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With Hilda Mleczko, Glace Bay I love Cape Breton. It's beautiful. I love Cape Breton. People'll say to me, "If your old man died, you'd go back to England, wouldn't you?" I said, "No, I wouldn't. I'd stay right here. This is my country now." Not that I'd turn my back on the country of my birth. Anybody who does that isn't very much. It's like a thumbprint. I'll be English till I die. You can't erase that. But I'd prefer to live in Cape Breton, and I want to stay here all the rest of my life. I love it here. I think the people are salt of the earth. I haven't made an enemy. As far as I know, anyway. I like people and they like me. I tried so hard to talk like the Cape Bretoners when I came here. I'd say, "I'll leave you now...." And, "Where is it at?" Hmm--it still came out English twang, so I quit. And of course, I married into a Polish family. Now, I tried to learn Polish. Well, that really cracked up my Polish family. Not my faltering attempts at Polish. But the fact that I was speaking Polish with an English accent apparently was very funny. But I had a couple of advisors--very friendly, so-called, quote, advisors. And they taught me "Good morning, good night. Grandfather." That was easy. And then they gave me some little phrases that they said were conversational pieces. And I was diligently rehearsing them in every spare time, in the corner, and told to myself. So I thought to myself one day, "I'll try that on my Polish father-in-law." So I said, "Dad, I've learned some Polish. Do you want to hear it?" He said, "Yeah." Well I started spewing out these words. And first he looked very angry. And then he started to laugh. He said, "You'd better shut up talking like that, or else they'd run you in." These Polish advisors of mine had been teaching me dirty words and colourful jokes! And I was repeating them without knowing. So I said to myself, "Before I learn Polish, I'll have to learn to speak English a little bit." Because I do fracture the Queen's English, I know I do. I mean, don't think all English people talk like me, for God's sake. I mean, in fact, they don't talk that fast. Can you follow me? (Every word, yes.) My Polish father-in-law, he'd say, "Hilda, you nice woman"--like broken English--"you nice woman, but you talk too fast, too fast." But you know--when I'm excited, when I'm happy, when I'm anything--except sad.... I can be quiet. Now, don't laugh! I can be quiet, really. I can be quiet. And I can be a good listener on occasions. I used to visit the sick when I was younger, and sit by many a bedside of a person that was dying. They used to think I belonged to some group or organization--religious group. I did it on my own. And I'd sit for hours listening to their secrets and their little admissions--just sit there listening to them, while they died. So I can be quiet. But it's--not very easy. (Hilda shows a photo of Henry, and one of herself.) It just shows you what the ravages of time can do to a person! (I don't know--time wasn't too hard on you.) He's mostly bald now. He's got a pot belly--although, I guess it's gone now. I mean, he lost about 25 pounds. But he's still the soldier boy I married. He's still the soldier boy. He'll never be nothing else to me.... HILDA MLECZKO'S STORY CONTINUES ON PAGE 18