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A Talk about George LeBrun George LeBrun was my grandfather. He was just a general hand3nnan who was well-edu? cated. And people used to come to him to write letters and to get things straight? ened out, maybe about land and taxes or roads or something like that. He had stud? ied by himself, and he could do veterinar? ian work. A lot of people would have troub? le with their cattle. They'd come to him and he'd help them out, solve the problem. They accepted him on equal terms. He was a kind old fellow--very charming old fellow-- and he'd help anybody. But all during those years, there was always a big divi? sion between the communities, because o*f religion. The community was French Catho? lic. And the priest didn't want the Protes? tants to fraternize with the Catholics. We were considered English Protestant, though we spoke Jersey French quite fluently. And there was a dislike generally against the Robins or the Jersey firm--whatever name you want. They looked at them--and you'll hear and read stories on this given by the French Acadians--they pictured them as the villains who took advantage, ex? ploited them. You have to understand the fishing business the way it was set up--the Acadians here were basically farmers at first. So this meant that a company that was going to do business in fishing had to advance them for the equipment. This'made big debts. So, the firm would ad? vance the necessary means. They'd even build the boats, equip the boats, sails and oars and trawls and that kind of thing. And the fishermen would come down in the spring, get in the boat. There was bait, hook and line and food--everything was there--they just had to get in the boat and sail out. Of course, things like food were booked against them. And this over? head had to be paid for by the fish. So there was a case in question which I al? ways remember my father saying. He used to go down when the boats would come in, see what their catch was like--he was manager of Robin, Jones & Whitman at the time--and he'd say, "How are you doing?" And this one day a bit of a breeze had come up and they'd come in early. So he was wanting to know why they came in early. They said, oh, they couldn't do anything with the trawls, blowing too much. And he asked the fisher? men, "Well, I hope you picked up all your trawls." "Oh no, no," he said, "it was blowing too hard--we just cut the lines and let them go." He said, "Oh, my gosh, that's expensive." "Oh," he said, "that's all right. We'll go and get another set - from the company." I don't know how they figured it. They seemed to think because it didn't cost them any money, all they had to do was go and pick it up. So he said, "You must realize that every time that you increase the cost by doing things like this, it's going to lessen the price of the fish." And then, of course, I would hate to tell you in French what would pass in the language used, but it would be pret- Herbert LeBoutillier ty rough, and they'd swear at the company and call them thieves, robbing from the poor. Somehow they thought the company should pay for this equipment, but not take it out of the fish, which business- wise was impossible. And this is part of where the attitude was fostered toward the Robins. Also, Fr. Fiset was quite a busi? nessman as well as being head of the par? ish here. And he ran the store and the post office. In those days--you don't hear so much a-



bout it now--but there was a lot of talk about sorcery and witches and things like that. And the Jerseys had the name of being les sorciers or witches. And that came about for various reasons. One thing, the way I see it, was that a lot of them (the Jerseys) were young fellows, full of devilment--and I often heard my father talking about some came from the city, used to call them "townies" as compared to country people--and they were full of hellery, they'd do anything for a joke--and the people being naturally superstitious--by nature, I don't know where it came from, but it seemed to develop in the Acadians themselves--things they couldn't explain, there had to be a sorcerer somewhere. This is the way they explained it. Somebody was sick or something strange happened, if they didn't know how to explain it--so they played on this. They weren't adverse to build up stories. And generally it was involving things like this that they would come and see George LeBrun. He was--what would you call it? (Able to take a spell away?) Yeah. To withdraw, to send out the bad spirits--that sort of thing. Well, here's how it worked. I'll give you one instance. He had enough psychology in his thinking to know if you (15)