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tWmmg Corner (iarl'! A Cape Breton Children's Book...for the Whole Family! Breton Books Is proud to announce the October publication of... Christy MacKinnon's Silent Observer "I was bom," writes Christy MacKinnon, "on a hill overlooking the Bras d'Or Lakes...." So begins this extraordinary find • Silent Observer • a book that was very nearly lost. Here is a bit of the stoy about that book: For several years, Ken Donovan has been an unoffi? cial contributor to Cape Breton's Magazine, suggest? ing subjects, bringing in tapes, and generally pro? moting our work through his own. When Ken discovered the work of Christy MacKinnon, he sought out more information • and he alerted Cape Breton's Magazine that this was a real find. Ken was right. The paintings and writings of Christy MacKinnon are a real find. Much of her writings and drawings were only discovered after Christy's death in 1981. Her niece, Inez MacKinnon Simeone of Milton, Mas? achusetts, saw a weathered note fall from a parcel among the things Christy had left her. In Christy's handwriting it read, "When my story is told, it will be called Silent Observer." The message led Inez to search through parcels of drawings and writings that had been unopened for years. The result was three hockey bags full of versions toward a book about Christy's childhood in Cape Breton. Christy MacKinnon was bom at Beaver Cove (near "Only the shadow cast above me made me look up in surprise." • from Christy MacKinnon's Silent Observer Vx l-r Boisdale), Cape Breton, in 1889, the daughter of Jo? seph D. MacKin? non and Mary Johnston. By her second year, an epidemic of either scarlet fever or mumps went through, leaving Christy completely deaf and her older sister Mary Sarah (Sadie) with very impaired hearing. In her book, Chris? ty says that she lost her hearing during a siege of whooping cough. "Ma didn't believe I was deaf. One day, I was outside play? ing in the sand when a family Christy MacKinnon horse was freed from his traces to run to pasture. I was in the way. I couldn't hear my mother's fright? ened call as the frisky horse leaped over me. Only the shadow cast above me made me look up in sur? prise. My mother cried and cried in her apron," According to Ken Donovan's research, Christy's fa? ther Joseph MacKinnon was known as "the profes? sor," and was fluent in Gaelic, French, and English. He taught school in Beaver Cove from 1869, and in 1889 he enrolled in the Nova Scotia Agricultural College in Truro. He was then hired by the province and "spent much of his adult life lecturing through? out Cape Breton on the benefits of scientific farm-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20 Silent Observer is a story that really matters, in a full-colour hardcover book. A lovely Cape Breton gift item for all ages. Price \$15.95 (plus GST and postage) You can order copies of Silent Observer now. We will begin shipping in October. See page 67 for information about ordering. Front Cover Photograph: John and Annie Battiste of Chapel Island