketts that happened in 1913. Keeping in mind that Ferdie came to Sullivan County in 1945, he still has in his memory hearing tell of the reunion picnic gatherings that were held at Lesterville for alumni of the town of Ricketts even after WWII.

In researching the museum's archives of obituaries, we found the following:  
Sir Knight Eugene Lester died Jan. 7, 1902, member of the Knights of the Maccabees.  
Mary (wife of Howard) Lester 24, died on Oct. 11, 1914 in Murray, one 5 yr. old child.  
Anna Mariah (H.M.) Lester at 81 died Sept. 1933.  
H.M. (Anna) Lester died July 1934 aged 85 years, 9 mo. and 3 days.  
Cortez Lester 73 died Nov. 3, 1982.

The children of these deceased all moved away from Sullivan County. In fact, Cortez had died in California where he and his wife Helen had lived in retirement. Helen had been a Buk and it was from her father whom Cortez had purchased the Lesterville store. After Cortez the store was sold to Frank Delovich. Frank died in Oct. 1979 and his obituary states that he is from Lesterville, even though he grew up in Lopez.

So the next time you're taking a ride out that way and pass through the little settlement of Lesterville, you can appreciate how some places don't even get a blink on the map but for those of you ever wondering about it – this is as much of what we know and just some of the people who lived there.

Meanwhile, for more on Sullivan County history, please feel free to visit YOUR museum by phoning 570-946-5020 or emailing [museum@scpahistory.com](mailto:museum@scpahistory.com) for an appointment. Also visit our web site at [www.scvpahistory.com](http://www.scvpahistory.com) and like us on Facebook.