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Louisbourg Portraits This book makes excellent reading and should not be missed • both in terms of the detailed information it provides and the pleasure of the writing itself. It will serve as a good school text as well as adult reading. No one need be put off by the thought that the book is too specialized or academic, because it is the opposite • it is an informed, imaginative presentation maintaining a comfortable reading style throughout. In "A Note on the Sources," author Christopher Moore writes: "Eighteenth-century France was, for its time, a centralized state, and keeping the central authority informed demanded paperwork. Colonial authorities routinely compiled dossiers on every aspect of their responsibilities, not only by written reports but also in maps, plans, censuses, and statistical tables. They made copies of everything, for their careers might depend on what they wrote. Under royal persuasion, officials outside the administrative hierarchy acquired the same habit: notaries routinely kept copies of the legal agreements they witnessed, priests diligently compiled their registers of baptisms and marriages and burials, and the law courts preserved verbatim transcripts even of trivial cases. Record-keeping was in the nature of the society.... "At once a rather small community and a fully-fledged royal colony, *lie Royale* was particularly well-documented. With fewer people in their purview, the record-keepers could be more detailed than usual, and with clerks, courts, and notaries close at hand, people availed themselves of the services offered. "Louisbourg ended not in pillage and flames but in orderly capitulation, so its records went into exile with the record-keepers. They eventually found their way to what became the National Archives of France. In the twentieth century the advent of microfilm photography made them easily available in Canada. The result: though most of the people of *lie Royale* were illiterate, and though there survive very few diaries and almost no personal correspondence, most individuals who lived in eighteenth-century Louisbourg for any length of time can today be named and identified, even (in varying degree of detail) described. "Such sources made *Louisbourg Portraits* possible. By attending to them I have not had to invent a single character, episode, or event. *Louisbourg Portraits* is history: there is no line of dialogue that is not taken from a document, and I have not had to transpose events in time or place. Events described in *Louisbourg Portraits* happened; the people to whom they occurred existed; and the records have long been available to scholars. Where I have speculated on motivation or attitude or emotion, I have tried to make plain both the speculation and the historical evidence that supports it." Good story-telling is always difficult, but it's especially difficult when you have almost too much information. Moore moves nimbly through an amount of information that would have tripped up a lesser person. He uses the stories of his central characters as an opportunity to share with us the context of their daily lives, thus fleshing out a general portrait of life along the quay, in the drinking houses, at the fish stages and on the sea, in the warehouses, homes, and barracks. This book is highly recommended. LOUISBOURG PORTRAITS; LIFE IN AN



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