

Smith's Hill

On almost all the maps from the 1880's one will find a place called Smith's Hill, the site of a Post Office established in 1884 and operated by a Mr. J.N. Hewitt. Like many of the other locations identified on maps in the 1880's and 90's, wasn't town, but it was a community.



In addition to the Post Office operated by Mr. Dodd and a store run by Mr. Hunter. Dave Cullen had a small blacksmith shop where he pounded shares for breaking plows for twenty-five cents apiece.

Criminal Activity?

But there seems to have been a more interesting anecdote about Smith's Hill.

According to Killarney historian and pioneer George Monteith, this just could be the only place name in the southwest corner to be named after a train robber.

It all started when Joe Smith took up his homestead about ten miles southeast of where Killarney would later be located.

On the northwest corner of his quarter was large sand hill, so when the Post Office was established adjacent to his farm along with a store operated by a Mr. Hunter, it was called Smith's Hill.

"Smith came in the summer with his two horses, some lumber, two or three carpenters and a load of furniture and built a cottage and a stable, and then his wife came. He never did any work, but every evening he took his horses out, got on horse back, first placing a barrel, pulled out a gun and could hit the bull's eye every time. I have seen him do this. Finally two men came around enquiring for him. He was gone. His wife said she did not know where he was. They said they had a warrant for him. They stayed about a month watching night and day, watching the mail.

Then one morning his wife was gone. A short time after, one of the women got a letter from her. There had been a big hold up in Montana: a train carrying the money for the miners was held up. A sheriff and posse pursued the robbers, got them surrounded in the hills. Joe Smith was one of the robbers and was killed.

The Smiths Hill Post Office closed in 1887, the name disappeared off the map, only to be reborn re-born in the early 1900' when the new community of Enterprise was located on the branch line between Holmfied and Lena. They needed a Post Office and the old name was used again.



*Sources: Monteith, George B., A History of Killarney and Turtle Mountain, 1950
Personal Reminiscence: Jessie (McClue) Church*

Pioneer Entrepreneurs

Much has been written about the ingenuity of the pioneers as they found ways to survive and thrive...

In 1885, the railroad was built through this area and passed across their land, so the Hunter children pitched a tent near the tracks and from here did a flourishing business, trading butter-milk to the cook for cookies.

Jones' Post Office

In the nineties and continuing into the turn of the century my Grandfather established a Post Office on the farm. A porch was built on the house where neighbours could post letters and get their mail from the wicket. He had a horse and jig in which he carried the mail from Ninga and later Killarney every day.