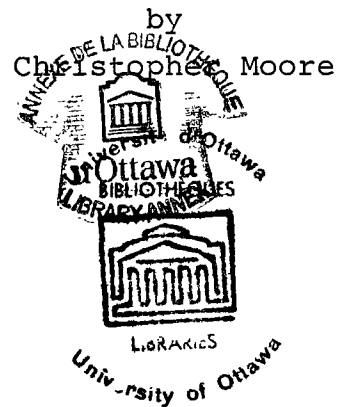


MERCHANT TRADE IN LOUISBOURG, ILE ROYALE



Submitted to  
The School of Graduate Studies  
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## INTRODUCTION

On July 17, 1744, Louisbourg, capital and chief port of the French colony of Ile Royale, watched the arrival of the merchant vessel Argonaute, possibly the largest merchant ship ever to visit Louisbourg. The Argonaute was six or eight times larger than the average ocean-going vessel seen there, mounted twenty-eight cannon and carried a crew of 154. Needing nearly four fathoms of water to avoid grounding, the Argonaute anchored in mid-harbour instead of approaching the quay like a smaller vessel.

The Argonaute was a ship of the Compagnie des Indes, the royally chartered company that held a monopoly of France's trade with the far east. Dispatched from Lorient in Brittany in December 1742, the vessel had sailed around the Cape of Good Hope to Pondichery in India, where it spent six months assembling a cargo of goods from all over the orient. Its visit to Louisbourg in the summer of 1744 was part of its return voyage from India to France.

At Louisbourg, the Argonaute traded little cargo, for its principal reason for the visit was to rendezvous with a convoy which would take it into European waters. However, the Argonaute and other company vessels with it did make substantial purchases. After their long voyage, the sailors needed provisions, equipment and new stocks of fresh water. The vessels needed many small repairs, and sick or injured crewmen were treated at the local hospital.

For the purchase of all these goods and services, the Argonaute incurred a substantial debt. Since the vessel had little to sell at Louisbourg and did not carry treasures in cash, almost all of its purchases were made on credit. When the Argonaute left Louisbourg to complete its two-

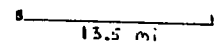
year voyage, it left behind masses of paper: notarized promises that the Compagnie des Indes, through its treasurers in Paris, would make future payment to the merchants and suppliers who had refitted the Argonaute at Louisbourg.<sup>1</sup>

The Argonaute was not at all typical of the ships which traded at Louisbourg, nor was the route it had taken to Ile Royale a regular pathway of trade. Louisbourg was not a centre of trade with the far east, nor were the rare visits of ships like the Argonaute a major part of the colony's commerce. Yet the Argonaute's voyage and the manner of its purchases at Louisbourg are striking examples of two phenomena with great importance for the economy and society of Ile Royale.

First, the long voyage of the Argonaute exemplifies the global reach of European commerce in the eighteenth century. The Argonaute was only one of a score of vessels regularly engaged in the voyage between Lorient and India for the Compagnie des Indes, and the company had only a tiny fraction of France's and the world's overseas commerce. By the eighteenth century, the major European powers were represented on almost all the world's oceans. The North Atlantic in particular was a sea of trade. European populations had settled around the Atlantic littoral by the time Ile Royale was founded, and large volumes of trade linked the colonies to Europe and each other. The Argonaute's voyage was longer than many, but navigation between far-distant ports was hardly an unusual feat. Louisbourg's geographic location and the state of eighteenth century trade ensured that occasional visits like the Argonaute's would occur.

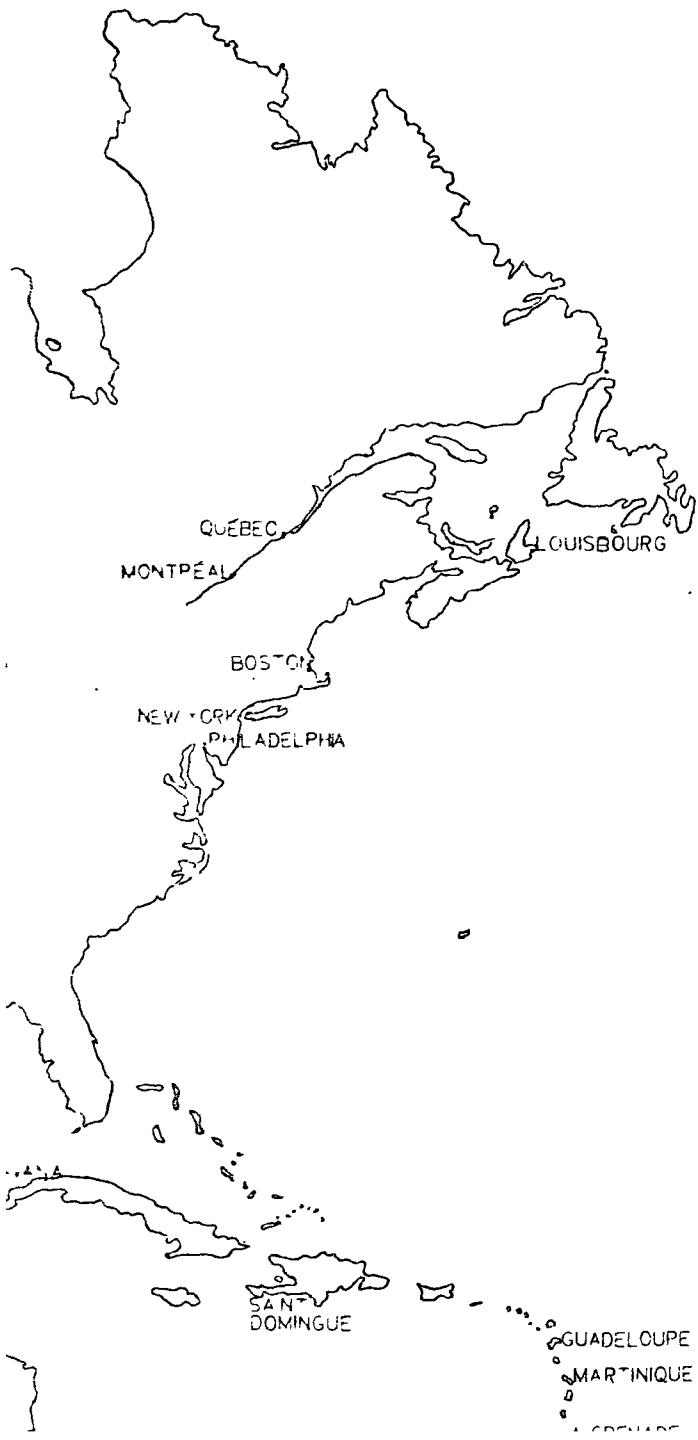
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1. The Argonaute never reached France. It was captured by the British, and its papers are in the British Public Record Office, High Court of Admiralty 32 97/1. Its debts at Louisbourg notarized by the Amirauté de Louisbourg are in A.D. Charente-Maritime, B, Registre 275, passim. The Argonaute was of 600 tonneaux burden.

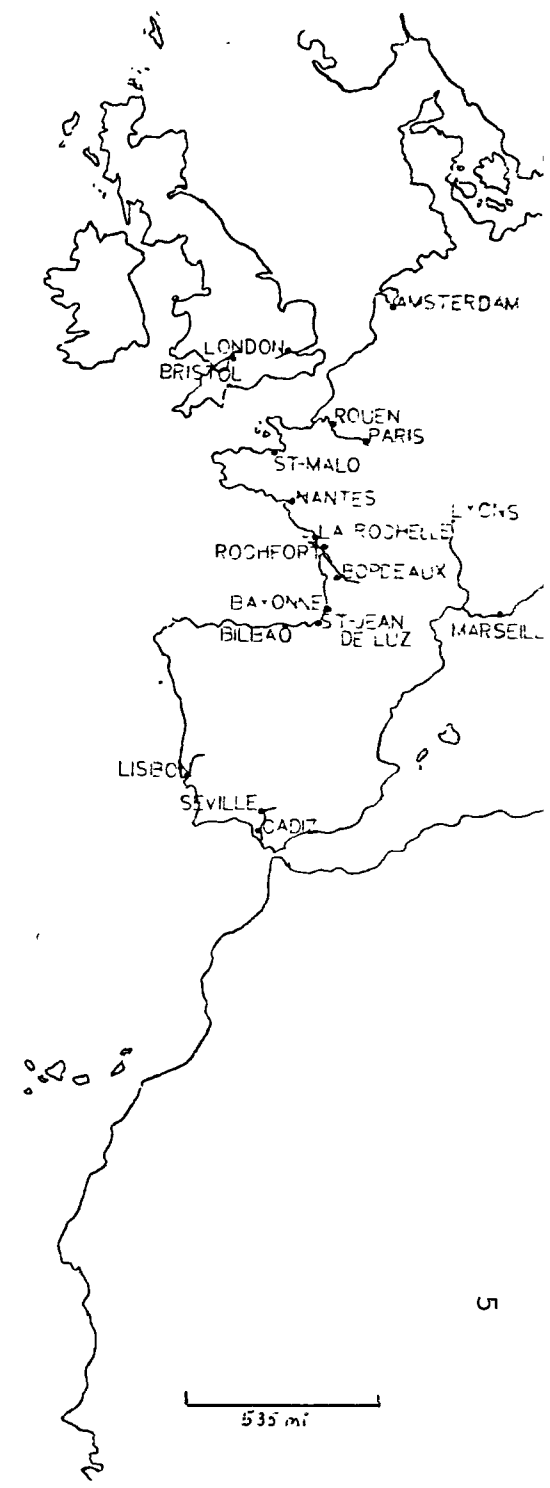


The second phenomenon is exemplified in the ease with which the Argonaute obtained credit at Louisbourg. Europe's world-wide trade was too extensive to be maintained by barter or by cash alone. It demanded credit services, insurance, processes of law and reliable communications. By the mid-eighteenth century, a financial and commercial network had been built to match the expanding network of trade routes. The successful encounter between the ship from Pondichery and the fishing port in Ile Royale is proof that the small new colony had been integrated into both those networks.

By the time Ile Royale was founded, Europe and its colonies were moving substantial quantities of goods about the Atlantic. Long established Portuguese and Spanish colonies in South and Central America produced important precious metals, lumber and other goods. Caribbean colonies were exporting or preparing to export sugar, tobacco, coffee and spices, and they were importing slave labour from West Africa and supplies from Europe. North American colonies were developing their own export industries. The volume of goods shipped to and from the Americas was still small compared to the shipping trade moving such products as wool, salt, foodstuffs and naval stores around Europe for internal consumption. Nevertheless the American colonies were joining the expanding networks of trade, just as their products were joining the other new or newly-available commodities provided by increasing trade.



THE NORTH ATLANTIC



Availability of all these goods had greatly altered consumption habits of Europeans, but more than buying patterns had changed. Trade was both changing European society and promoting economic growth by encouraging specialization and division of labour. Once regular bulk trading could be relied upon, a town or region well suited to the production of one product could concentrate on increasing that, and trade its new surplus production for necessities and luxuries produced elsewhere. By the eighteenth century, many Europeans, particularly those resident in the ports and trading cities, made their living by producing, transporting or marketing trade goods or by working in new industries and professions supported by trade. Government and society were obliged to respond to the changes which trade encouraged.

