

## ODDS AND ENDS

This column has been running in the York Observer for 7 years (since February 17, 1985). We try to write ahead and constantly gather material for future columns. The findings are placed in labeled folders and when there is enough to make a column we write.

In spite of our efforts, some of our folders have remained quite slender. Nevertheless, we think some items are too interesting to toss out. Here are a few odds and ends:

Item number one: As late as 1887 the York County Board of Commissioners called for "all able-bodied males between the ages of 16 and 50" to work on the county roads not less than 6, nor more than 12 days annually.

If there was failure to comply the man was charged with a misdemeanor carrying a penalty of not less than \$5 or more than \$10 or be imprisoned not less than 5 days or more than 20 days. For their part, the commissioners said that every person was entitled to 12 hours notice and to be told what kind of tool to take with him. Needless to say, many people just paid the fine rather than join the work crews causing a great deal of resentment on the part of those who could not pay. "Road work" was a hot political issue.

Item number two: On May 26, 1900 the Lancaster News reported that Lancaster will have "more pretty girls to the square inch Monday for a few hours than any other town of its size in the country." D. B. Johnson, president of Winthrop College, had gotten word that the best spot to view an eclipse of the sun was about three miles south of Lancaster. The entire student body boarded a train that left Rock Hill at 6:30 a. m. and stopped at the farm of R. J. Harper. The girls got out, and viewed the eclipse complete with a lecture from the professor of astronomy. Then they boarded the train for Lancaster for a pre-arranged breakfast. They got back to Rock Hill for afternoon classes.

Item number three: The May 26, 1859 issue of the Yorkville Enquirer reported an amazing wind, rain, hail, thunder, and lightning storm on May 15. The worse was in the Bullocks Creek area. Constant lightning kept the "whole heavens a burning sheet of flame." At the same time, within a 30 minute span, "a solid sheet of water and hail swept everything in its path. The water washed large gullies and swept all the leaves off deciduous trees and stripped the pine needles so that the trees were as "bare as willow branches."

Hailstones drifted 10 feet deep. One correspondent of the newspaper reported hail the size of a partridge egg that "a horseman could pick up without dismounting."

Our fourth item comes from Chester County and is the strangest story of all. It was said to have happened at Tyra Ford's store at Rossville shortly before Christmas. The storekeeper had an imported barrel of rum from which he was treating his friends--many of them veterans of the Battle of New Orleans fought in 1815. The barrel seemed to empty faster than expected. Someone took an axe and forced off the barrel head. Inside was a body in a military uniform. The veterans quickly identified him as "Old Pack," the British general, Edward Pakenham, who had led the British forces against Andrew Jackson and was killed in action.

The story is that Pakenham's men eviscerated him, placed him in a sitting position in a cask, filled it with rum as a preservative and sent him along to England for

burial there. The barrel must have gotten mixed in with a shipment to Charleston and ended up in Chester District.

It is said that two large stones mark the spot where Pakingham was buried close by Tyra Ford's store.

By Louise Pettus