

# Monteith: Before and after the fire!

Some of those who lost their lives were: Mrs. William McClinchy and daughter Pearl, who were suffocated in a well, where they had gone to stand with a neighbour, Mrs. Wm. Coleman. Smoke from their burning home had blown directly into the well. The husbands had been away working and could not get to their homes because of the burning bush. Mr. and Mrs. Norman Green and Mr Reynolds also perished. They lived nearby the McClinchy farm. Mr. Moe Poirier was the only one of his family saved. Two families who had fled to a root house on the present Ayers place were soffocated by smoke, among them a mother, whose babe was born while the fire was on. There were 10 in the roothouse. They were members of the MacMillan and Campbell families.

But shortly afterward people began building again on the present site of Monteith. Lumber was supplied, relief (help) to settlers who had lost their homes.

In 1916, a mill was built near the dam, and was known as the Monteith Pulp and Lumber Company. This attracted workers, a boarding house was built, also a store, with cottages for workers' families. This mill later, was operated by Tescendon Co. and later changed hands and became the Hawk Lake Mill, in charge of Mr. A. E. Wick and also Mr. Branders and brothers, also Mr. Peterson. Quite a few were of Finnish descent and among them were Branders, Petersons, Aho's, Bastilla and Hongisto.

Log drives were conducted on the Driftwood River. An incinerator was built for disposing of waste. Pulpwood was supplied to Woolings Mill, Connaught, and Abitibi Mill at Iroquois Falls. The dam supplied the mill and its people with electric power, and was enlarged later to supply the village of Monteith with power and light, it was 25 cycle.

A Demonstration Farm was built about 1914 for the purpose of teaching settlers the most suitable crops in this northern district. It was built on the south side of the railway, near the west bank of the river. It consisted of a large building, known as the Administration Building and a large barn and silo for cattle and feed. There was a house for the Superintendent. Nole, Frist Barn built by Milton Stover & Sons, Matheson. The first farm manager was Mr. John Whitton. The second farm manager was Mr. Harry Johnston.



Hawk Lake Mill, along the Driftwood River in Monteith. It closed in the 1930's.



Hawk Lake Lumber Co' Mill, one of many mills in the area in the early days.