



Dec. 17, 2021

TOURING SULLIVAN COUNTY'S MUSEUM . . . while dusting

The following is an excerpt from Doc Shoemaker's *The Satterfield Flyer*, published in 2015. We recently had visitors in the museum who were in awe of the example of wooden water pipes used within the Laporte Borough. These sections show the ingenuity of people to accomplish the goal of running water – something we take for granted today. So, from Doc's rendering:

"Wooden Memories

"In this age of sheet metal, fiberglass, plastics, styrofoams and bubble wrap, it's hard to imagine that many of our common everyday necessities were once made of wood.

"#1. Wooden sap buckets hanging on sugar maple trees, collecting sap as it dripped out of the trees through wooden spiles. You might find one in an antique shop. Neatly fitted pine wood strips, assembled to make a bucket, maybe 8 to 10 quart size, with a hanger to hold it against the tree trunk. The wooden buckets were replaced by galvanized pails, with loose lids and metal spiles. Nowadays, a sugar bush is connected by a system of plastic tubing. Goodbye buckets and pails."

"#4. At one time, all freight was shipped in wooden boxes, especially what was shipped by rail. All hardware items shipped to Dad's store were in wooden boxes, nailed shut and opened with a crowbar. The boxes were then knocked apart, the wood used as firewood. The merchandise in the boxes was carefully cushioned with wooden wool, commonly known by its nickname, "Excelsior". This finely shredded wood was standard packaging material and is still available commercially. It was made locally in Picture Rocks by the H&E Mfg. Co. It was especially useful for shipping fragile things, like glassware or china."

#5. Of all the wooden memories, wooden pipes should be mentioned. It wasn't too many years ago that Laporte Borough replaced its wooden 4" water main with cast iron.

Wooden pipe of smaller (inside) diameter was also used on some farms to carry water from a spring or well to where it was needed.

Wood pipe is made by fitting milled strips of wood into a tube of desired size, then strapping it with wire and finally coating it with tar of some sort. Maybe easier said than done. Reports say wooden pipe is still in use in parts of Philadelphia, a testimony of its long life."

Doc went on to list things that had been made of wood: soda cases, snow shovels, silos, wheelbarrows, fishing boats, auto bodies (Model T station wagons), rain barrels, barrel staves, toboggans, cow speculums, fencing, stanchions and wagon tongues. We've omitted Doc's sections on butter tubs and wood spoke car wheels, plus there were oh, so many other things made of wood besides what we've mentioned here. To see these and more you can make an appointment to visit YOUR museum by phoning 570-946-5020 or emailing museum@scpahistory.com. Also, check out our website at www.scpahistory.com and like us on Facebook.