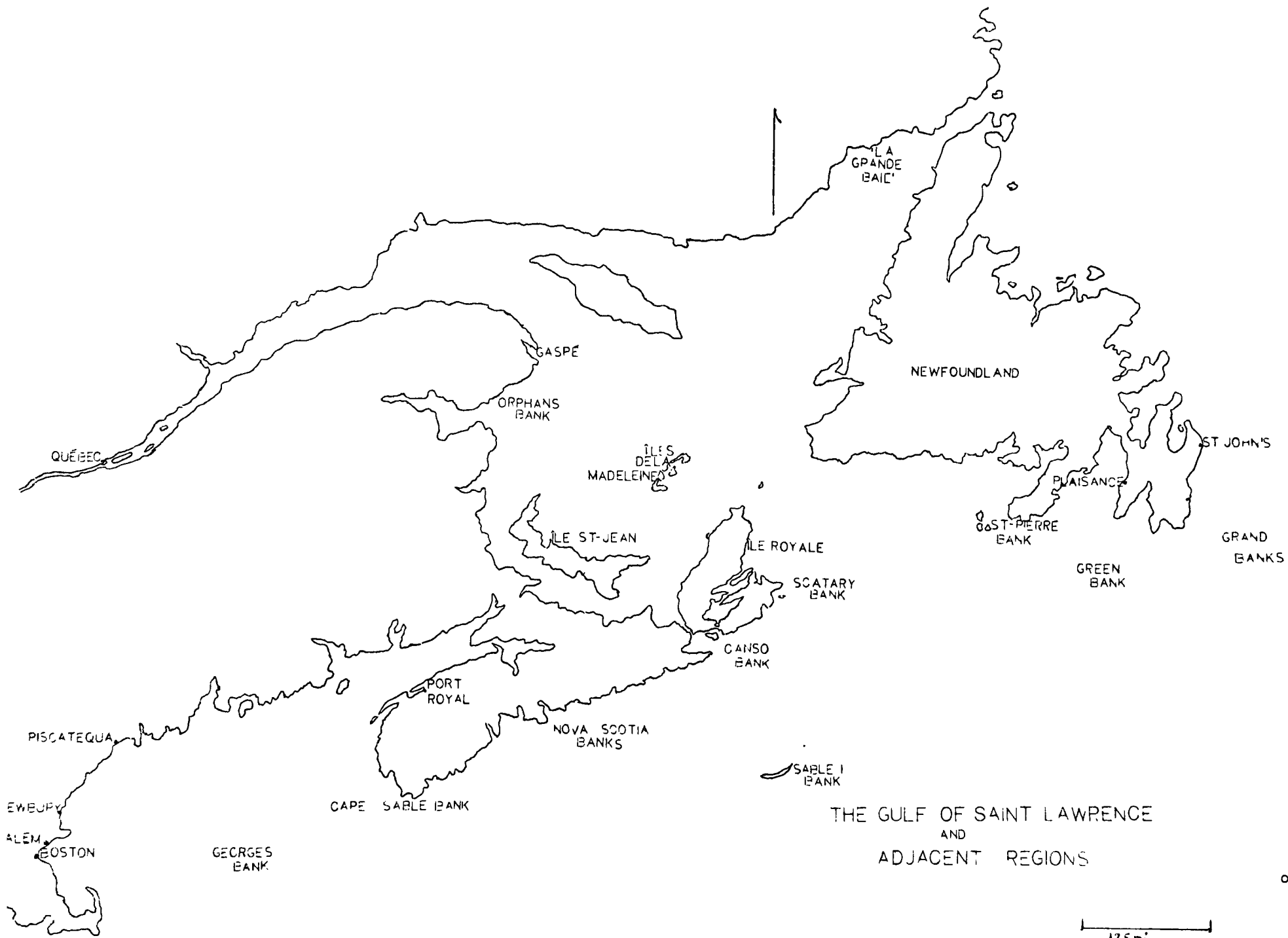
Trade as an increasingly important source of wealth had encouraged new distributions of economic power with important social and political consequences. In particular, it had created opportunities for those who organized the movement and exchange of goods. The merchant's essential function, arranging the movement of goods and payments, frequently gave him chances to extend his influence. Since goods and payments moved slowly and credit was essential, merchants could use debt relationships to extend their control over producers who were also consumers. In theory, a merchant could come to control production at both ends of his trade route, and in fact merchant power did expand beyond the functions of exchange. Holland, for example, had become one of Europe's leading nations on the strength of its merchant commerce. Benefits of trade, however, did not automatically flow to the merchants. Prussia was a major exporter of grain for centuries, but history there remembers the land-owning Junkers who produced the grain rather than the merchants who transported it. In a different situation, as when a new product was too abundantly available, conditions of trade could be dictated by consuming regions. The economic

consequences of commerce were evidently as diverse as the goods which were traded, but the distribution of the new economic power arising from trade influenced the social and political development of every region which entered the Atlantic trading system.

Matters of trade and economic power are not the perspectives from which Ile Royale has usually been studied, yet Ile Royale was pre-eminently a trading centre. Specialized in the production of cod for distant markets and reliant upon imports of its vital supplies, Ile Royale was integrated into the workings of the Atlantic economy throughout the colony's existence.

Cod fishing was not an innovation of 1713. North American cod had been one of the first American products introduced into Europe. European markets for cod were well established, as were techniques for catching and transporting cod from America to Europe. By entering that system, Ile Royale escaped the "starving time", the long unprofitable struggle to take root which typified the early years of many colonies.

The main change in the fishing industry in Ile Royale's time was the growing participation of colonists. First at Plaisance in Newfoundland, but particularly at Ile Royale, responsibility for France's cod production shifted from visiting Europeans to permanent residents. At the same time, a colonial merchant community appeared, first to organize transportation and payment systems for Ile Royale's imports and exports, but also to become involved in other aspects of the colonial economy. As Ile Royale emerged as a trading centre rather than simply as a place where cod could be found, the colonial economy became slightly more complex. There as elsewhere, trade fostered urban growth and the diversification of professions and services. As well, it provided particular opportunities for economic power, of which merchants



THE GULF OF SAINT LAWRENCE  
AND  
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seem to have been major beneficiaries.

Documentation on Ile Royale, providing ample evidence of the merchants' prominent role in colonial society, raises questions about their power over the local economy. Fortunately, there is an abundance of material with which to study the economic activities of the local merchant community. This documentation is of two kinds.

Official sources, those which collect the findings and opinions of colonial officials, contain a wealth of data about Ile Royale. Local officials reported constantly to their superiors in France, who preserved incoming and outgoing correspondence as a matter of routine. This correspondence provides the historian with the comments of the officials, but, more important, it includes a remarkable array of statistics on shipping, commodity trade, the fishing industry, government spending, population growth and other subjects. Sometimes in yearly series, sometimes available only for a few periods, this information is of great value. Nevertheless the official sources have serious inadequacies. Detailed discussion usually focuses on the duties and problems of administration. As a source of information about merchants' activities, business methods and careers, the official sources are arid.

Better information on the merchants comes from the judicial and notarial records of Ile Royale. These were also compiled by colonial officials, but the testimony and the activities described are frequently those of the merchants themselves, so much can be learned about the merchants from these sources. However, the greater descriptive qualities of these records are balanced by their greater resistance to quantification. Information in court disputes is obviously selective and, despite the availability of notaries in

Louisbourg, many important contracts and documents were either not notarized or were entered in notarial registers which have not survived. These sources provide a glimpse not a measure of merchant activity.

The nature of these sources suggests the method of study. I have attempted to take an overview of the trade of Ile Royale from statistics, censuses and comments in the official sources, and to cover the detail of merchant activity from notarized documents, judicial testimony and private papers entered as evidence.

These sources and my exploitation of them have several important limits. The almost exclusive use of Louisbourg documents means that a global or at least trans-Atlantic commerce is studied from a strictly local point of view. Even supplemented by secondary sources on other regions, the Louisbourg sources are not sufficient for resolving some issues, notably aspects of the relations between Louisbourg merchants and their counterparts in the French ports. On the other hand, the local point of view has redeeming features, for the colonial reality deserves attention. Ile Royale has frequently been studied from a viewpoint on the Saint Lawrence, and colonial merchants are often considered from a metropolitan point of view. This study's focus on Ile Royale has inherent limitations but it may balance studies of other areas that examine relations with Ile Royale from other vantage points. However, the limited attention given here to Ile Royale's ports and settlements other than Louisbourg is less likely to be balanced by other work. Port Toulouse, Niganiche and Ile Saint-Jean are neglected partly because Louisbourg appears to have directed much of the trade of the rest of the colony, but also because the Louisbourg merchants are much better documented than those few who worked in other parts of the colony.

Little is said here about costs, profits, overheads, rates of return on investment and generally the financial condition of most Louisbourg merchant businesses. It may be possible to attack such topics, by exploiting sources in ways which did not occur to me, and by filling the gaps with extensive conjecture. However, in the general absence of merchants' business papers, information on such questions is certainly scarce and the documentation leads more readily to other topics equally worthy of attention.

In quoting from documents, I have attempted to quote verbatim, so varying spellings are repeated without the constant use of sic. The only intentional editorial changes are in spelling out many abbreviated words without the use of square brackets (i.e., ord<sup>ce</sup> becomes ordonnance, mar<sup>d</sup> becomes marchand, etc.) and in adding a few punctuation marks in long quotations.

The final note on limitations must concern statistics. On the assumption that approximate figures are better than none, this study relies to a great extent on eighteenth century statistics which obviously are less than absolutely accurate. Vital series of data are missing completely, some are partial, some have important omissions, and there is a constant question about the amount of intentional and unintentional distortion. In addition to borrowing statistics from contemporary tables, I compiled others myself as a means to organize data. The 147 merchants analyzed in Chapter Two, for instance, are not all the merchants of Louisbourg. Some have escaped documentation completely and many are covered too superficially to be used in this sampling. I have tried to consider the limits of both kinds of data whenever possible. In a number of cases, however, the general trends suggested by the figures have been found to coincide with independent testimony from other sources, so there are grounds for believing in the general adequacy of the

statistics as economic indicators. Still, the approximate status of all figures and tables should be kept in mind.

It is the aim of this study to examine the activities and the influence of the merchants of Ile Royale. The examination proceeds in three stages. The first chapter demonstrates the importance of trade to Ile Royale and gives an outline of the colony's economic structure, the environment in which the merchants operated. Once that framework is established, the merchant community, its activities and its methods can be portrayed. This group portrait of merchant activity forms Chapters Two and Three. Finally, in Chapter Four, the relationship between the merchants and the wider economic structure can be examined, to demonstrate the economic power of the Louisbourg merchants and their role in the development of Ile Royale.

The writing of this thesis was aided immeasurably by many friends and colleagues. For their contributions, I am indebted to the members of the Research section of Fortress of Louisbourg National Historic Park, who started me on this research project, to Julian Gwyn, who encouraged me to consider it as the subject of a thesis, and particularly to Fernand Ouellet, my thesis director, for his advice, criticism and constant enthusiasm.

