



Nov. 1, 2017

TOURING SULLIVAN COUNTY'S MUSEUM . . . while dusting

Somewhat continuing on from last week, we'd featured a photo of Sullivan County's first courthouse that was taken from a small booklet with this week's photo being the second page. Copyrighted in 1940 for the price of 50 cents it was authored by Charley Wing and entitled *The Sullivan County Old Court House at LaPorte*. In this ten page goings-on he banters with rhyme and tells a picturesque tale of the initial history of Sullivan County's county seat.

“The wise have said, the soul of wit is brevity
This chronicle proves that fact with all this levity
Historians only write of great events and things of weight
Achievements by those who guide the affairs of state
This narration speaks of those not known to fame remote
Who made history in the old court house at LaPorte
Of sturdy characters the county seat was proud to claim
No grander souls could historians rightfully acclaim
The County's legal lights gained state-wide eminence
The old court room rang with their able eloquence
When lawyers engaged in harsh harangue and tart reply
With weapons of wit and wisdom each other would defy
When jurors reached a verdict the ringing bell was clear
Villagers rushed to the court house curiously to hear
The verdict that was a vital topic all heatedly discussed
Some approving the decision while others loudly cussed
The learned Judge was patient and always on the level
Those talking lawyers in a huddle jangled like the devil
The court house included Sheriff's abode and jail attached
That old-time structure was a hard one to be matched
Water was supplied by carrying it in pails from the well
When supply was nil, inmates joined in a vigorous yell
Coal oil lamps was the system used for creating light
To increase candle power, larger wicks made it bright”

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Nov. 8, 2017

On going transcription of a 1940 booklet of banter about the early years of “the Center”, later to be named LaPorte after Sullivan County’s inception in 1847:

“In the basement jail, cells were limited to only four
Prisoners used the corridor when there was need for more
Each cell had a tiny stove regulated with an iron poker
Inmates managed to keep warm being their own stoker
Cells were so full at times there was no room to sweep
Tow-Hour shifts for using beds gave them little sleep
Taking care of prisoners never had appealing lure
The cells were small and none connected to a sewer . . .
The court house was used for the Teachers Institute
County teachers gathered to hear educators in dispute
Attendance was large and enlivened by educated beauties . . .
Once the prosecutor foiled a prisoner from taking flight
Who tried to escape through the ceiling in the night
The prosecutor remained at his office some nights late
This was over the cell where the prisoner met ill fate
There was a naught but howling wind for anyone to hear
Until late a strange sound reached the prosecutor’s ear
He was startled with surprise and sprang from his seat
A re-hot iron protruded through the floor near his feet
Next day the prisoner was in court to receive a sentence
He got ten years in the penitentiary to seek repentance
The prosecutor was more cautious after this experience
He had criminals secure bail for their court appearance
Rather than incarceration in a jail so easy to make escape
Disappearing from the flimsy cage, many tried to ape
The cows grazed about the verdant court house yard
Trusty prisoners would stroll outside without a guard
The old court house was the symbol of the town personel
By nature great, they all strived to do each task well
Those noble, thrifty pioneers made the village grow
And thrive as they made history in the days of long ago
They were sturdy sons of toil, at their daily work by six
With virtues worth extolling, whom city dudes call hicks . . .”

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