

Page 46 - The Story of the Cheticamp Rug ISSUE : <u>Issue 19</u> Published by Ronald Caplan on 1978/6/1

Willy D. Deveau and her grandson want to or not, I had to stay with it. My customers were supplying orders. And the ones who were working for me said they wouldn't have any work, they wouldn't be ab? le to sell their rugs. That wasn't the case • but they thought they wouldn't be able to sell their rugs. In those days the Arti- sanale (Handicraft Co-op) wasn't there. They would cry because-I was going to stop. Willy let me keep on. He said, "Maybe a little la? ter it'll be easier for you to wean them." So I kept on awhile. Then I divided my cus? tomers with two others. And the Artisanale was there. And then I stopped. (But you don't keep rugs in your own home.) I don't want them. I'd rather carpet. And I'm getting old. What would I do with all those rugs? I could give them to my children and my grandchildren • but they've seen so many of them. I had my house full in the winter. In the beginning I had a room up? stairs that was almost full, until the Preparation for this article was aided by the Explorations Program of the Canada Council, and is part of an on-going project of "Lives on Cape Breton." Cape Breton's Magazine/46 spring. And I had to borrow money to pay for them. And I was always scared they wouldn't sell. You don't know the worry I got in my life. I was a widow then. And then I was never going out. I was working, from morning till sometimes 12 o'clock at night, stamp? ing. One winter I had 200 people working for me • hooking--counting the children and all. It was poor, it was dull. The big children could hook, the big boys used to hook. (But I suppose it meant a lot to the families to have that work.) Well, it meant their lives. We can thank Miss Burke. We were lucky that she started that. They were earning a little money. What could they do? They were fish? ing. Cod was a dollar a hundred pounds. And the tea was a dollar and a guarter. Imagine: a hundred pounds of fish for a pound of tea. And it's continued. But you know, every time that women start something it pans out. We were stubborn. We stood together. And we worked hard.