## CHAPTER ONE

## ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN ILE ROYALE

Political and military events had more influence than commercial ones upon the birth and death of the colony of Ile Royale, but since those military and diplomatic events have been the subject of most of the historiography of Ile Royale, they do not need extensive coverage here. The colony was founded in 1713, after France was obliged to yield its holdings in Newfoundland and Acadia to Great Britain. On Cape Breton Island and other islands of the Gulf of Saint Lawrence, the French proposed a new base for their cod fishery, an entrepôt of colonial trade and a new source of military power. Cape Breton Island, until then virtually without European settlement, was quickly occupied and a new colony, named Ile Royale, began to grow. Its development was interrupted in 1745 when New England and British forces captured Louisbourg, occupied the colony and deported most of the residents to France. In 1749 France regained possession of Ile Royale and the colonists returned, but in 1758 British forces once again occupied the island. They deported the residents again and brought the French colony to its end.

Ile Royale was part of New France, nominally under the authority of the governor-general in Québec, but its own government reported directly to the Ministry of Marine in France. The governor, with the civil administration and most of the garrison, resided at Louisbourg. Several other towns grew up along the island's east coast, but Louisbourg, designed and fortified by military engineers, became the major settlement and the chief port. As military, administrative and commercial activities concentrated at Louisbourg, the colonial population became an urban one, with usually more than thirty-five percent of all colonists living in Louisbourg.

Table 1.1 Colonial Population, Various Years

Year	1) Louisbourg	2) Ile Royale	3) Ile Royale plus Ile St-Jean	4) 1 as % of 3
1719	853	c2012	2262	37.7%
1726	1296	3528	3950	32.8
1734	1616	3955	4527	35.6
1737	1963	4618	5181	37.8
1752	4174	5845	8814	46.9

Source: Censuses of Ile Royale, A.N., Outre-Mer, Gl, Vols. 466-467. When the censuses do not include the military garrison, a figure for military population has been added, based on Gilles Proulx, Le Costume et l'Equipement Militaire de Louisbourg (Université de Montréal, thèse de maîtrise inédit, 1973), Tableau 1. Figures for Ile St-Jean are based on D.C. Harvey, The French Régime in Prince Edward Island (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1926). p.243.

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The smallness of the colony's resident population can be deceptive. Ile Royale's population specialized in the production of large volumes of dried cod for export, and exports of cod paid for large quantities of imports. As a result, Ile Royale never remotely resembled an isolated or self-sufficient community. Its revenues came from distant sources: from its earnings through exports of cod, from the French crown's investment in the colony, and from its earnings as a centre of international exchange. Revenues were spent outside the colony too, to pay for the wide variety of imported goods which the colonists consumed. These exchanges integrated Ile Royale into an international economy and generated a substantial shipping trade to and from Ile Royale.

The importance of this trade to Ile Royale is demonstrated by a comparison with some other colonies. Exports from Ile Royale in 1737 totalled about 1.7 million livres and probably surpassed two million livres in 1754. On a per capita basis, these exports amount to roughly 370 livres per person in 1737 and 340 livres per person in 1754. These estimates can be compared with figures for similar periods in Canada\* and for British American colonies around 1770. As Table 2 shows, Ile Royale's per capita exports were larger

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\* Canada is used throughout in its eighteenth century sense: the part of New France (later British North America) established along the Saint Lawrence River Valley.

than those of any other colony. They are approached only by those of Newfoundland, which also specialized in cod production for export markets. Not only was Ile Royale more export-oriented than other colonies, but the value of its per capita exports approached minimum annual wages for that colony. That is, exports alone, without domestic output or government funding, were providing the equivalent of a subsistence wage for everyone in the colony.

A larger volume of exports does not mean Ile Royale was richer than other colonies, but it does demonstrate the importance of trade to Ile Royale. With most of its revenues coming from overseas sales, most of the materials of its culture being imported, and most of its people directly involved in those exchanges, Ile Royale can virtually be defined by its overseas connections.

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Table 1.2 Per Capita Exports, Various Colonies, 1735-1772

<u>Colony and year</u>	<u>Exports (livres)</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Per capita exports</u>
Ile Royale 1737	1,700,000	4618	368 <u>livres</u>
Ile Royale 1754	2,000,000	5900	338
Canada average 1735-39 (1)	1,776,000	39000	45
Canada 1739 (2)	1,461,000	39627	37
Québec average 1768-72	1,340,000	72500	18
Newfoundland average '68-72	2,620,000	11400	229
Nova Scotia average '68-72	200,000	21000	10
New England average '68-72	9,780,000		17
Middle Colonies ave. '68-72	11,440,000		22
Upper South average '68-72	23,620,000		59
Lower South average '68-72	12,280,000		65

Sources: Ile Royale, see Exports discussion below.

Canada (1) from A.J.E. Lunn, Economic Development, p.477. Lunn judges the figures to be an underestimation. Canada (2) from J. Hamelin, Economie et Société, p.33. Population figure from G. Fregault, "Essai sur les finances". British colonial figures from Shepherd and Walton, Shipping, Maritime trade, p. 47. Sterling values converted to Livres at 20 livres per pound.

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### Shipping

Shipping to Ile Royale was seasonal. The rate of arrivals was influenced by the schedules of the fishing industry, the production cycles of

imported crops, the Caribbean hurricane season and the annual closure of the Saint Lawrence, but winter was the most important restriction of Ile Royale's trade. Ship movements virtually ceased at the height of Ile Royale's drift ice season (roughly February and March) and since the dangers and discomforts to shipping greatly increased in winter, most ship voyages were restricted to the months May to November. Nevertheless, small wooden sailing vessels maintained a regular, extensive trade between Ile Royale and five dispersed trading partners.

Ile Royale's most important trading link was to the Atlantic ports of France. France produced a wide range of goods for export and it had access to the goods of the whole trading system of the time. From its trade with France, Ile Royale received French foodstuffs, cloth and wine as well as large quantities of salt and other fishing supplies, but France also sent its colony German steel and pottery, Mediterranean oil and cloth, Chinese porcelain and Irish salt beef. On one occasion, the naval storehouses at Rochefort purchased iron goods in England for shipment to Ile Royale.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless there were limitations on France's exports, particularly distance, which restricted shipments of fresh foods, livestock and many other perishables. To supplement its imports from Europe, Ile Royale quickly added other trading links.

The French government had foreseen that Ile Royale could join together the economies of the French West Indies and Canada. Canada could supply Ile Royale with wheat, vegetables, livestock and lumber, of which a

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1. The English iron goods are discussed in A.N., Colonies, B, Vol. 56, folio 332, 29 janvier 1732. Commodity imports in general are covered in Christopher Moore, Commodity Imports of Louisbourg, (Fortress of Louisbourg unpublished manuscript report, 1975).

portion could go on to the Indies with Ile Royale cod. In return, the Indies (Martinique, Guadeloupe, Saint-Domingue and Grenada) would send Ile Royale shipments of sugar, sugar byproducts, coffee and other tropical goods, some of which could be passed on to Canada. The West Indian part of this exchange developed successfully as the Indies became a major market for Ile Royale's cod.<sup>1</sup> The Canadian trade was smaller and less secure. Crop failures, growing domestic demand and other events caused Canadian exports to Ile Royale to decline by the late 1730s, but goods from Canada had never been a significant part of Ile Royale's total purchases. Trade between the two parts of New France failed to show the growth which typified Ile Royale's trade with the Caribbean, and the trade with Canada was always a minor aspect of Ile Royale's total trade.<sup>2</sup>

As a market for Ile Royale's surplus imports of West Indian sugar and rum, and as a source of construction materials, Canada was supplanted by New England. The British colonies, particularly Massachusetts, bought large amounts of sugar and rum at Louisbourg and supplied Ile Royale with lumber, hardware and livestock.<sup>3</sup> Ile Royale's fifth trading partner was Acadia, a British possession still populated by French Acadians who traded fish, furs and grain for imported manufactures. Ile Royale's trade with

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1. The growth is demonstrated in Clarence P. Gould, "Trade between the Windward Islands and the Continental Colonies of the French Empire" Mississippi Valley Historical Review, Vol. 25, #4 (March 1939), pp. 473-490, but Gould makes no distinction between Ile Royale and Canada. He estimates that cod shipped from Louisbourg eventually replaced ten percent of the French West Indian beef requirements.
  2. Canada's export difficulties, detailed in Tables 1.3, 1.4 and 1.5, are discussed by James S. Pritchard, Ships, Men and Commerce: a Study of Maritime Activity in New France (University of Toronto, unpublished PhD. thesis, 1971) particularly pp. 360-371 and by A.J.E. Lunn, "Agriculture and War in New France 1740-60", Canadian Historical Review, Vol. 16, pp. 123-136.
  3. Hereafter, I follow the documents in referring to New England, but a few vessels regularly arrived from ports as far south as New York.

all five regions was well established within a few years of the colony's foundation: the first detailed record of a year's shipping, for 1719, shows arrivals from all five regions.<sup>1</sup>

Not every vessel came to trade. The fishermen of Ile Royale were joined by fleets from France, particularly from the Basque regions. These fishermen, sometimes expecting to buy their supplies in Louisbourg, often failed to bring supplies for the colonists.<sup>2</sup> Summary reports on shipping made by colonial officials do not always distinguish these fishing boats from trading vessels, nor distinguish between small vessels and large ones. Still, as summarized in Table 1.3, the figures do give an impression of the overall port activity of Ile Royale. After eliminating local traffic from these

Table 1.3. Shipping Arrivals at Ile Royale, 1730-1753

Year	from: France	Canada	Indies	N.E./Acadia	Local	Total
1730	81	31	19	37	76	244
1731	84	29	25	31	72	241
1732	91	20	26	44	66	237
1733	70	17	25	46	81	239
1734	48	22	20	31	60	181
1735	68	25	16	52	67	228
1736	60	23	14	35	73	205
1738	73	14	15	42	54	198
1739	56	20	24	40	49	208
1740	73	19	24	40	49	166
1742	57	9	24	67	40	197
1743	58	7	32	78	75	250
1744	33	12	12	12	65	134
1752	48	17	57	156		
1753	53	0	54	150	80	337

Sources: A.N., Col., C11B, Vol. 11:69, V.12:64, V.13:243, V.14:233, V.16:120, V.17:90, V.18:190, V.20:220, V.21:152, V.22:238, V.26:209. (1742-43), V.26:227, V.33:495, V.33:436.

1. A.N., *Outre-Mer*, G1, Vol.466, #59, Recensement des vaisseaux...1719.
2. A.N., Col., C11B, Vol. 18, Fol. 169, LeNormant à Maurepas, 30 décembre 1736. *Ibid.*, Vol.23, Fol. 134, Bigot à Maurepas, 28 novembre 1741.

figures, J.S. McLennan estimated that, "one year with another 154 vessels visited its ports, principally Louisbourg" in the decade 1733-43, while by comparison, "only three ports of the populous, enterprising and seafaring British colonies saw more vessels come in from sea than those which visited this outpost in Isle Royale of French commercial enterprise".<sup>1</sup> For a true estimate of the volume of trade, however, tonnage figures are essential. Fortunately, nominal lists of shipping, which specify tonnage, port of origin and cargo of each arriving ship are available for a few years between 1719 and 1752. Their evidence is summarized in Table 1.4.

