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Kieran Ballah Remembers M. J, From Pam Newton's interviews with Kieran Ballah and Helen Ballah Dunn He'd be better known to people as M. J. (Moses Joseph). People would remember Dad most of all as M. J. That was a nickname he was called, in musical circles, all around Sydney. See, Dad died young; he wasn't very old when he died. He died in his 60s, early 60s--63, I think, when he died. 1957, or '56. Well, I could tell you a little first, just tell you a little about Dad's back? ground.... He was born in North Sydney; he was born in this country--although his fa? ther was from Lebanon, and his mother-- around 1892. And they moved to Louisbourg, I believe, in the early 1900s. And Grandpa started a business there. Grandpa was a peddler. And he'd go from Sydney to as far as St. Peters, just by walking--him and Grandma, and his brother and his wife, selling their wares. Just peddlers. They came from the Old Country. And they settled in Louisbourg, and built a big business--store--where the Grubstake Restaurant is now, that was our old home? stead. Same building it is now; hasn't changed hardly at all. Grandpa built it. And Dad lived most of his life there. He stayed there till 1930. It's a general store they operated. The Lewises operated the other general store, in competition, I suppose, in those years. They had a big store. Ice cream parlour up? stairs. I don't remember much about it, be? cause I was born in Sydney--the only one of my family born in Sydney. I remember visit? ing with Grandma in the store. Anjrway, Dad moved into Sydney with Mum and his family around 1930. That's when I was born. 'Cause he was doing a lot of travell? ing back and forth, singing. Very much in demand as a baritone. Singing on the stage, and singing in light operas. He studied un? der Professor Liscombe. Professor Liscombe was in Sydney, and he had a voice studio. He was professor of music, or of voice. And he taught Dad. And Dad's cousin in North Sydney, Uncle Dave, studied under him, too--I think. Anjrway, Dad would travel back and forth to Sydney. From Louisbourg, singing and in PhQtOS; Ki'r'n Bgll'h. ahd his pargntig. M. J. 'nd Mary (O'Keefe) B'llgih 75