



June 21, 2017

TOURING SULLIVAN COUNTY'S MUSEUM . . . while dusting

A piece written by Ulysses Bird for the Sullivan Review in 1889 is entitled History of Western Sullivan County, Pa. This dissertation was then given by John E. Bird to a group in Corning, N.Y. in 1954. It gives an overview of the first school house built in Elkland Township in either 1808 or 1809.

“It was pointed out to us years ago by Job L. King, large trees now stand within the foundation of this building and the remains of a large fireplace can still be seen.”
“Joseph Priestly Esq., of Northumberland, and great land owner of this county, being impressed with the importance of establishing a school in this new settlement for the purpose of educating the rising youth, made the following proposition to the inhabitants, viz: That he would give ten acres of land for the use of the school and would furnish glass for the windows and nails for shingling the building. A township meeting of the inhabitants of the township was held at Liberty Hall (Eldreds[ville]) September 30, 1808, resolutions and constitutions for the building and government of the school was adopted.

The building was 20X30 feet and ten feet high of hewed timber, with a stove chimney in one end. Taxables living within three miles of the school house were to have the right to send their children to school by contribution in proportion with their county rates in work, persons living three miles and under twelve should contribute one half the rate of those within three miles. And any person at a greater distance than twelve miles should have the liberty of sending to the school without contributing to the building fund, but only paying the Master.”

“The school was not continued long as a day school. John Bull was one of the principle teachers. The people were really too poor to maintain a day school though the price of the Master was only \$1.50 per quarter but less than twenty five scholars [students] attended then \$2.00 per scholar, and these amounts were payable in produce at the market price. This school house soon became known as the Quaker meeting house, as the Quakers who were in majority in this settlement held religious worship there. On the twentieth day of June 1819, was organized the Free Sunday School which continued in session each Sunday for over twenty years and was really the only seat of learning in this township for that length of time.”

A constitution of fourteen articles were drawn up and agreed upon on 6/30/1819 by William Russell, Edward J. Eldred, James Royle, John Snell, William King, Francis

Bull, Francis Boyles, Joseph Pardoe, John Raper, Thomas Baker, John Grange, Charles Mullan, Richard Snell, Jonas Hardy, John Huckell, John King. They had quarterly and yearly meetings when young men and ladies were encouraged to speak pieces. The school was moved after some time to a school house built by Charles Mullan, which was situated near the present Eldredsville. The old house getting out of repair and was destroyed by fire.”

Education has always been a standard goal for youth and this excerpt shows just one such example of early pioneers into Sullivan County who strove to make this possible for the then young people growing up in the wilds of what was then a frontier.

For this and more, come visit YOUR museum on Meylert Street in Laporte any Thurs., Fri. or Sat. this summer. Or, you can phone 570-946-5020 or email museum@scpahistory.com for an appointment.