The tonnage figures stress how much of Ile Royale's supplies came from France. Though the volume of shipping from regions other than France increased in importance over the years, the larger average size of the French ships meant that the largest volumes of goods generally came from France. In 1742, for instance, New England vessels at Louisbourg outnumbered French ones, yet the French ships' total tonnage was nearly double that of the smaller New England vessels. In the 1749-58 period, the role of the West Indies and New England in Ile Royale's trade increased greatly and reached tonnages greater than those from France, though the French contribution remained substantial.

### Imports

The most detailed record of goods imported to Ile Royale is

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1. J.S. McLennan, Louisbourg from its foundation to its fall, (London Macmillan, 1918), p.211.

Table 1.4. Cargo Ships and tonnages at Ile Royale, 1719-1752

Year	France	New Eng.	W. Indies	Acadia	Canada	Other	Total
1719 Ships	22	1	3	2	10		38
Tonneaux	1838	50	120	90	530		2628
Ave. Tx.	88	50	40	45	53		69
1721 Ships	59	9	9	3	7	1	88
Tonneaux	6120	265	425	48	290	25	7173
Ave. Tx.	104	30	47	16	41	25	82
1733 Ships	54	20	18		13		+105
Tonneaux	4600	745	1006		722		+7073
Ave. Tx.	85	37	56		55		
1737 Ships	56	35	19	11	10		131
Tonneaux							
Ave. Tx.	(87)		(50)	(23)	(68)		
1740 Ships		39	25	16	17		+94
Tonneaux		1131	1215	260	1198		+3802
Ave. Tx.		29	55	16	70		
1742 Ships	34	38	19	18	9	2	120
Tonneaux	2965	1563	1261	242	689	290	7010
Ave. Tx.	87	41	66	13	77	145	58
1743 Ships	45	31	18	21	5		120
Tonneaux	4429	1290	1252	269	420		7660
Ave. Tx.	98	42	70	13	84		64
1752 Ships	36	116	57		4		211
Tonneaux	4342	4685	4364		465		13615
Ave. Tx.	121	40	77		116		65

Sources: The table is copied from Commodity Imports of Louisbourg. Major sources are A.N., *Outre-Mer*, G1, Vol. 466, #59 (1719); Colonies, C11C, Vol. 9, fol. 10 (1721), C11B, Vol. 14, fol. 276 (1733), C11C, Vol. 9, fol. 50 (1737), F2B, Vol. 11, fol. 12 (1740); A.D. Charente-Maritime, B, *Registre* 272, passim (1743-1753), and for 1752, Colonies, F2B, Vol. 11, fol. 20 and C11C, Vol. 16, unpaginated, Table of New England arrivals. The average tonnages for 1737 are drawn from an incomplete list of shipping arrivals in A.N., C11B, Vol. 19, fol. 289-291.

a long list made in 1737 which gives the source, quantity and price of all the goods imported and most of those exported that year. The table seems reliable. It is probably a compilation of the customs declarations taken that year, rather than the summary report for the Ministry in France which is usually all that survives. Its detail inspires confidence, for information such as price estimates can be checked with other sources. Cod prices, for instance, were often estimated by what was paid for cod in Europe (generally 20 to 25 livres per quintal) but this table values cod exports by the colonial price, 10 livres.<sup>1</sup>

According to the 1737 table, the total value of the year's imports was 1,418,689 livres. Most of the ships and the largest tonnage had come from France and French goods were by far the most valuable: 1,022,597 livres or 72% of the value of all imports. West Indian cargoes were second in value - 247,049 livres, 17.4% - followed by New England's 102,198 livres (7.2%). Ten ships from Canada brought commercial cargo worth 23,851 livres, but a significant portion of their carrying capacity was filled with government cargoes. (Royal imports, discussed below, were not included in accounts of private commerce). Eleven small vessels from Acadia brought cargoes worth 22,994 livres.

The commodities imported to Ile Royale in 1737 can be gathered into five major groups. The most valuable of these is food. Including items ranging from flour and salt meat to wine and tobacco, food imports accounted for slightly more than half the value of all imports (53.7%), emphasizing how much the local economy was oriented to production for export rather than for its own subsistence. Food was the most valuable import from every region trading with Ile Royale.

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1. The table is A.N., Col., C11C, Vol. 9, Fol. 50-95, "Cargaisons apportées dans la colonie 1737".

The second most valuable group of commodities imported was work materials. Swollen by large quantities of salt and other fishing supplies, as well as ship supplies, sails, tools and hardware, work supplies formed 32.8% of all imports in 1737. France sent nearly all the work materials, with fishing salt being the most valuable single commodity. Construction equipment and hardware from New England made work materials nearly equal in value to food from that region, but they were only ten percent of all work imports.

Clothing, including both ready-made apparel and large amounts of cloth and material, amounted to about 8.4% of the value of all 1737 imports. This heading was monopolized by France. A fourth category, household materials (furniture, kitchenwares, cosmetics, medicine, games and toys) comprised about 1.7% of imports by value. New England sent as much as France in this group, for New England pine furniture was prominent in the household heading. Finally, 2% of imports fell into the miscellaneous category. Skins and furs from Acadia and a few slaves from the West Indies were the most valuable items there.

Since partial import figures exist for some other years, the degree to which the 1737 pattern of imports was typical can be tested. Region by region, the fluctuations are fairly small. France sent about the same range of goods in similar proportions in 1752 and 1753. The same holds true for the West Indies in 1740 and 1752, for New England in 1740. That is, the volume of goods from a given region would vary, but roughly the same items made up each year's cargoes. Some change in imports from France can be seen, for as the colony grew it purchased more luxury goods in food, household furnishings and clothing. The major change, however, was not in the basket of goods from any particular region, but in the rapidly increasing amounts

imported from New England and the French West Indies.

In 1737, Ile Royale had imported goods worth 242,000 livres from the West Indies. In 1754 much the same items dominated cargoes from that area, but their total value had soared to 1,200,000 livres. In about the same period, from 1737 to 1752, imports from New England had risen from roughly 100,000 livres to 500,000 livres. Imports from France had increased by a much smaller proportion, from about one million livres in 1737 to 1.1 million livres in 1752 and 1.4 million livres in 1754. These figures do not mean that the material culture of Ile Royale was becoming English and Caribbean, for France still sent by far the greatest range of goods. The increasing imports from the West Indies were only partly intended for local consumption. Though there were local purchases of New England livestock and lumber and of West Indian coffee, sugar and tobacco, large volumes of these goods came to Ile Royale only to form the basis of its rapidly expanding re-export business.

### Exports

Unfortunately, we have no complete record of exports for any year. The 1737 list omits the goods exported to New England (and also Acadia), while in other years where New England is covered, France is omitted. Analysis of the variety and value of the goods exported from Ile Royale has to depend on observation of typical patterns over a number of years, so export estimates are even more tentative than figures on imports.

As a purchaser of goods from Ile Royale, France was seriously interested only in cod and cod oil, some of which was actually sold in Spain and the Mediterranean.<sup>1</sup> Exports to Europe of goods other than cod were of miniscule value in 1737 and still small in 1754. The West Indies, like France, were primarily interested in cod, but also bought horses, lumber and construction equipment, most of which came to Ile Royale from New England. The ships

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1. Ile Royale records rarely specify destinations in Europe, but ship charters frequently refer to a triangular voyage between Ile Royale, Spain and France.

of the other regions came to buy goods previously imported to Ile Royale rather than local products. New England bought rum, molasses and other West Indian goods, while Canada bought rum, French wine and some other imports. The small volume of exports to Acadia is virtually unrecorded, but it must have been in imported goods rather than in Ile Royale's cod or timber.<sup>1</sup> Three of Ile Royale's trading partners bought re-exports rather than local products, though the two regions buying cod were actually the principal customers of Ile Royale.

In 1737, Ile Royale's exports of cod amounted to 1,450,949 livres, directed towards Europe or the West Indies. Re-exports of West Indian sugar and its byproducts went unrecorded that year, but judging by the amount imported from the West Indies, the volume of shipping to New England, and New England's purchases in 1740, sugar re-exports to New England could hardly have been larger than 100,000 livres. Even doubling that figure to allow for re-exports to Canada, Acadia and the West Indies leaves re-exports at about 12% of all exports, far behind the huge earnings from the sale of cod.

By the 1750s, the pattern of exports had changed. France and the West Indies were still purchasers of cod, and cod remained the major export earner for Ile Royale. It was joined by growing (if small) sales of local lumber, coal and furs. New England still bought rum and the West Indies still added New England horses, lumber and bricks to its major purchases of cod, but the important change was in the increasing volume of New England and West Indian shipping. Their purchases had increased so greatly that the absolute value and relative importance of re-exports had soared. Total sales of cod had evidently fallen off slightly from the 1737 amounts, to

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1. There are unsubstantiated reports that the Acadians took cash rather than goods back to Acadia.

Table 1.5 Import and Export Values Recorded by the Office of the Ordonnateur, Various Years (Values in livres)

<u>Imports to Ile Royale 1737</u>						
Region	Food	Work	Clothing	Household	Misc.	Total
France	453,406	412,265	117,377	17,395	23,576	1,022,597
West Indies	242,678	0	2192	274	1800	247,049
New England	49,313	48,256	72	6945	0	102,198
Canada	19,356	4495	0	0	0	23,851
Acadia	22,926	50	0	18	0	22,994
All Regions	764,558	456,008	119,641	24,632	25,376	1,418,680
<u>Imports 1752</u>						
Region	Food	Work	Clothing	Household	Misc.	Total
France	415,391	370,206	201,105	18,968	114,186	1,124,137
West Indies	1,169,144	3454	3744	1350	2554	1,180,246
New England	280,340	188,355	192	18,805	336	488,037
Canada	7805	4221	0	240	1020	13,276
Acadia	no data	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
All Regions	+1,872,689	+566,236	+205,041	+39,363	+118,096	+2,805,696
<u>Imports 1754</u>						
Region	Food	Work	Clothing	Household	Misc.	Total
France	745,756	391,093	191,263	67,224	41,920	1,437,256
West Indies	1,174,796	0	9877	3756	480	1,188,917
New England	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
Canada	12,353	25,000	1700	554	0	39,607
Acadia	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
All Regions	+1,932,905	+416,093	+202,840	+71,534	+42,400	+2,665,780
<u>Exports from Ile Royale 1737</u>						
Region	Food	Work	Clothing	Household	Misc.	Total
France						1,082,394
West Indies						147,828
New England						n.d.
Canada						72,855
Acadia						n.d.
All Regions	+1,450,038	+43,311	+0	+3020	+3077	+1,499,448
Total includes 196,369 sent to unspecified destinations						
<u>Exports 1752</u>						
New England	654,680	0	0	0	0	654,680
<u>Exports 1754</u>						
Region	Food	Work	Clothing	Household	Misc.	Total
France	738,448	12,605	0	0	27,701	778,757
West Indies	490,067	159,682	600	6000	0	656,353
New England	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
Canada	51,632	3143	13,873	2685	4000	75,575
Acadia	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
All Regions	+1,280,147	+175,430	+14,473	+8685	+31,701	+1,510,685

Sources: 1737: A.N., Col., C11C, Vol.9, fol. 50-95  
 1752, 1754: Ibid., F2B, Vol. 11, passim. (This volume also provided less complete data for several other years between 1730 and 1756).

