



In today's world, staying connected is as easy as reaching for our cell phones, or picking up our mail at our local post office, or retrieving our bills, letters and flyers from our postal box just down the street.

But in the 1800's sending and receiving mail by post was a very special thing, because, other than telegraph, this was the only way to communicate with friends and family in other parts of Canada or across the big waters.

I'm Charles Bate. On April 1st, 1883, I opened the first post office here in the Killarney district - in my house on the farm, of all places! On the north shore of Erin Lake - what you call Killarney Lake.

Previous to 1883, the nearest post offices were Smith's Hill to the east, Wakopa to the west and Glendinning to the north of Killarney.

When we opened, the mail was brought by train from Winnipeg to Brandon, by courier to Deloraine, by courier again to Wakopa and then to me, here in Killarney.

Later it was brought from Brandon via old Souris City (which was located just west of Wawanesa) and Langvale in the RM of Prairie Lakes.

In the fall of 1886, I moved the post office from my farm by the lake into town. Later we built our home with a post office attached on Williams Avenue; where it remained till 1923. But by this time, I had retired and World War One Vet, Mr. R.E. Olver, was postmaster. So the office was moved to Broadway, in the heart of the business section.

Rollie Olver served our community as postmaster for 34 years, beginning his career as acting postmaster in 1922. The following spring, he was named the official postmaster for Killarney and area.

Something to note is that in 1932 the RCMP took over the police protection and patrol of the province from the Provincial Police. Killarney was among the first of Manitoba's towns to seek the services of this stalwart body in the carrying out of those duties. Records concerning the force and its relation to Turtle Mountain and Killarney are not easily available, however, we do know that the force used the sample room of Killarney's Leland Hotel and then moved to the Keskey House, and from there to the Agricultural Society Farm buildings. But when the new post office was built on Broadway, the RCMP officers' detachment office and barracks moved into their new home. The jail facilities were also located at the new post office built in 1954.

Another interesting fact is that the town of Killarney was named by a land guide named Sidney O'Brien, a native of Ireland, who came from the world famed Killarney Lake district from that country. Erin Lake would be renamed 'Killarney Lake' sometime later – but THAT story is for another time on Vantage Points Flashback!

*'Snail Mail Trail to Killarney' was taken from the book titled, Then and Now, Stories from Early Days of Killarney Turtle Mountain.*

*Vantage Points Flashbacks were written by David Neufeld with help from Betty Sawatzky. They were originally aired on CJRB Radio out of Boissevain, Manitoba in the early 2020s.*