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Published by Ronald Caplan on 1993/1/1

A Visit with Herman Murphy, Ingonish From Talks with Ed Binns and Cape Breton's Magazine • about Mail Delivery & Horses 19-and-30 was the first that I started on the mail. I took over the job the year before that. Chap from Bay St. Lawrence was on this area, between Ingonish and Neil's Harbour. A MacNeil chap. And he quit it, and Danny MacDonald from Cape North had the main contract from Ingonish through to Bay St. Lawrence. And in that area, in sum? mertime, he carried it out himself, all the way through. But in wintertime in these years, when the road was plowed, it was all horse-and- sleigh work. And of course, he had another sub-contractor who took the mail from In? gonish to Neil's Harbour. He deposited all the mail from Ingonish to Bay St. Lawrence off at Neil's Harbour, excepting what went on down through to New Haven--that's an? other couple of miles down the line. to Wreck Cove, there for him. And my brother ran the mail We have had some pretty dirty times, for sure. Yeah, I've seen some pretty bad blizzards and storms there. And what I would take from Ingonish--I would leave the mail at Neil's Harbour, and carry on to New Haven with--well, there'd generally be only one mailbag. It was a small district. And by the time I got back from New Haven the chap who went from Neil's Harbour to Cape North would be up, and pick up the mail that I had left there, and he would carry that on to Cape North. And then there would be another chap who had another area from Cape North to Bay St. Lawrence. And he would pick up the mail that Danny MacDonald had taken from Neil's Harbour to Cape North. This other chap would take it right through from Cape North right through to Bay St. Lawrence. And it would be delivered from there right over to Black Point and these other areas. And about the first week of December, over the top of the mountains you begin to have trouble with the snow. So about the first week of December (Dan MacDonald) would al? ways cut off, and I would take over my ar? ea- -anywheres from the 1st to the 10th of December. My brother (Jim), he ran between Ingonish, North Ingonish, and Wreck Cove. He drove mail there for Sandford Burke. Sandford Burke was councillor for the Ingonish ar? ea, and he had the contract from Ingonish I remember one winter that the snow was so heavy--between Ingonish and Neil's Har? bour, there's two iron bridges over the mountain there, just on the other side. Mary Ann bridge and the Big Black Brook bridge. Mary Ann bridge was one of those lower rail bridges, had about a 6-foot high rail on it. And I've seen one winter--that was shortly after I started on the rail, that Willie MacLeod--he was road foreman. He had to take a bunch of men and go down with picks, mattocks, and axes, and shov? els, and chop that snow and ice off of the bridge. The snow built up so high that it was almost dangerous to drive across if it was slippery. You'd slide out over the top of the rail into the brook.... I ran (the mail) for seven winters. I started in the fall of '30, till '37. (How old were you in 1930?) Twenty. Hard win? ters down there, though. Hard winters, they were, yes. There's an area from--we used to call it Mica Hill. It runs back from Neil's Har? bour for a number of miles. Back in the early '20s there was quite a fire there. It went for miles and miles back, and it came right out through New Haven, to the houses



there. I think there was one house burned. But when you'd get a storm in win?
tertime, you'd get a storm with an easter-