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'-,\*Vt • -\*\*\*'' 'i\*\*j' j\*1|>'-' ' "xyct. ??\* ""-' .>\_ '\*-',> .??-',- i;"\* anything with them there--we got them down here in Red River and that's how we saved the houses. The fire came right back of the house. It went out there a little piece, about a quarter of a mile beyond my house, and it jumped right across Red Riv? er, about a half mile it jumped. It was an awful gale of wind. And real hot. But I think if more people had stayed in here, more of the homes could have been saved. Like the church burned. It started in the roof from sparks flying--the old ce? dar shingles. The community hall burned. And the only general store we had at that time, that could have been saved, too, if there had been more people stayed around. But see, most of the people got nervous and got out, even a lot of the people that owned homes, And there was no danger for men, you know, able-bodied men, because you could always get down to the shore-- fire wouldn't come near the shore. But it was a pretty nervous spell there for one day, because both roads were cut off--the road to Cheticamp and the road to Cape North, And even the last ones that went out on the boat--it was quite lippy--there was another little rowboat had to go out with the last people and put them aboard that boat. And it was quite windy. And the ones that came down from Cheticamp with the boat--it was pretty obliging of them, because they were taking a chance, you know. But there weren't too many--the most of them went out by car. It was just a few that were a little stubborn and decided to stay. Some more of the men should have stayed, but for women and children, they were much better to get out. But those of us who stayed, we were here all the time the fire was on. We never left. (And there was no road out, and no boat out for you,) That's right. We just stayed up all that first night. In the mid? dle of the night it was as bright as it is now. Bright as day. Fire was right in the community. When I came down the road, even • along at the church there, it was almost impossible. It was burning across the road. There was one house all on fire--that's John S. Hinkley's house--a great big, flat- roofed house with two stories--it was an awful looking sight. The fire was coming out of every window, you know. Could real? ly scare you. A lot thought the place was doomed, I didn't, myself. Even after the fire, a lot of people were saying, well, it's the end, I was councillor at the time, municipal councillor--and a lot of people were say? ing, it's the end of the community. But I never gave up hope. I knew we'd come back. It was a terrible thing to happen to the people. We had a little help with money for windows and stuff, but I think the peo? ple themselves can be praised, an awful lot of credit can go to them, because the majority of people in the community never gave up. They all built back. There were two or three families that were a little reluctant to start, but after they saw eve? ryone else going to it, they too came a- round. But I knew very well that the com? munity would come back, because we're not that weak, you know, Willard Hinkley: When you come down MacKen? zie Mountain, you look at Pleasant Bay. Now, before the fire it didn't look a bit like it's looking now. Because it was quite a pretty little place. Pleasant Bay, and it took it about 25 years before the grass came back and the moss grew on the stones and all the old shaggy trees were cut down. The



mountains and the shoreline all look the same, But between here and the church was all big spruce, and around this house here were all big white birch trees--and that's all gone. And in Red Riv? er there, we call it Moore's Hill, it's all little shaggy spruce trees now--that was all cleared land. And out the brooks were all big" high spruce and hardwood. It all burned and grew up in little poplar trees and little alderwood or thick spruce. And that Mountain up there was handsome, all big maple and birch, trees 75 feet high, I suppose, without a limb, some of them. Just like walking under a big roof in there. It looks nice now because every? thing is grown back and is green, but you could go for a walk then through the woods, Now you can't get anywhere unless you're on the trail, a mass of thick little trees. It looks nice, but it doesn't look a bit like before it burned. Our thanks to Pam MacKay, Cape Breton High? lands National Park, for help with photos. and to Mr, and Mrs, Clayton Timmons, who had saved copies of the August, 1947, news? papers "that reported on the fire. (21)