

[Page 17 - Pleasant Bay Fire](#)ISSUE : [Issue 29](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1981/8/1

burnt and scorched--everything was as black as the top of the stove. Everything was burnt. Just one building up here that stood. I think in all there were about 17 houses burnt here in about an hour and a half. There was nothing left this side of Timmons' store, only just two family houses. Bishop family saved their house, and the Moores over here. Fire went all a- round it, but he kept water pouring on it all the time, and when he had to get out, he left the hose running on the roof--and I guess that saved the house. And in Red River, it went down as far as just beyond the church. The school didn't burn. The old schoolhouse--that burnt--the old hall. There was a store there--that burnt. And there were three homes that burnt there, and just everything you touched was smoke. Mary: We lost two pigs, that was all our animals that were lost. The other animals stood in the brook down there by our barn. They wandered along the brook, and they didn't get burnt. The horse stood up in the brook there. And our neighbour the next morning went up looking for her. And he had an awful job to coax this mare to come out, because she was so frightened, the poor thing, she just shook and shivered. But she wasn't a bit hurt, for all that, which was a wonderful thing. But our neighbour down here, two of his cows got burnt. Rod: But he didn't lose them. Their feet got scorched, but they were all right. There was nobody got hurt. It happened in the daytime, that was just the only thing. There were old people here, if the fire would have struck here in the night, it would have been pretty hard to get them out. Willard Hinkley, Pleasant Bay: It came a- cross the mountain when it did break out, came out above the Bonnie Doon Motel up there, We fought it out there. We were out there for four or five days, with the park warden and voluntary firemen from around here. We had a voluntary fire ranger for the Provincial, and he went around and asked you to go and fight fire

- So we all did. But nobody ever dreamt that it would ever come into the community. See, we got it under control up there at Beach Hill, we call it. We figured it was pretty good. Using back tanks and firehose and pumping engines from the brook. (It wasn't a big fire then?) No, it was more or less burning in the sods, in the turf and things like that. Then the wind hauled southwest. And she came out MacKenzie River--she came out that river just like a gunshot. The fire was about half a mile ahead of the smoke--the blaze, where it was just sifting through. We found it impossible to do anything there. I stayed here all night on the beach--Ken- ny Fraser and I. He had a workshop there-- he had a big 40-foot boat he was building-- and we set up two pumping engines there and saved his house and his workshop and his boat. But then it circled around after it burnt this house (Jack Sam Hinkley's home) and it went up over the mountain here. And the next day we fought it in Red River. I was with Walter Moore. It went up the hill here and it burnt right across and it by-passed the houses in Red River. And then it came around just like in strips. It would take a strip so wide and it would burn right through and go right up over the mountain in Red River and down the way of Pollett's Cove--and then there'd be another strip come around. We were there I think 11 days altogether, fighting it--and you'd think it was under control, and the first thing you'd



know, bang-o, away it'd come again. Another strip came through in perhaps a hundred feet wide, take a swath right through. I was in Red River when it came around the second time. It went through the first time, and then it was about two days we were just there watching any fires that would flare up. We'd sleep on the floor in some of the houses. And some nights you'd be up all night--you'd sleep a little in the daytime when somebody else'd be watch? ing the fire. Keep spraying the burnt ground and the burnt trees--any little wind that would come up would start this all up again. And after the trees were burnt, the leaves and all the needles burnt off of them--well, they were just skeletons. Now if that started up again, that'd burn twice as bad, because that stuff would be just as dry as powder. Then about on the third day, another strip came through--a strip two or three hundred feet wide from the burnt part down--and the rab? bits and the deer and everything were running ahead of that--just whistling. You could see those rabbits going, boy, just sizzling. And the deer, they were right tame. They'd run right up to you. It seemed as if they wanted your protection, CONTINUED NEXT PAGE (17)