Note: For this table, "n.d." means "no data".

about 1,200,000 livres. In the same period, exports to New England had risen fivefold to about 500,000 livres, virtually all in re-exported sugar products. The West Indies took perhaps 100,000 livres in lumber and other re-exports, along with half a million livres of cod. The total value of re-exported goods in 1752 may have approached 700,000 livres, or as much as 35% of all exports, triple the percentage of 1737. Acadian voyages to Ile Royale were unrecorded after 1749 and may have ceased entirely, while Canada's trade with Ile Royale remained small in absolute terms and was relatively less important than it had been.

#### A Balance of Trade

Import and export statistics of even bare adequacy are restricted to 1737 and the 1752-54 period. However, if conclusions can be drawn from the data on those periods, less complete information from other years can be put to use by comparison with the better documented periods.

As noted above, the 1737 records appear to be honest and reliable within their limits. However none of these tables can be regarded as complete. Apart from inadvertent errors, the tables have many gaps. In 1737 the official responsible for the trade tables, ordonnateur\* Le Normant de Mesii, estimated that the value of imports should be increased by one quarter, because ships' captains and travelling merchants brought substantial private cargoes (pacotilles) without being obliged to report them. The export figures, for their part, omitted New England and Acadian purchases, and Le Normant estimated the value of exports should be increased by 200,000 livres.<sup>1</sup> These were not the only unregistered exchanges. Ships from New England sold in Ile Royale were not counted as imports and ships sold from Ile Royale to

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I. A.N., Col., C11B, Vol. 19., fol.143, Le Normant à Maurepas, 31 décembre 1737.

\* Ordonnateur - the chief civil administrator of Ile Royale. The office and men who held it are studied by T.A. Crowley in Government and Interests (Duke University, PhD., 1975).

Europe or the West Indies were not considered exports. Smuggled goods also escaped documentation, and though smuggling was less prevalent than many historians have presumed, the ordonnateur acknowledged that foreign ships did trade without authorization at the colony's small ports.<sup>1</sup> Most of the same omissions affected the figures for 1752 to 1754, though by then the pacotilles were being recorded.<sup>2</sup> Despite all the inadequacies, a balance of commodity trade can be projected for 1737 and the early 1750s if the statistics are accepted as underestimations and as rough estimates.

Recorded imports for 1737 amounted to 1,418,000 livres. Raising that amount by one quarter as Le Normant advised increases imports to about 1,770,000 livres. Recorded exports of 1,449,000 livres would be raised by Le Normant's correction to 1,650,000 livres. By these estimates, the total commodity trade of Ile Royale in 1737 was nearly three and one half million livres. The uncorrected figures show a slight predominance of exports, while the corrected figures show a trade deficit, with exports about 7% less than imports. In view of the large but approximate increases which Le Normant was willing to make, one may assume that the 3.5% adjustment required to balance these figures is well within their margin of error. It appears that Ile Royale's commodity imports and exports were not far out of balance in 1737.

The state of the colony's trade balance can be projected back from 1737 through two sources of information. First, records of shipping make clear a fairly continual rise in the total tonnage of freight carried to Ile Royale. The increase is understandable: as the colony grew, it imported more. Though the figures are unavailable, the value of all imports should show a fairly constant rise toward the 1.7 million livres documented for 1737.

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1. A.N., Col., C11B, Vol. 22, fol. 200, Bigot à Maurepas, 7 novembre 1740. Smuggling and foreign trade regulation are discussed in Chapter 3.
  2. Reporting of the private cargoes began in 1743. A.N., Col., C11B, Vol. 26, fol. 213, Bigot à Maurepas, 29 novembre 1743.

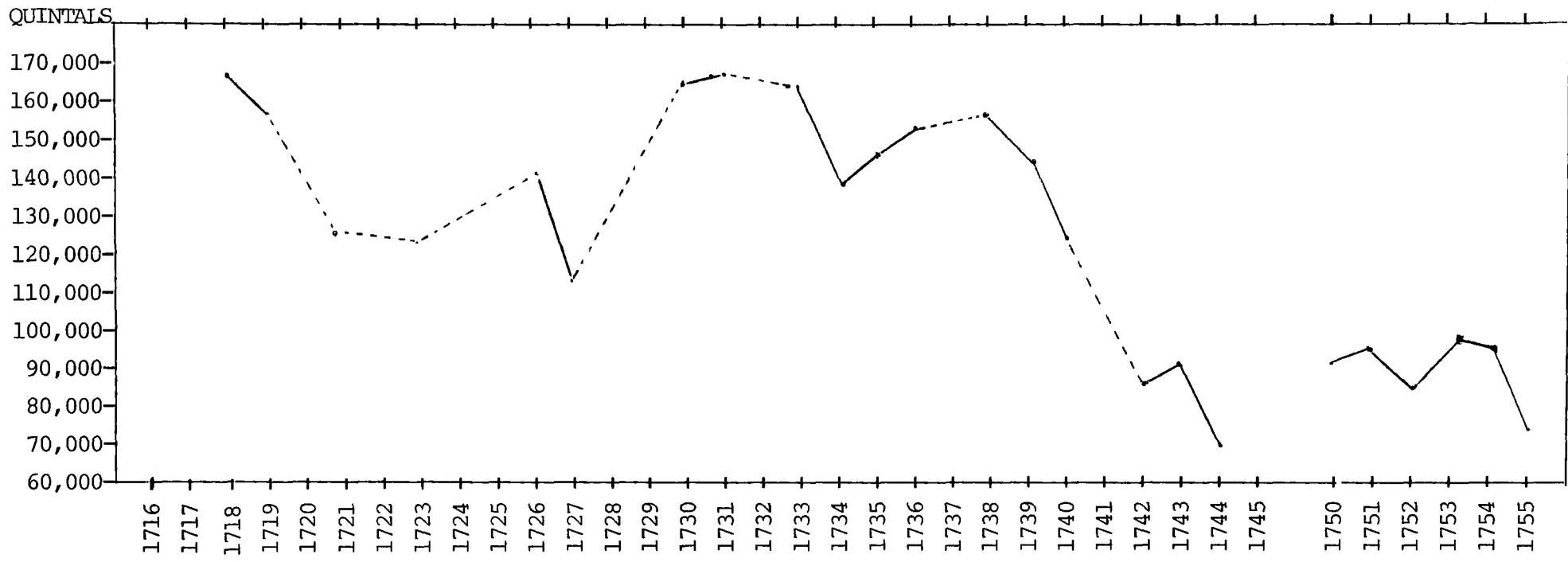


Chart 1

Cod Catches at Ile Royale,  
1718-55

Source: Table 2.09  
in Chapter 2.  
1718, 1719, 1750,  
1755: McLennan,  
Louisbourg, p. 382.

On the other hand, exports before 1737 can be measured through records of the annual cod catches. In 1737, cod provided nearly 90% of all export earnings, and that proportion had been at least as large in previous years. The records of the cod catch do not show a rise matching the constant increase of imports. Cod catches fluctuated, but they had reached levels equivalent to 1737 by 1718. Through the 1730s, catches generally matched or bettered the 1737 catch. As a result, export earnings close to or better than those of 1737 must have been achieved in several previous years.

Trade balances from the origins of the colony up to 1737 can be roughly estimated from this information. Import expenditures and export earnings were close to even in 1737. In earlier years, import expenditures were lower, while export earnings were frequently as high. Ile Royale must have had a generally favourable balance of trade up to about 1737.

A generally favourable balance of trade up to 1737 did not remove all trade problems from the colony. An unexpected crop failure or the non-arrival of a few grain ships frequently caused wintertime food shortages in the colony, since it was almost totally dependent on external sources of supply. Occasional sudden declines in the fish catch and problems such as high labour costs also complicated the economy. Nevertheless there is little in the official correspondence to contradict the impression that, in its early decades, Ile Royale exported enough cod to pay for all its imports.

The trade situation began to change dramatically shortly after 1737. By 1739 fish catches were in a steep decline due to a shortage of cod, and only rising prices for cod in the 1750s kept earnings from cod exports near their old levels. Import expenditures continued to grow. The trade balance became unfavourable to Ile Royale, probably soon after 1737.<sup>1</sup> Consequences of

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1. There are some other balance of trade figures, such as A.N., Col., B, Vol. 75, fol. 581, Maurepas à Bigot, 15 juin 1743, but they are neither complete nor detailed.

deficit trade were noted in both private and official correspondence in the 1740s.<sup>1</sup>

In the early 1750s, the trade deficit can be documented from import and export statistics. Annual imports to Ile Royale at this time amounted to between 2.6 and 3 million livres, while all exports can scarcely have been greater than 2 million livres. The increasing volume of trade in the 1750s was creating a trade deficit approaching one million livres, to be recovered by other means.

### Public Spending

In addition to the colony's large commercial trade, substantial government expenditure supported it. In fact, the importance of military spending on the colony is well known if not exaggerated.

Ile Royale received royal funds in much the same way as other French colonies.<sup>2</sup> Each year the civil officials of the colony drew up itemized accounts of their projected spending for the following year and submitted these to the Ministry of Marine. During the winter the proposal was assessed in France. By spring, the Ministry established a budget and prepared funds for payment in two forms. Part of the colonial budget was spent at the Colonial Storehouses in Rochefort, which supplied necessary goods to the colonial administration.

After such payments had been made in France, the rest of the budget was shipped in specie to the colonial treasury in Louisbourg for expenditure

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1. Bigot's evidence is found throughout his reports for 1741-43. A visiting merchant's letter, in A.D. Charente-Maritime, B, Reg. 275, 28 nov. 1740, speaks of "la triste scituation du commerce à l'ile Royale".
  2. Ile Royale's accounts, the Bordereaux des recettes et dépenses, are collected in A.N., Col, C11C, Vols. 11-14. The analysis of them here borrows from Guy Frégault, "Essai sur les finances canadiennes" in Le XVIIIe siècle Canadian: Etudes (Montréal, HMH, 1968) which analyses the Canadian bordereaux.

in the colony. Both the goods and the money were shipped to Ile Royale in the spring or early summer aboard a flûte du roi, or naval transport, which visited the colony each year, partly as supplier, partly as protector. At the end of the year the colonial officials prepared a statement of expenditures (the Bordereau) to show how the budgeted funds has been spent.

