

FROM THE SCRAPBOOK
Bob Hannington on his Beloved Brockway, 1974
by Rev. Dr. William Randall
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Have you ever wondered how you would cope with the reality that you might not have long to live?

While visiting Mrs. Fleetwood Hannington (Glenna) recently she told me a remarkable story, which I would like to share with you.

Last summer, 1993, Brockway had a Vail family reunion in which I participated. The headquarters for the three day event was at the Hannington's. Mrs. Hannington having been a Vail. I got to meet the Hannington family at the well furnished Sunday luncheon.

Later in the fall Bob Hannington of Ft. Lauderdale Florida discovered that he had a potentially life- threatening illness. Bob had spent his childhood summers at the home of his grandparents in Brockway and being of a very sensitive and artistic temperament he developed a life long love for the place. When he became aware of his illness he requested his parents to purchase for him a burial plot in the beloved soil of Brockway. His attachment to this place is expressed in a letter he wrote in 1974. The grandparental homestead of his childhood was to have an exchange of ownership, which for Bob would alter his relationship to the environs of his childhood. The letter he wrote was simply to express his sentimental attachments.

Here is the letter.

June 1, 1974

Dear Lower Brockway:

Please send me 2,760 cubic feet of your pine-scented air sprinkled generously with black flies and mosquitoes. This amount will fill my living room. A little river water and a few wild meadow strawberries would be nice. A bag of your great sand would be appreciated also. A quantity sufficient to "wiggle" bare toes in would be helpful to refresh ones physical self. Several swallows on the power line, to swoop down over the field and return again. A blueberry bush or two. A "stolen" carrot from an Aunt's garden. A spudding iron, used to peel pulp for an Uncle. A frog from the brook. The bell from an Uncle's lead cow. A small child running from "across the way" carrying fresh milk in a lard pail. A hayloft to sleep in. An Aunt with a 1948 Packard who will travel. An orange pineapple ice cream cone from Jack's. A dirt road. An old wooden bridge, with loose planks, over a brook. A raft on the river. A grandmother's biscuits and blueberry johny cake. A piece of homemade bread with real butter and molasses. A fiat rock, with which it might be possible to obtain a "four skipper" across the deep hole in the brook.

A sudden evening thunder-storm which leaves mud puddles to walk in with bare feet. New hay to gather from a meadow with horses and a hay rack. A few cousins. The largest swing ever under cool pine trees. The dark silhouette of a fir tree against the evening sky. Moss and sand to create the finest estates known to small boys. Golden stubble in a mown hay field to test the toughness of my bare feel. A dipper of cool water from the well. A kerosene lamp with a lamp shade needing cleaning with a newspaper.

The list seems endless!

You have molded and installed into the characters of many people something one cannot put into words. It's presence can only be felt. You have given freely many things to many people. The wise ones have taken greedily because by taking, it has multiplied that which was given.

Bob Hannington

Bob Hannington was laid to rest in the Brockway Cemetery, July 3, 1994.