

[Page 29 - Annie Battiste: a Mi'Kmaq Family History](#)

ISSUE : [Issue 64](#)

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not dance. When the Lewis family got ready to leave and prepared to return to Barra Head, many people in the town asked them to drop by before they left to say goodbye. When they arrived at these homes, they were given baskets and boxes of sandwiches and cakes to take with them on their journey home. Annie at the sacred well on Chapel Island Home for Harriet and John Lewis was a little house, a shell that was built by the money provided by the Indian agent. Most people got a shell. But from profits from their baskets, John and Harriet bought sheet rock and hired a Frenchman to finish their house. They had hardwood floors and an oilcloth flooring in the kitchen. They had two bedrooms upstairs and a kitchen and living room downstairs. These houses were not big, but they often had to hold a lot of people, especially during the annual Pestie'wa'taqtimk. This was the occasion for feasting and feasting with friends and family. Pestie'wa'taqtimk started on Noelimk or Christmas Day. The preparations for the event had gone on for a least a month or two before that. Food was gathered and stored and readied for the 13 days of feasting and the all-night dancing at each of the little houses in the Mi'kmaq village. Each consecutive night, a different person's name was honoured. As each name was honoured the people would gather and then walk to the house singing Christmas carols or talking. As they approached the house, a gun shot would announce their arrival. The host would open the door and invite them to enter. When they entered the house the leader of the procession gave the host a shaved wooden cross and a medal or tie or cloth wrapped around the cross. After asking the host if they might dance, they danced the traditional ko'jua dance around the stove until the house rocked to the rhythm. A loud "Ta ho!" would end the dance and they would then eat the meal prepared by the host. When they had eaten and visited with the family, they then would start out to the next house and continue throughout the night until all the names for that night had been honoured. My mother remembers these days fondly as they were a fun time for the people. They feasted and frolicked every night for 13 nights until the last day, January 6. This last night of Pestie'wa'taqtimk festivities commemorated the three kings' arrival at the manger bearing gifts for the Baby Jesus. On this last night there was a square dance and people would come and dance all evening. A king and queen would be selected previously to host the evening's dance, and they would come dressed in a king and queen's costume. Fond memories of the past always give way to tragic moments as well. John Lewis died on September 15, 1933, from appendicitis, at the age of 43. He had gone to the doctor in St. Peter's with a pain on his side. The doctor had diagnosed an abscess and sent him home with some aspirins for the fever. Several days later, John realized that there was something much greater wrong and kissed his family goodbye and he took the car ride to the St. Peter's train station. He travelled in anguish by train to the hospital in Antigonish. Three nights later he died. Mother remembers that night and the sign that came to her foretelling her father's death. She was alone at the house. Her brother Mattie was in the woods cutting pulp, living among men in camps. That



night she decided to try Sunday, Aug. 15 • ! P.M. FEATURING: The Open Door Gang (John Ferguson, Dave MacIsaac, Jamie MacInnis, Paul MacNeil, Tracey Dares) Jerry Holland • Lennie Mason The Washabuck Connection Richard & Alex Poulet Liz Doherty • Pipe Band 1 and MANY MORE FIDDLERS | DANCERS and SINGERS!!!
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