Ile Royale normally operated on a balanced budget, with expenditures being made to equal revenues very precisely. Small surpluses and deficits of a year's operations could be eliminated by carrying them to the following year's accounts, either by including the surplus as a receipt in the new year or by borrowing against the following year's receipts. In 1734, for instance, the precise equality of receipts and expenditures in the Bordereau masked a deficit of 67,652 livres. To make extra unexpected purchases, the ordonnateur had promised his creditors payment from the 1735 budget. This unusually large borrowing against future revenues brought a reprimand from the Minister, but similar borrowings were made in other years.<sup>1</sup> Such loans, if not paid immediately, would soon have used up the entire year's receipts and caused a real breakdown in expenditures. Since Ile Royale's budget normally balanced, such borrowings must have been successfully restricted.

Ile Royale's budget had three main headings. Fortification expenses included both cash and materials shipped from France for payment to the fortifications contractor.<sup>2</sup> A second large heading, which increased as the colony grew, was the Colonial budget. This covered food supplies, uniforms and equipment for the troops as well as supplies needed by the bureaucracy,

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1. A.N., Col., B, Vol. 63, p. 528, Maurepas à LeNormant, 19 avril 1735.

2. Analysed in F.J. Thorpe, The Politics of French Public Construction in the Islands of the Gulf of St. Lawrence (Ottawa unpub. PhD. thesis, 1973).

Table 1.6. The budget of Ile Royale: Receipts and expenses 1721-1757

Year	Recette			Total	Dépense	Surplus or Deficit
	Colonies	Extraordinary	Fortifications			
1721	151,871	11,084	80,000	242,955	242,954	
1722	124,740	4,020	80,000	209,661	192,353	17,308
1723	144,289	6,817	130,000	281,105	267,761	13,344
1724	151,485	9,601	150,000	311,087	298,831	12,256
1725	116,941	3,960	150,000	270,901	270,899	
1726	136,911	8,879	150,000	295,701	295,790	- 89
1727	144,889	14,939	150,000	309,829	309,790	
1728	--139,056--		150,000	289,056	286,746	2,310
1729	--155,112--		150,000	305,112	292,324	12,798
1730	154,283	4,007	152,700	311,162	311,162	
1731	149,965	5,067	128,900	300,427	300,427	
1731						
1732	167,362	420	128,900	296,682	296,682	
1733	179,784	583	130,335	310,704	310,703	
1734	179,441	575	128,900	313,587	313,586	
1735	209,091	492	128,900	338,484	338,481	
1736	205,389	2,437	128,900	337,370	337,370	
1737	216,012	1,133	128,900	346,045	346,044	
1378	215,123	218	128,900	349,455	349,455	
1739	--176,005--		128,900	304,905	309,904	
1740	224,586	2,892	128,900	355,830	355,845	
1741	247,314	5,284	128,900	380,701	380,702	
1742	232,269	4,974	128,100	365,346	365,345	
1743	352,650	14,709	128,100	495,461	495,468	
1744	335,825	83,553	128,100	547,480	547,436	44
1749	1,082,569	6,241	48,420	1,137,231	1,194,724	- 57,492
1750	851,478	532,634	143,200	1,527,312	1,463,086	64,266
1751	846,791	89,761	28,400	964,952	1,369,560	-404,608
1752	1,184,095	350,259	80,000	1,614,354	1,305,355	308,998
1753	422,035	349,938	51,720	823,693	892,834	- 69,141
1754	456,300	208,693	82,000	806,993	960,907	-150,914
1756					1,069,574	
1757					1,113,691	

Source: A.N., Col., C11C, Vols. 11-14, Bordereaux des recettes et dépenses, except for 1756, which is A.N., Col., F3, Vol. 51, p. 478.

Two bordereaux exist for 1732. The revised one, dated 14 octobre 1733, is given here.

Several partial figures for 1745 are included in the bordereaux, but none is shown to be final and complete. Due to the siege, no funds reached Ile Royale in 1745. The partial bordereaux represent later attempts to sort out the expenses of that year.

The heading "Colonies" includes all receipts for civil and military expenses. "Extraordinary" receipts were funds collected in Ile Royale. The 1744 figure is swollen by the government's share of privateering gains. The large figures of the 1750s come from sales by the Royal Storehouse of Ile Royale to French military detachments operating on the mainland of Nova Scotia, and funded through Québec's budget rather than Louisbourg's.

and money for locally purchased goods and services. The Colonial budget also covered salaries for administrators, officers and troops, and an amount for unforeseen expenditures. The government also had a local source of revenue. Royal supplies were not intended for sale, but in times of shortage or when the storehouse had a surplus of goods, royal stores were sold to the public, and the payments received were added to the colony's revenues. In wartime, the government's share of privateering prizes was also entered in this heading. Taxes for harbour maintenance and other local income added further to these "extraordinary" receipts. However, the government never exercised the right to charge the cens, a property tax levied on land conceded to private individuals.

Ile Royale's budgets from 1721 to 1757 are shown in Table 1.6. The average yearly budget shows a rise in each decade. A comparison of Ile

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Table 1.7 Average Yearly Budgets, Ile Royale and Canada.

Years	1) Ile Royale	2) Canada	3) #1 as % of #2
1721-1730	282,657	469,200	60.2%
1731-1740	325,406	504,499	64.5
1741-1744	447,247	801,361	55.8
1749-1754	1,083,325	2,769,942	39.1

Sources: Ile Royale, Table 1.6 above. Canada, Guy Frégault, "Essai sur les finances".

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Royale's budget with that of Canada in the same period suggests that Ile Royale was better treated than Canada. In most years, Ile Royale received more than half as much as Canada, though its population was far smaller. On a per capita basis, Ile Royale was receiving six or eight times as much as Canada in government funding. Though the greater rate of expenditure on Ile Royale is explained by the fortification program and the large military establishment, Ile Royale's ability to balance its budget suggests better treatment for the smaller colony. Unless Ile Royale's administrators had far greater ability than those of Canada, the chronic Canadian budget deficits

must mean that funding for Canada was inadequate, while Ile Royale was being given enough to meet its regular expenses.

Table 1.8. Budget Receipts per Capita, Ile Royale and Canada

Decade	I.R. population & funds per head		Canada pop. & funds per head	
1721-30	c3500	80	28,555	12
1731-40	c4200	77	39,627	9
1741-44	c4300	104	c53,000	35 (years '41-50)
1749-54	c5900	183		

Sources: Ile Royale: Tables 1.1 and 1.6. Canada: Guy Frégault, "Essai".

Ile Royale's budget figures also underline the importance of government expenditures in the colony. Before 1745, the colony's earnings from government payments was a useful supplement to the earnings of the private sector. After 1749, however, government spending began to amount to a large fraction of colonial income from all sources. Government expenditures of that period had a large part of the task of paying for the trade deficits which the colony incurred.

Table 1.9. Some sources of Colonial Earnings, 1737 and 1754

Year	1) Export Earnings	2) Government Funding	3) 2 as % of 1 and 2
1737	c1,700,000	346,045	16.9%
1754	c2,000,000	960,907	32.4%

Source: Tables 1.5 and 1.6, above. Note that government funding in 1754 was well below the 1749-54 average.

### A Balance of Payments

The figures and estimates on Ile Royale's trade suggest that the colony had a favourable balance of trade during a large part of its history. There was always substantial government investment in the colony, perhaps enough after 1749 to offset the trade deficits of that period. Trade and government spending, however, do not provide a complete statement on Ile Royale's financial situation. Several other factors must be taken into account in order to convert the balance of trade into an overall balance of exchange.

A complete account would have to consider various invisible charges paid to or by the colony, as well as movements of cash in and out of the colony. For instance, Ile Royale on the whole paid for shipping services, because most of the ships trading at Ile Royale were owned outside the colony. At the same time, Ile Royale recouped some of this expense by sales of equipment and services to visiting ships. It might be possible to form some estimate of the colony's costs and earnings in shipping, but it is impossible to measure the movement of cash in and out of the colony. Apart from trade earnings and government funding, Ile Royale had several sources of money. Immigrants arrived with savings or goods to put to use locally, local residents borrowed funds from France, and French businesses with interests in Ile Royale invested there. At the same time, residents took away money if they moved, non-residents took away profits earned locally, and colonists spent money on purchases in France. These exchanges went on in addition to commodity trading and government funding, but were interrelated with them. Credit extended from France to a colonist, for instance, often meant the supply of equipment rather than cash and consequently it increased the colony's commodity imports. Examples of capital transfers both in and out of Ile Royale can be found, but the volume and the balance of capital exchanges between Ile Royale and other areas are unknown.

One indicator which does reflect the overall balance of exchange is the money supply of the colony. Paper money and other cash substitutes were known and used at the time, but a generally unfavourable balance of exchange tended to drain cash from the affected region. Hence the ready availability of cash suggests that a particular economy is doing well in the sum of its exchanges with all regions.

Evidence on the supply of money in pre-industrial colonies is difficult to obtain. Even quantitative studies are obliged to make very broad estimates of money supply, relying on indirect evidence and eyewitness testimony.<sup>1</sup> One area where shortages of cash are clearly indicated is eighteenth century Canada. Canada's regular trade deficits, its recourse to cash substitutes such as card money, and the reports of local observers all testify to a shortage of hard cash. Canada's money shortage and the unreliability of its substitutes for cash have been cited as both a symptom of its economic difficulties and as an impediment to local accumulations of wealth and to local economic growth.<sup>2</sup>

Ile Royale never used the card money substituted for cash in Canada, and documentation suggests a general abundance of coin in the smaller colony. The evidence ranges from records of substantial cash payments, made even when food and other commodities were scarce, to inventories reporting large amounts of cash, to anecdotal references to soldiers, fishermen, or artisans paying cash for purchases or carrying quantities of cash in their money pouches. Most comprehensive, however, is the testimony of the ordonnateurs, which provides some evidence of the fluctuations in the colony's money supply.

Colonial administrators were constantly concerned with the preservation of adequate stocks of circulating coinage. In 1735 the Ministry of Marine, in objecting to the excessive use of bills drawn against future revenues, pointed out that such actions drained cash from Ile Royale, since the treasury would pay the bills in France rather than in Ile Royale. Earlier, the Minister had noted that exports of West Indian rum and molasses from Ile

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1. For example, Shepherd and Walton, Shipping, Maritime Trade and Economic Development (Cambridge, University Press, 1972) pp. 151-154.

2. Jean Hamelin, Economie et Société en Nouvelle-France (Québec, PUL, 1960).

Royale to New England, contrary at that time to the ban on foreign trade, were better than exports of money there, since commodity exports kept cash in the colony.

Though the officials were attentive to the money supply, the subject was rarely discussed in the official correspondence before 1740, presumably because money supply was not a problem. About 1740, however, references to money shortages began to appear. In 1741, ordonnateur François Bigot noted incidents such as the departure of a ship for Marseilles with 30,000 livres in cash in addition to its purchases of cod.<sup>1</sup> By 1743 he was reporting that the colony's business was being disrupted by the limited circulation of money.<sup>2</sup> These shortages coincided with the trade deficits which had resulted from a sharp decline in the cod catch beginning in 1739.

