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he did for a living?) In Dan R.'s case, I suppose in most of them, they had alternative employment, something that paid a lot better. You can't just get room and board at places for playing the violin, and hope that'll do. Dan R. was in the army for a while. He worked in Windsor with the Chrysler Corporation. A lot of them held alternative jobs. They might go other periods where they weren't working so steady, and then they'd use that spare time strictly for music. Any time they had a decent job that wasn't maybe too hard on the fingers-- you'd have to keep that in mind!--they would take it for a certain length of time. Consummate musicians--those people that are consumed by their music--there's so many things worldly and practical that don't bother them at all. Their music is too important. Dan R. wore glasses for a long time tied up with band-aids. He could have replaced them but, like an absent-minded professor, it just wasn't the thing that it was important to do. He had other things that were more crucial, like writing a tune that day, or learning a new technique, or something like that. I suppose now there aren't as many like Dan R., but you wouldn't have to go back too many years, not more than 20, and you'd find all kinds of bachelor fiddlers and spinster fiddleresses on the island. They're not like gypsies, where they're continually on the road. But they have quite a flexible schedule, if they do know a certain player's in town and they want to spend a week or two with him, or they want to head off for another county or province--they're available to travel. (Where do women fiddlers fit into all this?) One of the questions I would ask is, "Do you find there's any chauvinism or prejudice, anything directed your way because you're a female violin player?" Although there would be slight hints of it, certainly in the older players, they say at the point when they were learning to play at home, no one ever said that it's not right that a woman would play. Never. The whole family was encouraged to stepdance, play the violin, play the organ, sing Gaelic songs, whatever. There have been women players all through the ages. The families that I've talked to that were large families, the girls were never relegated strictly to piano accompaniment, although some of them went that direction all right, maybe because the men were more anxious to play the violin. When there was a father in a family of a large group of kids, he'd certainly hand the violin to the girl as quickly as to the boy, if she had the talent and the desire. That's been my research on it, anyway. You should hear a tape of a strong dance player, like Cassie MacIsaac--she's Sandy MacIntyre's mother, she'd be Cassie MacIsaac MacIntyre--a wonderful dance player, this woman. Mary MacDonald is another strong fiddler; I don't know how much she played for dances. Theresa MacLellan is another one who plays very strong. She just says, "You just get in there and drive her. You give her the best you can, and you just come right back on it. There's no time for roles. You just say, 'I'm a violin player and I'm going to play the violin' --it's as simple as that." A Shop for Cape Bretoners and their Friends Island Crafts WHOLESALE - RETAIL Visit our store for a distinctive gift or souvenir. Whether it's a beautifully handcrafted C. B. wool sweater, a high-fashion mohair or boucle sweater, an accessory item, jams and



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