

SECOND SECTION

The St. Thomas Times-Journal

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ST. THOMAS, ONTARIO, WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 1959

SIX CENTS PER



A DAY TO BE REMEMBERED was the one which was marked yesterday by the descendants of the Patterson-Backus-Storey-Pearce families, when a re-union was held by approximately 200

members at the Pearce Provincial Park, at Tyrconnell. It marked the 150th anniversary of the families' landing on Lake Erie's north shore, and is believed to be the first such celebration ever

held in Ontario. Family members came from far and near to attend the event. They ranged in age from one and a half years, to almost nine decades and they represented all walks of life. Some were present from Lacombe, Alta.; others from Wichita,

Kansas and Raytown, Missouri; Columbus, Ohio; Detroit, Mich.; Pines Lake, New Jersey; Belleville, Toronto, New York; Sheffield Mills, Nova Scotia and all points in Southwestern Ontario.—(T.-J. Photo).

200 Gather at Tyrconnell

Historic Church Bells Call Descendants of Pioneers to Worship

Across the woodland park, dedicated to the memory of their forefathers, and named for its donor, John E. Pearce, of Dunwich, the chimes of historic St. Peter's Church at Tyrconnell, rang out at 4 p.m. yesterday. They called, as they had done for 125 years, the descendants of John Pearce and Leslie Patterson, Stephen Backus, and Mary Pearce Storey to a service of gratitude and thanksgiving to He who had given them life and the ancestors whose name they so proudly bear.

This marked the closing of a day that commemorated the sesquicentennial of the arrival on July 14, 1809, at this point, five miles west of Fort Talbot, of the small band of pilgrims who had set out bravely from Erie, Pa., to make a farmland from the forest.

About 200 descendants of the Pearce - Patterson - Storey - Backus families were here on Tuesday, to reminisce, to renew acquaintances and meet younger members of their families for the first time, to hold reunions with sisters and brothers who lived half a continent, or even further, away. They ranged in age from 18 months old Mary Esther, who was introduced as the granddaughter of William Pearce of Exeter and the great granddaughter of Thomas Pearce, to Mrs. Bertha Turville, Hyde Park, 86 years of age and Rev. Anson Moorhouse, Sr., of Riverside, who has entered his 89th year.

CAME FROM AFAR

There were family groups, one of which numbered the greatest in age of any present, the six members' ages totalling 464 years. One brother, Leslie Pearce, with his daughter, had travelled from Lacombe, Alberta, which was thought to be the lengthiest trek. His brother, Walter Pearce, and his family, were here from Sheffield Mills, N.S., and this particular branch of the family held a reunion of its own, for it was the first time they had all been together in a quarter of a century.

The children had a wonderful day, free from rules and regulations. They romped and they ran and they climbed trees. They met dozens of cousins they never knew existed and became undying friends, instantly.

It was a day for remembering, from start to finish.

Eric G. Moorhouse, Justice of the Supreme Court of Ontario, who acted as chairman for the event, which he believes to be the first sesquicentennial of its kind ever held in, as he expressed it, "Upper Canada," showed The Times-Journal's representative a

piece of pumpkin pie, which he was finding most appetizing.

"See that sugar on there," he said, "do you know what that is?"

A guess as to its being maple sugar was correct and he went on: "That's right. This pie has got maple syrup on it, and maple sugar, and it was made from the trees right in this park."

THE CAKE

There was a beautiful cake, three stories tall, which had been made and baked by Miss Eva Pearce, of Wallacetown, and iced and decorated by the wife of her nephew, John S. Pearce. Keen interest was exhibited in the picture of the centennial reunion of 1909. There were parents in it, and grandparents, and in some cases, the viewers themselves.

A millstone, brought by the original members of the families, from Pennsylvania, which ground the flour in those long ago days, was a point of much interest. It is still in perfect working order, having recently been fitted with a new handle by a member of the family.

Perhaps living was lean in those early years of the 19th century, but such was not the case yesterday, when food to feed a good sized town was placed on the tables in the picnic area above the lake, for the noon meal. Following this important event, Douglas Simpson, of Glencoe, acted as master of ceremonies for the short program.

FAMILY HISTORY GIVEN

A brief history of the family was given and told of the travelling, in 1800, of Leslie Patterson and his sisters, from Fermanagh, Ireland, to Erie, Pa., there they met Joseph Backus and his family from Vermont, and John Pearce from Rhode Island. In 1809, Leslie Patterson, who had married Lydia Backus, with his widowed sister, Mary Storey, her son and two daughters and John Pearce, married to Fanny Patterson, left Pennsylvania for Canada, and settled on the land purchased in 1803 from Colonel Talbot. Stephen Backus soon followed, and married Anne Storey, and here today some of the families' descendants still occupy the farms. In the midst stands the church where they had all worshipped, on ground donated by Mary Storey, 125 years or more ago, which is still open for regular services.