The money supply during the other period of trade deficits, the early 1750s, was complicated by government expenditures. Government funding was probably large enough to overcome the draining of cash which trade deficits encouraged. However, ordonnateur Jacques Prévost, rather than paying cash to all creditors, had issued many with bills of exchange on the Marine treasury. Coinage was apparently in short supply when Prévost wrote in 1754:

Tout le monde se rebutte de ne toucher que du papier avec lequel il est ici aussy difficile de vivre que de faire le commerce. L'officier, le soldat, l'habitant et le marchand, tous ont souffert cette année et la dernière du peu de circulation de l'argent.<sup>3</sup>

Still, government-backed paper, whatever its inconveniences, was at least available as a substitute for coinage, so the balance of exchange problems of the 1750s may have been less serious than those of the previous decade.

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1. A.N., Col., C11B, Vol. 22, fol. 137, Bigot à Maurepas, 30 déc. 1743.

2. Ibid., Vol. 25, fol. 199, Bigot à Maurepas, 13 oct. 1743.

3. Ibid., Vol. 34, fol. 192, Prévost à Machault, 20 décembre 1754.

If the ordonnateurs' reports are an accurate indicator of the money supply, shortages of money coincided with trade deficits, with the most serious balance of exchange problems occurring between 1740 and 1745. The overall balance of exchange, like the balance of trade, appears to have been satisfactory during most of Ile Royale's existence.

#### An Economy for Merchants

The constant movement of goods to and from Ile Royale made certain that there would always be opportunities for merchant commerce there. Furthermore, Ile Royale's unusually large volume of trade made those opportunities fairly numerous in relation to the colonial population. However, even if the presence of commerce can be taken for granted, the actual distribution of economic power was greatly affected by the shape of the colonial economy.

In his study of economy and society in eighteenth century Canada,<sup>1</sup> Jean Hamelin has argued that the state of trade and exchange there inhibited economic growth. Chronic trade deficits and a weak currency, he argues, limited the local accumulation of profits and hindered the development of a commercial elite that could organize and finance economic growth. Other studies have suggested that many of the leading merchants of Québec were chiefly agents for metropolitan firms and could only maintain their businesses through the support of their principals in France.<sup>2</sup>

If that was the situation in Canada, theory should suggest the reverse for Ile Royale. The generally favourable balance of trade and exchange in Ile Royale, particularly in the early years of the colony, ought to have favoured commercial enterprise in the colony and fostered the growth of a local commercial elite.

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1. Jean Hamelin, *Economie et société en Nouvelle-France* (Québec, PUL, 1960).
  2. For example, Dale B. Miquelon, *Robert Dugard and the Société de Canada* (University of Toronto, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, 1973).

Is such the case? The documentation on Ile Royale suggests that if such a group existed, it was the merchants of Louisbourg. Merchants were numerous in Louisbourg. They owned many properties in and around the town. They took a leading part in social, military and administrative activities as well as purely commercial ones. In short, it seems difficult to confront any particular aspect of the colonial economy without finding the Louisbourg merchants involved.

On the other hand, it is easy to propose reasons for their success. The volume of Ile Royale's trade and the dependence of both producers and consumers on importers and exporters are not the only ones. Another important factor was the rise of Louisbourg.

The French government's decision to station a large garrison at Louisbourg and to make large capital expenditures on the town's development encouraged it to grow far beyond the size of the other fishing ports of the colony. The town's size supported specialization and diversification. At Louisbourg, a merchant could expect to find someone to translate a manifest, notarize a contract, make barrels, haul goods, loan him money or rent him a ship. As Louisbourg grew, it reduced the other settlements of the colony to dependency, adding their business to its own. There were a few merchants in other ports but the coastal trade was so extensive that even a minor shopkeeper could serve clients all over the colony from his base in Louisbourg.

The prominence of the merchants in Louisbourg and of Louisbourg in the colony suggests that the next step to be taken is an investigation of the economic activities of the Louisbourg merchants.

CHAPTER TWO  
THE MERCHANTS OF LOUISBOURG

1. PROFILE OF THE MERCHANT COMMUNITY

Between 1714 and 1758 about two hundred individuals called themselves resident merchants of Louisbourg, and another dozen or so practiced merchant trade in other parts of Ile Royale. The limits of the documentation make more precise numbers somewhat arbitrary. About fifty who took the title of resident merchant were so briefly resident or so poorly documented that their status as merchants is doubtful and they have been removed from the following tables. The remaining group, 147 individuals whose careers are confirmed by adequate documentation, form the sample from which the following figures are taken.<sup>1</sup>

From the start, Louisbourg society included merchants, some of them small shopkeepers, others wholesale traders. There were nineteen merchants in Louisbourg in 1715, most of whom had arrived with the vanguard of the civilian population in 1714. The number of merchants rose fairly steadily to a peak of sixty-six in 1755. The sudden decline between then and 1758 was clearly due to the Anglo-French war which restricted shipping and cut off the businesses of many Louisbourg merchants well before the capture of the colony in 1758. The only other decline in merchant numbers, a slight one, occurred between 1740 and 1745, and may be symptomatic of the colony's economic difficulties in that period.

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1. My statistics in this section are based on a file card index of merchants drawn from all consulted primary sources. It includes many merchants not listed in the censuses due to their absence in census years or to other occupations they held at that time. To separate resident merchants from the many transient merchants, merchants with only a single reference to their residence in Louisbourg have been omitted, unless the reference is unusually detailed and convincing. Obviously slight changes in the selection procedure would alter the total number of the sample, but the adoption of a firm sample was essential even for limited statistical analysis.

The growth of the merchant community roughly matched the growth of the general population. In census years from 1715 to 1737 there were between 2.1 and 2.5 merchants per hundred residents of Louisbourg. That proportion fell off in 1752, perhaps due to the rapid growth of Louisbourg's military population, but the proportion of merchants in the entire Ile Royale population was even more stable. From 1719 to 1752, in every year for which figures are available, there were between 0.9 and 1.1 merchants in Louisbourg per hundred residents of Ile Royale.

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Table 2.01 Resident Merchant Population of Louisbourg, Various Years

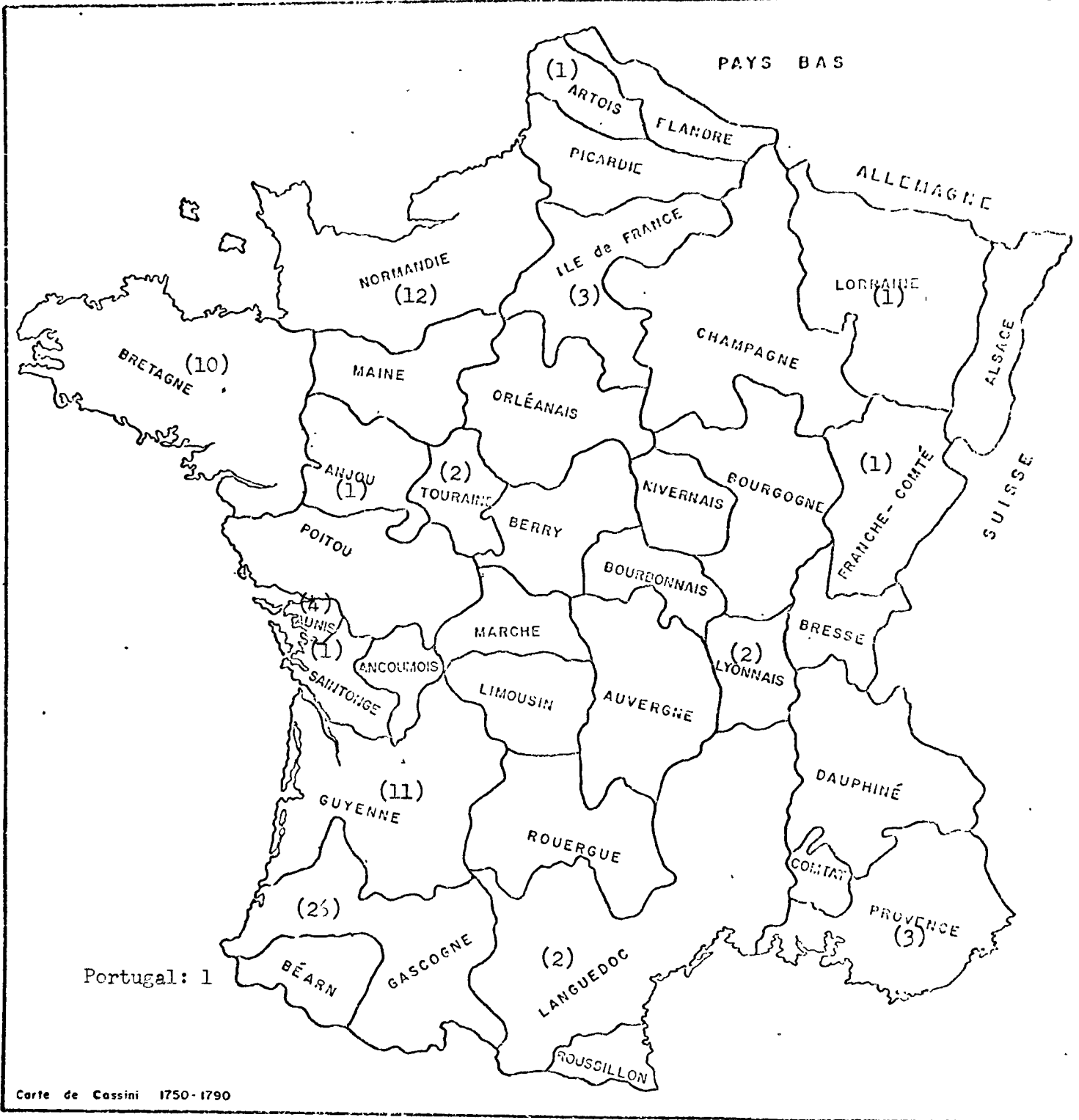
<u>Year</u>	1) <u>Merchants</u>	2) <u>Louisbourg Population</u>	3) <u>Ile Royale Pop.</u>
1715	19	741	
1719	18	853	2012
1720	20		
1724	28	1285	2494
1725	33		
1726	34	1296	3528
1730	36		
1734	34	1616	3955
1735	42		
1737	45	1963	4618
1740	55		
1745	52		
1750	52		
1752	59	4141	5845
1755	66		
1758	36		

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As might be expected, the Louisbourg merchants tended to come from the parts of France with which Ile Royale traded most. Of the French-born merchants, most were from the western coast, particularly fishing or trading ports such as Bordeaux, Saint Malo and Saint Jean de Luz. Those from inland were mostly from regions which had large commercial centres such as Paris or Lyon. As far as can be determined, the merchants from France not only came from commercial towns, but tended to be of business families. The father's profession is known for only thirty-three of 147 resident merchants, but 20 of those were sons of merchants. The twenty, however, include several sons

Region of origin unknown: 36  
 North American origin 30  
 European origin: 81  
 147

FRANCE (Anciennes Provinces)



taken into a family firm at Louisbourg, and the mercantile and metropolitan roots of the whole group should not be exaggerated. Many of the prominent merchant families of Louisbourg (the Daccarrette, Rodrigue and Milly Lacroix families, for instance) were descended from fishing or shipping families established in the colonies before the end of the seventeenth century. Their rise in merchant trade took place largely at Ile Royale, but not through the backing of French business circles. Among the immigrant merchants, few gave any hint that they arrived with fortunes to invest. Only after 1749 did French firms send representatives to Louisbourg and support their enterprises directly.

