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Memories of Lillian Crewe Walsh You may not know her name but you know her poems. You've read them or heard them sung by Charlie MacKinnon and many others • "The Ghost of Bras d'Or," for instance, and "Kelly's Mountain." Some know her as the author of ballads, such as the marvelous "Wreck of the 'John Harvey,' or, the Belleoram Boy," also called "On the Shores of Gabarus." She wrote the poem that gave weaver Lizzie Belle Grant the recipe for what became the Cape Breton Tartan. Born Lillian Crewe in Neil's Harbour in 1883, she walked a fine rare line between homey poetry and fledgling literature. The following comes from conversations with Audrey Wadman and Ruth Beaton and Ruth's husband, Nelson, of Glace Bay, who all knew Lillian Crewe Walsh as Aunt Lilly. Ruth Beaton; Now, Aunt Lilly had at one time • before she married Ernest Walsh • she had a little candy store up on York Street, going up York Street in Glace Bay. Now Aunt Lilly • that's the only way I can call her--Aunt Lilly used to make up little poems and put them in the window of her little store. And it would be poems for children that would be passing by her store. You know, little poems that maybe when they'd go in the store • they'd be buying candy, you know. Aunt Lilly, of course, wrote so much poetry. But I know that was quite a traction for a lot of school kids. (Do we know if Lillian had any education?) Aunt Lilly • I don't think she had any more than 3 or 4. Isn't that something? (Amazing.) Amazing. If she did, well she certainly didn't go past Grade 5. And she used to go to school in Neil's Harbour. And she was the eldest, you see. And I think too that probably she didn't get the education because she kind of looked after her sisters and her brother that came along after her. Aunt Lilly never had any children of her own. Lillian Crewe Walsh. Right: Her nieces Ruth Beaton and Audrey Wadman. So Audrey and I, and my two brothers, were almost like her children. We thought there was no one like her, and we always visited her. And my sister and I, especially, were almost like daughters for Aunt Lilly. We used to go down there a lot, and Aunt Lilly had all kinds of stories about different things down in Neil's Harbour. You know, she'd tell them over and over. I remember her telling us a story about this elderly man down at Neil's Harbour. He wasn't feeling very well. And my grandmother--that would be Aunt Lilly's mother-- used to send Aunt Lilly down nearly every day to find out how this old man was getting along. And Aunt Lilly of course would be, when she'd be telling a story she'd be very dramatic about the whole thing. Telling us about she went down this day, and

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