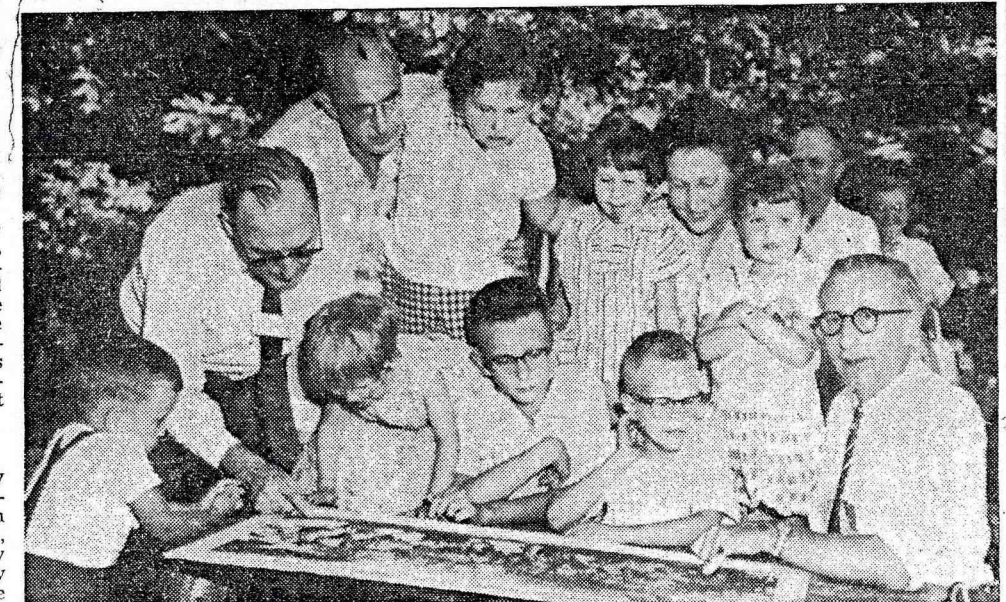
The service yesterday was addressed by Rev. Anson Moorhouse, Sr., and other members read the Scripture, played the organ, and all joined in the singing of the hymns.

Special guests for the day were Rev. John and Mrs. Graham, rector of St. Peter's Church, and family members attending included Eunice Moorhouse Goepel and her husband, Herbert Goepel, Pines Lake, N.J.; Rev. Anson Moorhouse, Jr., and Mrs. Moorhouse, Toronto; Miss Cornelia Backus and Miss Gladys Backus, Chatham; David Cowper Smith, Palgrave, Ont.; P. E. James, Ingersoll; Mr. and Mrs. Cecil Waite, R.R. 2, Port Stanley; Miss Minnie Gow, Dutton; Mr. and Mrs. Ray Chittim, R.R. 6, Chatham; Winnifred Anne Gow, Wallacetown, and others from Missouri, New York State, Ohio, Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan, Alberta, Michigan, Toronto and Belleville and South-western Ontario.



ACROSS THE MILES to a reunion within a re-union was one of the highlights of yesterday's anniversary for this group of brothers and sisters who had not been together as a family for 25 years. They are, left to right: Ernest Pearce,

Byron: Walter Pearce, Sheffield Mills, N.S.; Miss Gertrude Pearce, Dutton; John E. Pearce, Wallacetown, who donated the land for the park-site to the Province, and H. Leslie Pearce, Lacombe, Alta., with Mrs. Bertha Pearce Turville in the foreground.—(T.-J. Photo).



EVERYONE WANTED TO SEE the large picture of the group who had been present at the 100th anniversary of the arrival at Tyrconnell of some of Elgin County's oldest families. Here, taking full advantage of the opportunity to check for themselves are: Ross Smith, Belleville; Rev.

Anson C. Moorhouse, Jr., Toronto; Barbara Oldham, Paynes Mills; Steve Moorhouse, Robert Moorhouse, both of Wichita, Kansas; Bonnie Pearce, Wallacetown; Justice E. G. Moorhouse, Toronto; and in the back row: Willis Dodson, Barbara, Judy and Mrs. Dodson, Raytown, Missouri.—(T.-J. Photo).



STUDYING A CHART of the the family tree and finding out just where their branch is shown, are three sisters and a sister-in-law, Mrs. Pearl Davis, Detroit, Mich.; Mrs. Ada

Banghart, London, Ont.; Mrs. Myrtle Marshall, Byron and Mrs. Cora Hill, Columbus, Ohio. Copies of the family's genealogical history were made available to all the families.—(T.-J. Photo).