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Walter Dugas Revisited: Oxen & Wood Readers of Cape Breton's Magazine v/iW remember Walter Dugas of West Arichat in Richmond County for his extraordinary wov? en fences, and especially for the photograph of him standing with his enormous woodpile, in Issue 31. We visited with him re? cently and he showed us an album of pictures of some of his other annual woodpiles. We also noticed the photo of him standing with an ox. We knew that oxen were once a popular source of work power in Isle Madame. And so that became part of our conversation. But first, the firewood: Walter Dugas: Before we do anything--there (pointing out the back window to a piled row of split wood) that's the remaining--! burned some since last fall, all winter, see. (That's quite a pile of wood.) It's the last of it. Now, you only see half of it. If you could see behind (that build? ing) there. That's lined up there. Five tiers there, there's about 30, 40 feet long. I don't have to cut any wood this spring, even if I'm sick. (No, you've got it in the bank.) Yeah, I've got it in the bank. I should say. So, what I usually do--five below zero weather--I just put a couple of those pieces (in the stove) at night. I turn around, and I just shove the electric heat on. Because I've got electric heat all over. See there, in the porch. And I've got 2000 watt there, 2000 watt there, 1700 watt there. But I'm not insulated. Heat is very expensive. So that's what I do. (You use spruce wood, and you get good heat out of it, don't you?) Yeah. It's pretty good. I'm going to tell you one thing. There are a lot of people looking for hardwood. But I know two guys--and they're both related to me--who bought the very same stove right there. And one fel? low ruined it in less than 10 years-- ruined it, totally full of holes. And it's the white or yellow birch--green--that did it. Spruce will never hurt it. That stove will be 35 years next November. That's the Mr. & Mrs. Walter Dugas, West Arichat only one that kept, and it's just the same as the day I bought it. Just the same ex? cept the top there is starting to bend a little bit.... I've got oil with that too there, with the Keymac (oil unit on the stove.) I've got oil on Number 1 on that, see, just to keep the wood in good trim. Walter chuckles. But when I go to bed there, I choose the biggest piece--and I've got bigger stuff than that in the barn. Choose the biggest piece. And I put 2 or 3 of those. And I just close everything, and I go to bed, and it's beautiful. If I get up at 3 o'clock to go to the bathroom or some? thing, I shove another couple of pieces. That's through the night. (And you don't have to use the electric too much.) No. Walter Dugas Continues on Page 24 FRONT COVER: Gwennie Bennett Pottle of West Tarbot (photo by Carol Kennedy)