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GRAPE AND SAWGUIN ISLANDS
& surrounding territory

Marsh Land

MISSION ON GRAPE ISLAND

By Rev. Richard Boehme

INTRODUCTION

In 1987, two beautiful little islands rest peacefully and quietly in the waters of the Bay of Quinte near the mouth of Marsh Creek. Sawguin is now a farmer's field, connected to Huff Island by a causeway. Grape Island lies silent and alone all winter, but is awakened in the spring as one family comes to spend the summer months in their cottage there. This is a striking contrast to 160 years ago when some 200 Indian men, women and children lived on Grape Island and cultivated Sawguin. These were Christian Indians who had moved to the islands under the auspices of the Methodist Church. The life of this Mission lasted only 10 years, but it was a decade of fascinating history.

1824

Although the establishment and settlement of the Grape Island Mission did not take place until 1826-27, its beginnings can be traced to the year 1824. In that year the first session of the Canada Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church was held in Hallowell (Picton), beginning August 25. William Case was transferred from Upper Canada District to Bay Quinte as Resident Elder, succeeding the rebellious Henry Ryan. Elder Case soon became personally involved with Indian mission work in this area. This was an involvement that lasted all his life.

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