

[Page 3 - Lee Cremo Speaks](#)ISSUE : [Issue 1](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1972/10/31

LEE CREMO SPEAKS When we talked with Lee Cremo he had been back a few days from The Old Time Fiddler Contest, Shelburne, Ontario. He placed fourth out of 132 fiddlers. We talked to him in his home in Glace Bay with his wife Nellie and baby girl Elizabeth, We wanted to know, among other things, how Lee Cremo, a Micmac Indian, became a great Scottish fiddler. And this is what he said: 'es and his I was born December 30,1938, at Barrahead. When I was about 3 or 4 we moved to Eskasoni, I went to school there as far as 15 years of age. Then I quit school on account of my father had a stroke. The question I get asked the most is how did I become a Scottish fiddler, and the answer is I got started with my father. All his life he was a fiddler. He started when he was 5, He was 49 or 50 when he had the stroke. So the fiddle was there, nobody was using it. I never played the fiddle till my father had the stroke. I played the guitar. But I knew all his tunes. We were living in the same house, every time he takes the fiddle I hear the tune. After a while, I'm playing by ear. I don't know how my father got started on the fiddle. I think Father Soniyay, some? thing like that, gave him a lot of boost. When he was a kid, living up there at Bar? rahead, Chapel Island they call it tqday. Father Soniyay was doing parish work there, and Father MacLellan took over when Soniyay left. And he knew a lot of Scotch music. He got sheets and books from Scotland. So he taught my father. He didn't teach him notes but he taught him tunes. My father built the name Cremo, not really me. He played all over the island and Nova Scotia. He used to have a basket and he sold tickets. Put the tickets in the bas? ket and he'd give you a tune. He'd do that at every house. So everybody knew him. He'd play right in the house. Every child knew him. Sometimes he'd get to a house and stay overnight; the mother and father would go out and he'd stay and keep house for them. So the children knew him, even the dogs knew him. I used to go with him sometimes. He'd know the names of the dogs. He'd nfever make a mistake on the name of a dog so he must have known peo? ple real well. I don't think I'd want to play door to door the way ray father did. The only way it would pay for me is that I would get a lot of practise. Some people today they still say your father was way better than you. I have to admit he did a lot of practise. If you walk all over Richmond County, every house, pl:iy 10-15 tunes at each one • that's a lot of practising. One month one place, another month another place. So I have to admit if you play 10,000 tunes in two weeks there must be good in there somewhere. Cape Breton\*s Maga2ine/3