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Just to go back, though--I think we have to really appreciate what DesBarres does. Supplies are scarce. The Colonial Office has literally forgotten us. Nova Scotia, Halifax, if anything, is an enemy of Sydney. They hate to see Nova Scotia cut up. And there's a movement in Nova Scotia that goes on for another 30, 40, 50 years, to try to make what they call "Nova Scotia Ir-redencia"--the old Nova Scotia, complete again. They don't like this diminution of their power. So they're always trying to get Cape Breton back--the governors and the merchants--particularly the coal mines. Eventually, they win, they do get it back. But at this period (1785-86) DesBarres is fighting them, and he's trying to get supplies. They send him no supplies. So he gives the supplies that are meant for Loyalists to the non-Loyalists who came on the Blenheim, because they're literally starving to death. But he's not supposed to do this; it's illegal. And Lord Sydney gets him on this--the legal aspect--which is just a ploy. And he can't deny this. But on the other hand, he has to feed these people with Loyalist supplies. So bad is it that finally a ship runs aground at Arichat, and a group of them go off in sleighs that second winter, and they get the supplies and bring them back to Sydney--and that's what they feed the people. And the Indians feed the people the first winter with moosemeat and dogfish and this sort of thing, eels. I don't know if they could have survived without the assistance of the Indians the first winter. That's how difficult the situation was. He kept his optimism, which is the mark of DesBarres, all the way through the whole thing. This colony could make it, it was great, everything was going strong. So he brings the settlers over, he feeds them, and begins the mining. He brings the first minister, Ranna Cossit, from New Hampshire--sells Ranna Cossit a bill of goods. Ranna Cossit goes back, gets his wife and family, and they build what we call Cossit House, and moves in as the first minister and the first teacher. Begins St. George's Church. Lays out the streets. Ingrahams United Ltd. 213 Commercial St., North Sydney, N. S. B2A IBS Telephone 794-4536 GENERAL DEALERS Clothing for the Whole Family Moraff's Yarns n' Crafts Wools, Synthetics & Blends by • Mary Maxim • Paton?? • Bernat • Emu • Lopi • Jaeger • White Buffalo • Nomotta 100% Wool from New Brunswick I Prince Edward Island - Cape Breton ASK TO SEE Angora Camel Hair Alpaca Mohair Linert Blends Caahmera Tapestries - Crewel • Oecoupage - Maerama Large inventory of Craft Supplies and Patterns Threads for Embroidery, Crochetf'g, Weaving, Tatting & Quilting "A World of Yarn at Your Fingertips" 0pm daily 9:30 a.m.-5:30 p.n Fridays until 9:00 p.m. Mail Orders Filled Now with 2 Locations to Serve You: C. B. Shopping Plaza, Sydney River (539-5949) 752 Victoria Rd., Sydney (564-8339) So the mark of DesBarres is everywhere. It's everywhere. Look at his maps, not just of Sydney but of the island at this period--you see he's planned out the first road to St. Peters, Lingan Road is planned out. He's already thinking in terms of the rest of the island. His mind is beyond just Sydney. And he writes about lumbering and mining and plaster of Paris and deer and furskins and fishing. He's already thinking about the colony as a whole. Had he just stayed a few more years, he would have--being the



kind of man he was--the great spirit that he was--he could have incorporated the whole island, and things would have been running, I think, much more smoothly. It took so much longer than it needs to have taken. But I think if DesBarres had been just given the chance, he would have had it going, let's say, 10 years earlier. (How long did he have?) Oh, less than 2 years. A terrible time. He left here. He couldn't land in England 'cause his debtors were after him. Because, to pay for the supplies, he went on personal notes. (Supplies that fed the starving people here.) Yes. So when he left here, he couldn't go right to Whitehall, right to the Colonial Office, to plead his case. He had to go to France, and go back to England in disguise, so that his debtors wouldn't know him, and sneak into the Colonial Office to plead his case. He got it all back, every penny. Twenty years. And about 8000 petitions. (And he outlived every one of them.) Outlived! They were dead! He outlived his colony! (Cape Breton was re-annexed to Nova Scotia in 1820.) A lot of his children were dead. He outlived everybody. (And we don't really know whether he was 103 or 104.) No. We're not quite sure when he was born. But we do know that he danced that jig at the age of 100. That's the story they give. That he danced a jig on the table at the age of 100 in a Halifax tavern. 'R/' For more on Cape Breton as a separate colony (1784-1820) see: "The Separatist Movement in Cape Breton," in Issue 27 of Cape Breton's Magazine; "Joseph Frederick Wallet DesBarres and the Founding of Cape Breton Colony," in *Revue de l'Université d'Ottawa*; "The Loyalists of Cape Breton," in *Cape Breton Historical Essays* • all by Dr. Robert Morgan, Archivist, Beaton Institute, University College of Cape Breton. For DesBarres's life, see *Uncommon Obdurate* by G. N. D. Evans (1969). For DesBarres's 1786 map of Sydney, our thanks to Pat MacIntyre, National Map Collection, Public Archives of Canada.