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Leo Aucoin, Acadian Traditional Singer From Conversations with Rosie Aucoin and Cape Breton's Magazine Leo (h Pat) Aucoin of St. Joseph du Moine performed in the Helen Creighton Folk Festival in Dartmouth, October, 17, 1992. "It was supposed to be only two songs," he told us. "I sang five • they asked me for three more." Leo also sang traditional Acadian songs at Expo '86 in Vancouver. More and more, starting with Pere Anselme Chiasson, folklorists have found their way to his door, searching for those rare, perishable cultural treasures • the old Acadian songs. We asked him, "Leo, was there a time • oh, there must have been • 'when songs were a natural part of your life?" Leo Aucoin: Oh, yeah, that's the difference. When I was 8 or 9 years old, my father was a good singer. My mother was a good singer too, but she wasn't singing very much. But my father. And they had parties. He had beer. They had lots of parties at my father's place, and some (other) places. But when I grew up, I was 12 years old or 13 years old or 10 years old, I started singing. I started singing at 8 or 9, but not very much. But after I grew up a little bit. And then at 16 years old I was old enough to go to the parties. (Where did you sing first?) Home. And then sometimes you'd go to a place maybe till 7 or 8 o'clock at night. Well, they knew I could sing a little bit, so they were teasing me to sing a few songs, so I used to sing a few songs. But then after that I had to go home. (Would they stop the party and ask you to perform? And would everybody be quiet?) Oh, yeah. I wasn't the only one who was singing. After I would sing a couple, they'd ask the other guy, well, if they could sing. And then they'd ask the other guy. But that's at 16 years old, I was old enough to go.... And then, when the people were dancing, well, there was another room --every place you'd go there was another room--and there we were taking a few drinks and we were singing. I was singing, and then after I was singing, there was another guy (and) another guy. It was like that pretty near till 3 o'clock in the morning. There were parties very often. That was the only thing you could do. There was no TV. We used to make--they call that seed beer. You could make that in 24 hours. But it wasn't good till 48 hours, to drink. And then there was another one (a yeast- and-molasses beer)--it'd take about two weeks. Sometimes we were making 5 gallons, in a barrel. Put it in bottles. And then we had that. Especially at Mardi Gras--that was a big time. You heard about the Chandeleur. February the 2nd. (.See "Chandeleur, a Feast of the Candles" in Issue 10 of Cape Breton's EXCELLENT Experience the Nite Life DOWN UNDER" - Sydney's Hottest Dance Club ~ Beverage Room & Grill 458 CHARLOTTE STREET • DOWNTOWN SYDNEY MAJOR CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED