

**RURAL CHURCHES**

**Bush Fire Took 223 Lives  
50 Years Ago This Week**

MATHESON, Ont. (CP) — Those who survived could describe it only as a "giant orange wave".

Everything in its path was swallowed, almost in an instant. Death for most was mercifully swift. For others, it was agonizingly slow by suffocation.

Fire—the one thing dwellers of the forests really fear—was loose in the scrub bush and prairie-like grassland that surrounds Matheson. It destroyed six towns and 1,000 square miles of homesteaders' farmlands and bushland. The monetary loss was put at \$2,000,000.

Two hundred twenty-three men, women and children died. That was July 29, 1916, and went into Canadian history as the Matheson fire—the most tragic, but not the most devastating, in Canada's records of forest fires. It will be commemorated Friday, 50 years after, with the unveiling of a cairn three-quarters of a mile south of Matheson, centre of the burned area.

Conditions that day were ideal for the outbreak of a forest fire—no rain for weeks, temperatures that in the preceding fortnight had reached 100 degrees, low humidity. And settlers were burning brush and workmen were burning scrub on railway right-of-ways. Suddenly, entire townships were ablaze.

From township to township, the orange wave swept. The towns of Kelso, Nushka, Ramore, Porquis Junction, Ironquois Falls and Matheson were levelled. The hamlets of Homer and Monteith were officially listed as "damaged." A separate fire on the same day damaged Cochrane, 45 miles north-west of Matheson, and killed nine persons there.

Entire families of settlers, who had come into the new land from the south to open up the riches of the northland, suffocated in root cellars and wells where they sought refuge. Many were burned to death as they ran in terror before the orange wave. When it was over, railway boxcar loads of pine coffins were shipped in to bury the dead.

What Mrs. Frank Ginn terms a miracle occurred that day. Her eight-year-old daughter, Joan, lay on the floor of their frame farm home, sick from suffocating smoke, and Mrs. Ginn watched the 40-mile-wide sea of flame, whipped by 70-mile-an-hour winds, bear down upon them. But, somehow, the Ginn house was the only thing left standing in mile upon mile

**KINGS**

**THE PRESBYTERIAN Church** Sunday, July 31, Murray Harbour, North, 11:00 a.m. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper, Peter's Road, Church School 7 p.m. Worship 8 p.m. Preparatory Service in the Murray Harbour, North, Thursday, evening at 8 o'clock. Rev. M. Carl Carr, minister.

**MURRAY HARBOR Pastoral Charge**, the United Church, Murray Harbour 9:45 a.m. Murray Harbour 11:15 a.m. Mr. John Whiteway, guest speaker.

**CENTRAL KINGS Pastoral Charge**, the United Church, Sunday, July 31, Annandale 9:45 a.m. Georgetown, Sacrament of Holy Communion 11:15 a.m. Dundas 8 p.m. Rev. James W. Forbes, BA, BD, minister.

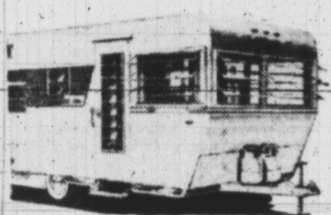
**LITTLE SANDS Hall**, Sunday, July 31, Gospel service 8 p.m.

**JUMP INTO RIVER** At Matheson, many survived by jumping on a freight train which had been stopped at one end of town. The train roared through the fire. Two cars caught fire and were dropped off after the occupants had been transferred to other cars. Other Matheson residents escaped by running into the Black River.

Survivors had little food for a week until railway crews arrived after repairing burned tracks. Doctors, nurses and soldiers were brought in on relief trains and many settlers, like refugees, were taken "outside." To induce settlers to remain in the area, the Ontario government granted them \$150 for loss of a barn and \$350 for loss of a house.

**CITATION**

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**MONTAGUE Pastoral Charge**, the Presbyterian Church, St. Andrew's Cardigan, Church School 10:15 a.m. Worship 11 a.m. St. Andrew's Lorne Valley, Worship 2:30 p.m. St. Andrew's Montague, Worship 8 p.m. All services conducted by Rev. John Cameron, Lunenburg, N.S. Rev. Basil Lowery, BA, BD, minister.

**GEORGETOWN Baptist Church** Sunday School 10 a.m. Worship 11 a.m. Gospel service 7 p.m. Message: "Escape from Bondage." Evening Service 7:30 p.m. Message: "The Church at Ephesus." Leslie Jones, minister.

**MONTAGUE Baptist Pastorate**, Rev. A.G.J. Steeves, MA, BEd, BD, pastor. Montague Sunday School 10 a.m. Worship 11 a.m. Evensong 7:30 p.m. Murray Harbour Sunday School 2 p.m. Worship 3 p.m. Murray Harbour Sunday School 2 p.m. Worship 7:30 p.m. Sturgeon Sunday Frank Phinney.

**Chalk talk for the children** School 2:30 p.m. Worship 1:30 p.m. Musical Music: Ron Harris, guest speaker.

**MURRAY RIVER Pentecostal** Worship, 7:30 p.m.

**MONTAGUE Pastoral Charge**, the United Church, Sunday, July 31, Lower Montague 9:45 a.m. Montague 11 a.m. Sturgeon 2:30 p.m. Rev. Theo Crozier, Westmeath, Ontario, guest speaker at all services. Rev. R. F. Burns, minister.

**MONTAGUE Church of Christ** Sunday, July 31, Bible School, 10 a.m. Morning Worship 11 a.m. Message: "Escape from Bondage." Evening Service 7:30 p.m. Message: "The Church at Ephesus." Leslie Jones, minister.

**ANNUAL Memorial Service** will be held in the Cemetery on Sunday, July 31 at 2:30 o'clock. If day unfavorable service will be held in the church at St. Peter's Bay. Guest speaker: Rev. Frank Phinney.

**FREE CHURCH of Scotland**, Worship, Birch Hill 11 a.m. Sunday School 10 a.m. Murray River 7:30 p.m. Sunday School 11 (Continued on page 12)

**DANCING**

EVERY TUES. - THURS. SAT.

**Stella Maris HALL**

**NORTH RUSTICO**

Music by the Belmonts. Dancing from 9:30 until 12:00. Admission 75c.

Sponsored by the North Rustico Recreation Commission.

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**G. E. Barbour Maritime Hi-Fi Winner**

Pictured above is Mr. Temple Llewellyn being congratulated by Mr. Clifford C. Montgomery on being the winner of the Fathers of Confederation card contest display, which are packed in King Cole Tea and G. E. Barbour products. Pictured between Mr. Montgomery and Mr. Llewellyn is Mr. A. J. Goldenise, Manager of G. E. Barbour Co.

**The Alberton & West Prince Board of Trade**

**ANNUAL AQUATIC DAY**

**FRIDAY AND SATURDAY JULY 29 & 30**

AT **ALBERTON SOUTH WHARF**

Visiting Ships—Both days—H.M.C.S. Loon, Mallard and Cormorant.

**FRIDAY EVENING - 9.30**

Mammoth dance in Government Transit Building at Alberton South "Sea Queen presiding". Music by Paul and the Echoes.

**SATURDAY AFTERNOON**

**OFFICIAL OPENING 1.30**

Guest Speakers.

Music by Summerside Legion Concert Band.

Classified fishing boat races—Outboard motor races—dory race—tug of war—water skiing—scuba diving

Water safety demonstration.

Canteen on the wharf—Lobster Burgers, Lunches, etc.

Prizes for all events.

**SATURDAY EVENING 7.30 TO 9**

Band concert on Westerner Motel lawn by Summerside Legion Concert Band