



Sept. 23, 2020

TOURING SULLIVAN COUNTY'S MUSEUM . . . while dusting

A piece has come into the museum from a Scranton newspaper dated March 2, 1934. The title of the article is Complete Text of Anthracite Industry Code as presented Operators and Miners by N.R.A. It begins with "The anthracite industry code proposed by the N.R.A. and presented to the

committee of anthracite operators and officials of the United Mine Workers of America in Washington this week is herewith printed in full." This is a full three and one half column of print of the articles I thru XII. There is a Preamble, a Definition, a Labor Provisions of the Act, an Hours of Labor, Rates of Pay and Other Conditions of Employment, a Prices and Terms of Sale, a Modification, Monopoly and Effective Date. The whole thing reads like a legal jargon, which it actually is but an untitled section (IX) gives the reader a good idea (to some extent) why this was done. It reads: "In view of the economic situation of the industry, the loss of markets, the curtailment of production, and the extent of unemployment before and since the depression, there shall be established a board of seven members, three of whom shall be appointed by the code authority hereunder, three by the United Mine Workers, Districts 1, 7 and 9, and one by the administrator. Said board shall make a study of the problem of unemployment within the industry and report thereon to the administrator."

Under the Hours section it reads: "No employee other than those excepted herein, shall be employed more than forty hours in any one week or more than eight hours in any one day. In the case of mine employees this means not more than eight hours at the place of work. The working time shall be exclusive of the lunch period." Then it goes on "The basic minimum rate of outside and inside day labor shall be 57 ¾ c per hour for those employed on the basic eight-hour day."

Stemming from the coal strike of 1922 and then the Great Depression of Oct. 1929, this act was to formalize the strict guidelines of all facets of the coal industry in Pennsylvania. A statement from a Sullivan Review article of 1959 states "it has been said that more than 20,000,000 tons of coal were shipped out of the Bernice coal fields". In the same article "The town of Murray was superior to the surrounding towns. It consisted of twenty-five large comfortable houses, painted red, a big company building, housing three apartments, and the Murray Store and Post Office".

All industries that existed in Sullivan County had their own stories to tell, this has just been one of them. To visit the museum, please phone for an appointment to 570-946-5020 or email museum@scpahistory.com. Also visit our website at www.scpahistory.com and visit our Facebook page.

And from Osborne Farm Annual – The crooked politician hates straight talk.