

Mr. Joseph Hannah, Stage Driver

Mr. J. Hannah was one of the early stage drivers to Whitestone a distance of approximately 10 miles. He married Mrs. John Vankoughnett sometime after her husband was accidentally killed in the mill which John Hosick owned. She was a widow with nine children to raise, six girls and three boys. Mr. Hannah had a big heart and took all the younger ones under his roof along with his own three, Bill, Mable and Fred. They all lived in the big Kelcey house near the narrows in the village Part of Lot 60, Con. A. Until it burned down around the year of 1936, as near as we can ascertain.

It was a lonely drive by horse and rig to Whitestone three times a week, Tuesday, Thursdays, and Saturdays, were mail days, rain or shine, the mail had to go just the same as nowadays with cars. "Grandpa Joe" (as his grandchildren called him) was quite an entertainer with his Jews Harp and a fine singer. Whistling in those days was quite the thing to do when driving along the road. It gave the horse something to listen to as he jogged along up hill and down. What was the old horse sense verse? Up the hill hurry me not, down the hill worry me not, On the level spare me not, In the stable forget me not!

As we were about to say, Little Reta Cambell often took the drive with her Grandfather to Whitestone. He would sing old songs she knew all the way in to the Post Office. One song she still remembers was, "An old Indian sat in his birch canoe, sailing along over the waters blue".

After the house burned the family who remained at the Hannah home moved across the road into another house, the former owners of that house were Huge Wylies and several others. Infact it was used as a store in the early days. Mrs. Hannah used the spacious dining area for serving meals to travellers and men going to and from the lumber camps.

After Mr. Hannah's mail contract ran out -- these usually were for the period of four years, Mr. Joseph North took over the route.

The Hannah children all married and left except her son Walter Vankoughnett who was a veteran and had been gased and hurt in his head. He wore a steel plate, it was said. However, he helped drive the mails and so did Fred and Levi at times when their Father was ill or the weather was nasty.

There were so many grandchildren Mrs. Hannah was mostly spoken of as Grandma Hannah by the neighbours, she was a affable lady and great knitter. She sold her wares to the lumber camps and the local stores. They took a supply of mitts and socks in the Autumn, ready for the hunters, and new comers to the cold climate. Who would not be prepared for our severe wintery days. So it has been said, "Many a hand and foot she warmed".