

Purple Valley *January 27 1977*

(by Mrs. Audrey Hepburn)

-Mrs. Helen McCartney became a grandmother again on Monday, January 17, 1977. A new baby boy arrived for Emmy and Jerry Mosser. His name is Brian Ralph. In view of the fact that he only weighed four pounds and the sight of the cold January world, he decided to stay for a few extra days in the hospital.

-We received a phone call on Friday night that my brother Bob Urbshott, Guelph had the misfortune to fall and break his hip while skating. He will have to spend quite some time in hospital.

-Jim and Margaret Urbshott and Bill and Edna Cook enjoyed some snowmobiling on Sunday and called on Elwyn and Joy Richardson, Hope Bay and Harv and Betty Weir, Mar.

-On Saturday evening, Sally Johnston and Jim Deakins visited with Bill and I and we enjoyed a good game of euchre.

-Sunday, Mr. and Mrs. Henri Engeski, Scotland, Ontario called on us. Henri and Cecile are sawmill owners too. They

brought Bill and Fran Dmetriuc, Wilsonville with them to see our Bruce Peninsula. Did I hear you say "not another Bill"? That's exactly what I said. Anyway it was nice to meet them and I think they liked our area so well they are going to come up again to do some snowmobiling.

-Broomball, snowmobiling, skiing, curling and hockey are all favourite sports of the Purple Valley residents but there is a new game out now called "Shovel Your Roof". Any number of people can play and the only tools required are a ladder and a shovel. As this sport requires quite a bit of skill and can be dangerous, it is not recommended if you are getting older or are afraid of heights. The length of the game depends on when we get a mild spell.

-Visitors on Sunday with Grenville and Edythe Crawford were Lorne and Ioleen Hepburn. Marie McLean and daughter Lynn were also recent visitors.

-Vernon Crawford, Hamilton is reported to be recuperating nicely after an acute appendicitis operation on Saturday morning.

Chas. Watchorn then became postmaster but gave up his duties to Mrs. Malcolm McMillan in 1891.

Mrs. McMillan also ran a grocery store in the house behind where the present store is situated. Grandma McMillan as she was known to everyone, kept store, supported the church and sorted the mail until 1913, when she retired.

Which brings me to the original idea for this article.

Lorne Hepburn has in his possession a letter with a Purple Valley post mark on it, dated October 22, 1913. This letter was discovered while doing some renovations on his house on Lot 26 Conc. 8 Albemarle.

Mrs. McMillan was Lorne Hepburn's great grandmother and would be the post mistress when this letter was delivered.

The penmanship is beautiful and the letter was sent to Wm. C. Hambly, Purple Valley, by his father, William Hambly, who had gone west where money seemed more plentiful.

Posted in Regina, Saskatchewan, October 22, 1913, the letter arrived in Wiarton, Ontario on October 27, 1913, thence to Purple Valley. This would show that mail delivery was quite speedy even in 1913.

The stamp is missing so it is not known how much it cost to send a letter then.

Addressed to "My Dear Willie", mention is made of Bill Mallard, the weather being cold with some snow, the fact that the writer has been helping build a church near Regina and expects to start a new job at \$75 per month at a sash and doo factory for the winter and that he has received news of the birth of a baby girl at Uncle Ernie's. It is believed Uncle Ernie to be Ernie Glendillen Ioleen Hepburn's uncle, who was married to Ada Hambly.

Signed "from Regina"

In 1914 a rural mail delivery service was begun and did away with the Purple Valley post office and the one at the McIvor settlement, just three miles north.

This rural route was known as number four, Wiarton, and remains so to this day.

The man appointed to deliver the mail daily to approximately sixty mail boxes on R.R. #4 Wiarton, was Mr. Herbert Bull.

With only the years between 1918 - 1930 off, Mr. Bull still brings us our mail. This adds up to fifty years of travelling over the same road, winter and summer, rain or shine.

In part of the period between 1918-1930 Mr. Gladstone took the mail contract and his driver was Charlie Davis, a deaf mute.

Tom McGarvey was the next contractor and his son Billie McGarvey drove the mail route.

Mr. Bull recalls that he used a horse and buggy for the first summer but after that he had a car. Of course he had a horse and cutter for the winter as the roads weren't ploughed like they are now. I recall the little house he had built on his sleigh with a stove to keep warm. I often wonder if anyone ever took a picture of his travelling van.

A great number of changes have occurred since 1914. The cost of a stamp has gone up from 2 cents to 10 cents. The number of mail boxes has increased from 60 to 80, plus the summer people. Additional miles have been added into Berford Lake, down sideroads to Hursts and Crawford's.

When asked if many people used to receive a daily paper, Mr. Bull could only recall two on his route who did. Mr. George Voght used to get the Globe and Mail and George Howe the London Free Press.

Other popular weekly papers were the Family Herald, the Farmer's Guide and the Canadian Countryman.

Bill and I have a number of old copies of the Canadian Countryman which were delivered to Robert Hepburn in 1921-1925. The cost of this paper was \$1.50 per year and is full of interesting advertising and reading material.

Compare this for cost and the number of daily and weekly papers you can subscribe to today.

A great number of interesting things happened to Mr. Bull while he delivered the mail. He remembers meeting a big truck with tarpaulins flapping over on the Mar road. His horse was not used to motors and such, so he promptly ran away and broke the shafts and frightened Mr. Bull's wife when the horse came home without its driver and the buggy. The year that it was so cold and the frost snapped all the hardwood trees, Mr. Bull was walking behind his cutter to keep warm, which he often did, between Urbshott's and Forbe's and his horse being skittish did not like the sound of the trees

going off like gun shots so there was another run-a-way which spilt all the mail. Mr. Forbes came to his rescue and caught the horse and helped pick up the letters. He did not tell me if he ever had any problems with his

car but I'm sure he must have.

Because of the recent storm we have missed two days without mail. Mr. Bull recalls one winter when the roads were so bad he could not get from Purple Valley to McIvor for two weeks.

Such faithful service should be rewarded. Who else would bring you stamps, post your letters, get a money order and send it on its way and weigh parcels and ship them.

With the loss of Eaton's catalogue, Mr. Bull says he does not have as many parcels to deliver anymore. I can remember the huge parcels my mother got in the fall with warm underwear and stockings in it

and another at Christmas full of surprises.

Besides delivering the mail, Mr. Bull farmed and was secretary treasurer for Albemarle school area and is still secretary-treasurer for Albe-

marle township. All this he does with only one hand. A remarkable man.

If it wasn't for Mr. Bull you wouldn't even get to read the news about Purple Valley in the Echo.

Feb. 3, 1977 **FE**

By Audrey Hepburn

A new 4H project called "Focus on Living" is about to begin for the Purple Valley and area girls.

It covers six topics and sounds very interesting. The members may decide to cover one topic thoroughly or learn a little about photography, the art of reading, indoor gardening, music and art appreciation, live theatre or historic interests.

The leader Mrs. Goodale and her assistant, Mrs. Elaine Rouse have attended the training school and hope to have their first meeting Thursday, February 3rd, 1977, at Mrs. Goodale's at 7:30, weather permitting.

-Did the Groundhog see his shadow? I'm afraid he wouldn't get his head above all the snow banks. So get ready for more winter.

-Did you know that our little community of Purple Valley once had its own post office?

It was established in 1884 but was not a shiny modern building with wickets and numbered boxes such as we have in Wiarton today, but only a small corner in the home of Thos. Hambly who lived on Lot 26 Conc. 13 Albemarle. Mr. Hambly was the first postmaster and held the position until his death by drowning, while walking over the ice to Wiarton.

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