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Joe had one of those fiddles like the pro? fessors had, big deep ones, you know. Be? cause he'd take: so much music out of it, that's what I figure. He'd come in a house and play the worst fiddle that'd be there. Look, he'd pick them up and he'd try one from the other. Then when he'd run into a good one, he'd try to beat it. I've seen him blowing them out, boy. He'd play them that long. He'd stay with them for hours, seeing if it was any good. That's one thing about him--he knew his fiddle, too. I had one I bought over in Dominion one time. He said, "Is it any good?" I said, "I don't know. I didn't play it long e- nough. I like it, anyway." He tried to play it out. Pressing on her, did every? thing with it. He passed her back to me. "Boy," he said, "you've got a good piece of wood there--she wouldn't give in." (Where did Joe Confiant get his tunes?) Well, he had an uncle, Henry Fortune. The music came from there. They ail mostly came from Bras d'Or, the Fortunes, Then there was another fellow ahead of him-- Grandmother said he was better than any of them--Joe or Henry or any of them--his name was Billy Fortune. I don't know what they'd be to him. He'd be related to them. And he was a left-hander. He was a slick player, they say. (How old were you that you knew you were going to be a fiddler?) Well, I used to be on the floor with two sticks, you know, giving her hell with sticks! I suppose a- bout 13 I could get a few tunes out of the thing. I never took any lessons. What we had to do was--we heard a fellow, you know. There were lots of players around. When we heard a tune, a fellow playing a tune, we could get it off him. We'd listen to it-- we wouldn't ask him for it--we'd listen to it. We would memorize it. Then we'd go and play it. When we needed another one, we had to go to somebody else or the same fel? low, listen to it, take off and learn it. But like (my Uncle) Jack said--he was a good reader--"That's no good." He said, "Every time you've got to get a tune, you've got to go to someone. Why don't you take up the notes?" I said, "It's too tough." "Oh," he said, "I was about the stunnedest in the whole business, and I learned them. It wouldn't take you long. I'm going to write out the scale of music for you." He wrote it out. I couldn't make anything of it. "Stick with it until you learn it." And of course, I still didn't learn it, and he died. So one day I was waiting for the bus. I was working with the coal company in Glace Bay. On Senator's Corner--! was going to go home--Charlie MacLeod had a bookstore over there. I saw an instruction book there, "By geez, I'm going to get this. I'm going to go at it again, see what hap? pens." I wasn't any time before I had the notes. Three or four days, and it came all to me. But I couldn't read fast. (Paul Cranford: If you were working in the coal company, you must have been in your 20s then. So you'd already been playing by ear for 10 years or more.) Oh, yeah. (Where did Henry Fortune get his tunes?) Now, you've got me. There were a lot of I- rish tunes. But there were a lot of tunes that they played around here, you know, Passport Photographs While You Wait !"Abhas& Studta Ltd. ONE HOUR FILM PROCESSING) 5"x 7" Enlargements or Reprints in Only 20 Minutes! Weddings * Commercial & Industrial * Family Groups ' Graduation ABBASS STUDIO LTD. 170 Townsend St.. S'dnev * 564-8234 or 564-6491 40 YEARS ' OF SERVICE TO CAPE BRETON QUALITY SOFT DRINKS



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