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Minnie Aucoin of St. Joseph du Moine This article with Minnie Aucoin • Minnie (6 Frederic d Janvier Deveaux) • is edited from a Cape Breton's Magazine visit in February, 1990, with Minnie and her granddaughter Rosie Grace, as well as from conversations Minnie continued in French with Rosie. These taped conversations have been edited, using portions from both the English and the French. One language, however, is not meant to be a translation of the other, and portions are told only in one language. Readers with two languages will just get a little more. Also, Rosie points out that Minnie's story comes across "harder" when told in English. Minnie: My name is Marie Belle Aucoin. I was a Deveaux. I was born in Cap Le Moine (September 2nd, 1895). I'm 94. I'll be 95 the 2nd of September. (CBM: Did you grow up at Cap Le Moine?) Yeah. I got married at 21. My mother died, I was 5. (What did your father do for a living?) Oh. it was fishing. It was mackerel and codfish. (And was that enough to make the family rich?) Yes, yes--we never starved. Minnie chuckles. (Did he keep a farm as well?) Yeah, yeah. (If your mother died when you were 5--were there any other children?) I had a sister. She went away, so I stayed with my grandmother and my father. I had to stop going to school at 12, to help my grandmother. I tell you, it was not fun. I had to scrub the floor, and bake the bread--my grandmother was old--to help her. (Who washed the clothing?) Well, I had to wash--she helped me to wash it--to wash on the board. You know what is a board, eh? You had to scrub on the board. I hauled water from the brook. Oh, my God, it was--I tell you, it was not fun. (Rosie Grace: Rendu k 1'age de douze ans et r6duit d'abandonner l'6cole pour prendre garde au manage, je pense que ta vie 6tait tr's diff'rente que la vie des enfants d'aujourd'hui. Explique moi une de tes tSches.) J'forbissais avec des brousses. Des fois j'avalais pas de brousse, pis j'prenais une branche de pruce. (Une branche de pruce?) Oui. (Juste avec de l'eau ou quoi?) Avec de l'eau, ah oui. Tu frottait ta place de bois et tu mouillais ta branche. On voulait qu'a vient blanche. Minnie, her husband Patrick (d Joe d Dosite), and their first child Freddie. Right: Patrick & Minnie as king and queen during 100th anniversary of St. Joseph's Church, St. Joseph du Moine.