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St. Ann's Day Mission, Chapel Island Introduction: Grand Captain Noel Marshall
Interviewed by Lillian Marshall and Lynda Boudreau, July, 1983 (What do you remember of the first Chapel Island Mission that you attended?) Grand Captain Noel Marshall: There were a lot of things going on in Chapel Island. I remember the tail end of it--it was deteriorating already. We had a ten-day mission. People starting coming to the island on July 26, St. Ann's Day. The Chiefs and the Captains were supposed to be all there. The Religious Education started for children--mass first of all, then instructions. Micmac Catechism was taught because all Micmac children received their first communion in Chapel Island--all of N. S. (Micmac) Country--the same was done for the singers. They too started practising with evening prayers and singing. After evening prayers, the singers would stay to continue choir practising. People were married and were buried on Chapel Island. (What role did the Grand Council play in the old system of Indian government?) The Grand Council ran their government the same as any nation in the world. They made their laws and they were binding. I have seen a law being written out by the Grand Council at Chapel Island. It read, "This pledge made by members of the Grand Council cannot be broken even at the gates of Hell." This is how much they honoured the laws they made. The first business being done (in the Grand Council wigwam) was the reading of the el nopsse kuk--the Micmac/Mohawk peace treaty beads. Those special beads were brought back by my great-grandfather. So at every meeting on Chapel Island, those treaty beads were read by the Grand Council. (How did you acquire a Captain or a Chief or an executive?) The men--for example a Captain--the reserve he comes from appoints their own man. Then he is inaugurated by the Grand Council. In the proceedings all the Captains present touch the new apprentice on the shoulders. This is to give him strength. This was done in the Grand Council wigwam. Another ceremony is held at the church in which the priest anoints or blesses the new Captain. After the meeting was over in (31)