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Annie Battiste: a Mi'kmaq Family History Told from Mi'kmaq into English through Her Daughter, Marie Battiste INTRODUCTION: Annie Battiste of Chapel Island told this story in Mi'kmaq to her daughter Ma? rie; Marie has written, from her notes, into English. It's a Mi'kmaq interviewing a Mi'kmaq, rather than our typi? cal situation of one culture call? ing to another. This is a long, complex story which retains the pace of family sharing. A crystal clear memo? ry is hard to find in many people, a trage? dy of old age or an inattentiveness to the world. But my mother Annie Battiste has always been known for her memory of de? tails that others, including myself, have never attended to and could not re? member. I have always been in awe of this trait and in the spring of 1992 when my mother, at the age of 81. spent some weeks with us as she often did during the years after the death of my father, she sat and told stories of people and places of the past. Although I had heard these stories often, I marvelled at how new and fresh and interesting they were to me. My memory being so bad, I asked if I might use paper and pencil to take notes. Then we started at the first memory of her life. Born on December 16, 1910, to Harriet Cre? mo Lewis and John Lewis in Barra Head, Un- ama'kik, Annie lived all of her growing up years in Potlo 'tek, Barra Head, Nova Sco? tia, now known as Chapel Island Reserve. Barra Head was among the largest Mi'kmaq communities at that time, being the capi? tal of the Mi'kmaq Nation where Mi'kmaqs from everywhere gathered annually each summer for their national assembly to meet, pray, socialize, and discuss politi? cal issues of the day. At the age of 5 or 6 years old, my mother remembers her whole family had the deadly dreaded disease called smallpox. The Mi'kmaq word for this disease was lapekut. Her father John Lewis worked with cutting pulp in the woods. Since in these days there was no speedy transportation and the distance from work required him to remain away from home, my mother's mother lived with her father's family in their home. This was the home of Peter Cremo and his second wife Mary Ann Googoo. His first wife Helen had given birth to two children-- Simon and Harriet Cremo--and died in Canso where she was buried. Mary Ann worked like most Mi'kmaq women of those days. She was a basket maker within an extended Mi'kmaq family enterprise and sold the baskets, peddling them from village to village by train and by foot. At that time, the people in Barra Head usually would take a horse- and-wagon to the village of St. Peters, and from there they took a train to various points. It was not unusual, however, to walk the full 7 miles to St. Peter's, al? though (in) winter they skated across the Bras d'Or Lake to the town. On one such peddling expedition, Mary Ann came to a Scotch home where she was invit? ed to come in. She discovered immediately that the people in the house were sick with smallpox. The trip home must have been a long one for her as she carried the news to the family. Her husband Peter was away cutting pulp, and when she got home she cried in despair that in 18 days she knew she would get the deadly disease of

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