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A Visit with Janie Nicholson, Baddeck Edited from a conversation with Kathy Moggridge Kuusisto (March 2, 1978) (What year were you born?) 1887. I was about 17 when I went in ((for nursing)). In 1904, I think it was. My father's people were in Boston. (Did you feel you could get training there easier than in Nova Scotia?) Well, I don't know. I liked the States, you know, I liked to stay there and live there. And then I took sick when I went in training, after a few months. I got the measles some way or another, I don't know how. And I was so anxious to work, you know. I was homesick for a little while at my aunt's. And I guess I got up too soon, and it was in the wintertime. And I had quite a ways to go, you see, to work. And I got the relapse. Then I had to quit. (You were working as a nurse at this point?) Yes, at that time. I just got a few months in. But that few months was really good for me. So then I got the relapse and I got a pain--pleurisy--and then I had to stay home. Oh, I felt so bad. And then the doctor said that the climate didn't agree with me there. Boston is a very damp place; it's low. And he said that he thought I'd have to come back home to my own country. When I was in the States, I worked with a doctor there for a little bit, my aunt's doctor. I did a little work with him. Just to please me, he'd take me. I was so anxious. I thought. Well now, if I become a nurse--this was my ambition--if I become a nurse, and graduate, then I'd make enough money, and I'd go take up medicine. I wanted to be a surgeon. I wanted to operate. I wanted to see what is inside of a person. And every doctor I ever worked with, they always said they'd rather me than a graduate nurse, an R.N., working with them. That's what they all told me. One doctor told me, he said, "You missed your calling. You should have been a doctor." (You just never had enough money to go?) Well, no. So then I was determined to carry on and do what I could about nursing. Then I got books, and I took a course that way. And then I went out working with the doctors, and doing midwife. (This was back in Baddeck?) Yeah. When I was at my aunt's (in Boston), her son's wife was having a baby, and oh boy, I had to have my finger in the pie, too. I was bound I was going to find out. So I was helping my aunt along with the doctor, and I was only about 17. So I got some training there, see. Everything I saw the doctor do, you know, I just put it right down in my head. (It was a home birth, I guess.) Oh yes. Those days, you never took anybody to a hospital to deliver a baby. The doctor came to help deliver the baby, and then we looked after the baby after that. I kept washing it for her and looking after it, and helping her, and everything. Oh, I just loved that work. (When did you come back to Baddeck?) I'd say 1907. My mother got sick, and I had to come home. I didn't want to come home. Even if the doctor told me I'd have to come back to my own country, I said I wouldn't come. But then my mother sent for me, and I had to come home. (What was it that you preferred about the States?) Well, I don't know. This was only a very small, little town at that time. (Very isolated, too, I guess.) Yeah, it was at that time. And I kind of liked the city life, you know, in a certain way. But not crazy about it at all. I wouldn't want to live in New York or any of those places, oh no. Halifax itself is city enough. (How did you get back to Baddeck?) Oh, I



came by boat as far as Hawkesbury, then came on the train from there. And then we came from Iona on a boat. And when I landed on the wharf down here, well, I thought Bad- deck looked so funny to me. Oh, it was at that time. There were only a few buildings here and there, you know. But anyway, I stayed home and looked after my mother. Then I got married. He was a good-looking chap. I guess that's what got my goat. But anyway, I guess it must have been something I had to do. (When you married him, did he say that you couldn't work?) No, he didn't mind it too much. Course then, I couldn't very well go out to work as much as I did later on. Vjell, I was having children, you know, and one thing and another. That'd keep you home. But I'd always go, wherever they'd call for me, you know, or if there was any place I could go to help. Wherever there was a baby bom, I'd always be there. Sometimes the doctor'd call me, and some? times the women, you know, when they knew they were pregnant or something--they'd call me up and ask me. Or they'd write me a (15)