



Dec. 1, 2021

TOURING SULLIVAN COUNTY'S MUSEUM . . .
while dusting

An interesting article caught our attention that depicts the perils of an industry in past times. This piece comes from the Sullivan Review issue of June 12, 1959 and reads as follows:

“Bruce G. Burgess Is Fatally Injured Working in the Woods – Bruce G. Burgess, 46 of Forksville Star Route, died Wednesday morning at 10 o'clock in the Williamsport Hospital following an accident on a

lumbering operation Tuesday afternoon at about 3:30 o'clock.

“Mr. Burgess and John Edkin of Forkville RD 2 were felling a large tree seven miles up Mill Creek, on Middle Hill, near Hillsgrove. Norman Wilcox and Delos Kobbe were working nearby.

“Wilcox said that the tree leaned to one side, and Burgess and Edkin cut everything away in the direction where it would fall so it would not become lodged. The tree fell according to the plan laid out, but in doing so it apparently pulled down an old stub of a tree about four inches in diameter. Wilcox said it was his belief that the stub whipped back and struck Burgess on the shoulders and back of the head.

“He shouted, “Oh, my shoulders!” and fell unconscious bleeding badly from the wound on the back of his head.

“He was rushed to the Williamsport Hospital in the Hillsgrove ambulance with Ray Kanally in charge. Mr. Edkin accompanied him. He was operated on soon after his arrival, but the surgeon informed members of the family there was little hope. He remained in an unconscious state until Wednesday morning when he succumbed.

“The men were cutting logs for Roscoe Burgess, a brother of the deceased, who operates a sawmill near Forksville.

“Born on April 27, 1913, in Elkland Township, he was a son of Ralph and Ethel Birdsall Burgess, who lived on Bear Mountain near Estella. He had served nearly a year as school director in Forks Township. He graduated from the Loyalsock Joint High School in 1932.

“Mr. Burgess spent most of his life in Sullivan County, except for a short time in the early 1930's when he and his wife resided on the VanDine poultry farm in Chemung, N.Y., where he was employed. At one time Mr. Burgess was employed by the State Highway Department as timekeeper.

“Surviving are his wife, Thelma Rightmire Burgess; one son, George; two daughters, Jane and Kay, all at home; his parents; three brothers, Roscoe of Forksville RD, Leland of Waverly, and Paul of Annandale, Va.; four sisters, Mrs. J. Demarest Berry of Estella, Mrs. Ross Goodwing of Horseheads, Mrs. Ambrose Marchinock of Elmira, and Mrs. Clinton [Bonnie] Boyles of Forksville RD 1.

“The body was at the Holcombe Funeral Home, Dushore, where friends called Thursday afternoon and evening. The remains will be taken to the Millview Wesleyan Church at 1:30 p.m. today, Friday, for funeral services at 2 o'clock. The Rev. Richard M. Brown will officiate.

“Pallbearers are Fred Bennett, Kenneth Bennett, John Edkin, Sherman Higley, Delos Kobbe and Norman Wilcox, all members of his lumber crew.

“Interment will be in the Forksville Fairmount cemetery.”

This sad reflection shows the danger involved in the profession of logging that plagued many who have been and still are in the business.

For this and more, you can contact the museum for an appointment or information request by phoning 570-946-5020 or emailing museum@scpahistory.com. You can also visit our site at www.scpahistory.com and like us on Facebook.

Photo: Logging camp on a side hill - could be anywhere in Sullivan County