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were overdoing it a little bit, and then they cut back. There were lots of gentle? men violin players who didn't roam the country, yet I think they were generous with their music anyway. Some of them were hard-working farm owners, fishermen--that sort of came first with them--they were able to temper the whole thing so it balanced out nicely. But others completely gave themselves up to the music. Angus Allan Gillis Gordon MacQuarrie MacDonald You take a fellow like Angus Allan Gillis. He worked hard at home, ran the family farm for years and years. He would have visitors a lot. Maybe Dan R. MacDonald or other travelling violin players would drop in and stay. He'd be at the chores, and Dan R. would be hanging over him--"Do you know this tune, do you know that tune?" So he still got to swap tunes. I got a letter from the daughter of Colin J. Boyd from Antigonish, who was a pioneer in the recording of Scottish music in Canada. She tells that when Dan R. came to visit her father, he just went flicking potato bugs off his plants and that sort of thing, while Dan R. just rambled on and on about new tunes he'd heard, and had the fiddle right out in the field with him. While they were out pitching hay, Dan R. was swapping tunes, with a fiddle in his hand. A lot of people looked forward to these visits by these va? grant fiddlers because that's how they learned new tunes and new techniques and got to talk about the thing that meant so much to them. And the fiddlers would come and stay long periods of time, come bag and bundle and say, "I'm moving in for a couple of days." Could be a piper, could be a violin player--and he'd play the whole while. He may have thought this was his calling and that's what he was expected to do--come in and swap tunes and tales. And it's still going on. I think Dan R. was keen enough to know the places where he'd be the most welcome. You'd know, if you stayed a certain length of time with somebody and maybe they didn't want you playing the fiddle at 7 o'clock in the morning. Dan R. had this routine of places, and Gordon MacQuarrie was the same thing. He'd arrive at homes where there was lots of music in the house, where music was loved. And you knew when this character arrived that the parties were going to start every evening probably for days on end. And the first time he had a good visit there, he'd be back again. I remember Father John Angus Rankin saying that Dan R. had sort of a pattern--it seemed he'd be going in a cycle--he'd go all the places regularly. And then come back and hit them again. Father John Angus, for one, really looked forward to his visits, and really respected what the man was doing. Music was his vocation; he was bringing happiness through it. Dan R.--they say he wrote thousands of tunes, there's a possibility he wrote more than 2000, I think. He took his composing very seriously. He believed he had some kind of divine help every day to compose, or at least he had the support of the gods. There was a time Dan R. was in the States, or maybe in Windsor or Detroit, wherever he was working, and out on the street. And he was struck with this particular melody. Now he didn't have to have his violin with him to compose. He could probably write on the back of an envelope, or even write it in his mind and go home and transfer it to paper exactly as he had written it. So Dan R.



was struck by a tune out in the middle of the street this day, and he wrote it down somewhere or composed it in his head. He was looking for some title he could put on it in the general surroundings. And there was a man across the road, just standing waiting for a bus or something, and Dan R. went over and asked the guy his name. And when the guy gave his name, Dan R. said, "I just made a tune for you." So he put the guy's name on the tune. I be? lieve, as it turned out--probably that's how the story got to be spread around--by some coincidence, it was a Cape Bretoner he had stopped. Now the guy maybe didn't know what to make of it at the time, but somewhere in Dan R.'s collection there's a tune for this total stranger. (Were music and visiting pretty much what (41)