Table 2.02 Region of Origin of Louisbourg Merchants	
Sample: 147 merchants. Region of origin unknown: 36	
Gascony 26	(St Jean de Luz 8 Bayonne 6 Manciet 5 Hendaye 2 Bidart 2 Auch 1 Unspecified 2)
Normandy 12	(Avranches 5 Coutances 2 Granville 4 Unspecified 1)
Guyenne 11	(Bordeaux 7 Perigord 1 Unspecified 3)
Brittany 10	(St Malo 6 Nantes 2 Rennes 2 Dol 1)
Aunis 4	(Tonnay-Charante 2 La Rochelle 1 St Martin de Ré 1)
Ile de France 3	(Paris 2 St Germain 1)
Provence 3	(Marseilles 1 Tartas d'Aix 1 Unspecified 1)
Languedoc 2	(Montauban 1 Montpellier 1)
Lyonnais 2	
Touraine 2	(Chinon 1)
Anjou 1	
Artois 1	
Franche-Comté 1	(Besançon)
Lorraine 1	(Metz)
Portugal 1	(via Port Royal, Acadia)
<u>Total from Europe 81</u>	
Ile Royale 9	
Plaisance 13	
Canada 4	(Québec 2 Riviere Ouelle 1 Unspecified 1)
Acadia 3	
Martinique 1	
<u>Total from North America 30</u>	

Note: Origin refers to place of birth, frequently as given on parish record statements at Louisbourg. However, some of those listed under Plaisance may have been born in France, though they cited Plaisance as the region from which they came to Louisbourg.

Table 2.03. Father's Profession of Louisbourg Merchants  
 Sample: 147 Profession unknown: 114

Merchant	20	Noble	1	Total:	33
Fishery proprietor	5	Surgeon	1		
government functionary	3	Woodworker	1		
military officer	1	Butcher	1		

The merchants of Louisbourg did not form a closed community.

Immigration and emigration constantly produced changes in the merchant population. Most merchant careers at Louisbourg lasted less than ten years, though the length of residence of merchants tended to be longer, since some spent part of their residence in other occupations or in adolescence. However, the impression of an ever-changing group should not be carried too

Table 2.04. Merchants' Length of Residence and Length of Business  
 Sample: 147

Number of years spent:	As Merchants	In Residence in Ile Royale
1 year	7 individuals	3 individuals
2-5 years	54	43
6-10 years	41	31
11-15 years	13	12
16-20 years	12	16
21-30 years	13	24
31-40 years	7	16
41 years (1714-58)		2

far. Though sixty-one merchants were active for five years or less, the great majority of merchants who immigrated to Ile Royale did so to enter trade, and the ends of their careers were most often involuntary ones such as death or the surrender of the colony. It may be noted that bankruptcy is not listed in Table 2.05 as a cause of the end of any businesses. Some of those who moved away from Ile Royale or took up other occupations may have done so because they could not continue in trade, but there is only one clear case of a business failure. That merchant left for France shortly after the seizure and sale of his goods in 1743.

Table 2.05. Conclusion of Merchant Businesses

Sample: 147 Conclusions known: 121

Cause of Conclusion	Number of Merchants Affected	
Siege, 1758	38	
Siege, 1745	15	
Death, Retirement or change of profession	38 (Heirs or partners maintained the business in 15 cases. No evidence of heirs in 23 cases).	
Moved from Ile Royale:	1755-58 period	Other periods
to France	15	6
to West Indies	2	
to Canada		2
"to foreign colony"		1

Note: It is likely that many of the unknown conclusions involve unrecorded departures from the colony.

Many residents of Louisbourg were involved in the production, transportation or marketing of goods. Fishermen, innkeepers, artisans, administrators and military officers all participated in trade as a sideline or as an integral part of their businesses. Their presence raises problems of including or excluding them in a study of merchant trade. The problem is compounded by the outside interests of the men routinely cited as merchants. Only 58% of merchants used no other occupational titles.

Since there was no guild of merchants in Louisbourg to which entry could be restricted, anyone who involved himself in trade to a significant degree could be called a merchant. In 1758 for instance, merchant Nicolas Hamelin attempted to have the regulations of the Ordonnance du Commerce applied in his lawsuit against the estate of a roofer on the grounds that:

Jean Bernard en son vivant habitant de cette ville etoit à la verité couvreur de profession, mais en outre cette profession il achetoit des marchandises en gros et les revendoit en détail ce qui lui donnoit en plein la qualité de marchand.<sup>1</sup>

There is no evidence that Bernard ever claimed the title of merchant, but some artisans went further into wholesale and retail trade and became known

1. A.N., Outre-Mer, G2, Vol. 211, dossier 536, Hamelin vs. succession Bernard, pièce 10.

as merchants. Jean Claparede practiced as a master locksmith in Louisbourg from 1736 to 1745. In 1750 he was referred to as "marchand maitre serrurier" and from that time his trading activity increased and he was usually called a merchant. Similar developments can also be found in the careers of fishermen, innkeepers, seacaptains and others who came to be called merchants as their interests shifted in that direction.

Instances such as these suggest that in the absence of rigid craft organizations, occupational titles changed easily to fit changing interests. An innkeeper or artisan who developed a substantial interest in merchant business quickly received the title of merchant in substitution for or in addition to his other title. The same is not entirely true of merchants. Unless they gave up trade entirely, they tended to retain the title of merchant. Investment in fishing, in industrial projects or in property speculation appears to have been accepted as part of merchant activity requiring no new title. This use of terminology facilitates the drawing of a distinction between merchants and non merchants. Anyone who took a major interest in trade was likely to be referred to frequently as a merchant, while merchants could expand their interests without ceasing to be merchants.

However, some individuals who had an important role in the commerce of Ile Royale were rarely described as merchants. Military officers and career administrators were generally described by their official rank or title, even in the midst of large commercial operations. Though commerce may have dominated the interests of these enterprising public servants, there were particular limits to their commercial activities. Only a limited number of officers and administrators had large trading interests, while many

officers without inherited wealth or special opportunities lived on their salaries and in some cases left their families in need after their deaths.<sup>1</sup> More commercially-minded officers and officials tended to concentrate their business in areas where they had special advantages, in sales to the administration or in the trade of outports where they commanded. Finally, these men tended to be investors of capital, while the merchants made their investment in time and business skills. Shipping ventures and other projects frequently brought together an officer or administrator with a merchant or seacaptain, the former providing capital while the latter brought his commercial expertise. The commercial role of these elites cannot be discounted, but their participation in business routines may have been less important than their capital investment.

Table 2.06. shows that just as merchants were not the only ones involved in trade, merchants did not restrict their activities to merchant trade. The table suggests that the major outside interests of merchants

Table 2.06 Other Occupations of Louisbourg Merchants				
Sample: 147. Merchants without other activities: 60				
Merchants with related activities only: 26				
86 (58.5%)				
(Merchant-related activities)				
Title	Number of individuals	Before merchant activity	Simultaneous	Replaced mcht. activity
Commis	11	10	1	
courtier	1		1	
entrepreneur des fortifications	1			1
habitant-pêcheur	22	4	18	2
pacotilleur	1	1		
praticien	2	2		
(Activities not related to merchant trade)				
aubergiste	13	3	8	2
boucher	1		1	
boulangier	1		1	
cabaretier	5	1	4	

1. T.A. Crowley, Government and Interests (Duke University, unpublished PhD. thesis, 1975), Chapter 3. For example, A.N., Col, C11B, Vol.19, fol. 43, St Ovide à Maurepas, 31 octobre 1737 reports the death of senior captain Dangeac and the poverty of his family.

<u>Title</u>	<u>Number of individuals</u>	<u>Before merchant activity</u>	<u>Simultaneous</u>	<u>Replaced mcht. activity</u>
capitaine de navire	14	9	6	
charpentier	4	3	1	
cuisinier	1		1	
fonctionnaire	10	4	8	1
forgeron	1	1		
interprete	2		2	
menuisier	1	1		
navigateur	5	4	3	
officier militaire	1	1		
pêcheur	2	2		
serrurier	1	1	1	
soldat	2	1	1	
tailleur d'habit	1		1	
tonnelier	1	1		
traiteur	3		2	1

Notes: Because some merchants had, for instance, another occupation both before the merchant activity and simultaneously, the number of individuals in a given profession is not always matched by the sum of the three right hand columns. Similarly the number of individuals in other occupations is smaller than the number of cases, since many individuals had more than one other occupation.

were shipping, fishing, and innkeeping. Other activities provided only a few other merchants and most of these abandoned their other activity if they established themselves in trade. By contrast, shipping, fishing and innkeeping seem to have been more compatible with merchant activity. Merchants with connections to those occupations were relatively numerous and they often held those occupations in conjunction with merchant activity. For a seacaptain, becoming a settled merchant was often a way of retiring from the sea. Furthermore, captains were familiar with import-export routines, were often commissioned to handle cargo sales, and often took a financial interest in their cargoes. The relationship between trade and innkeeping probably stems from the importance of food as an import commodity. Retailers of other imports called themselves merchants, but retailers of food frequently had specific occupations and titles (e.g. aubergiste, cabaretier, cuisinier, traiteur). The crucial relationship between the

merchants and the fishing industry is discussed at length in a section which follows.

Apart from terms to distinguish between merchant trade and other occupations, two principal titles were applied to individuals within the merchant community. These were the terms marchand and négociant, both of which are translated as "merchant" in this study. The difference between these interrelated terms is no more simply stated for Louisbourg than for any other port or region of the period.

The term négociant arose in France before the end of the seventeenth century, and from the start was used to describe trading activity on the grand scale.<sup>1</sup> As it became established, négociant began to reduce the meaning of marchand to the simpler aspects of trade: retail sales, shopkeeping, local interests. Besides wholesaling, négociant implied a wide-ranging enterprise which might include shipping, banking, property speculation and, above all, international trade. The history of the term, closely related to a style of trade special to the eighteenth century, is summed up by Pierre Léon:

Si au XIXe siècle le terme négociant prend un sens restrictif et cède le pas dans la hiérarchie économique à banquier, industriel ou armateur, à partir des premières années du XVIIIe siècle, lorsqu'il s'installe au détriment de marchand, il désigne avant tout le grand commerce non spécialisé; il implique richesse, ampleur internationale des affaires et exprime parfaitement le capitalisme commercial qu'il accompagne jusqu'à son déclin. Par définition, peut-on dire, le négociant fait tout simultanément ou successivement, suivant les temps et les occasions.<sup>2</sup>

The négociants of Louisbourg justified their use of the title not by wealth

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1. The origins of the term are discussed in detail by Charles Carrière in his Négociants Marseillais au XVIIIe siècle, Volume 1 (Marseille, Institut Historique de Provence, 1973) Chapter 3.
  2. Fernand Braudel et Ernest Labrousse, eds., Histoire Economique et Sociale de la France, Tome 2: 1660-1789 (Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1970) p. 211.

or magnificence, but by the international scope of their activities. Louisbourg merchants who used only the term marchand tended to be those whose activities concentrated on a retail shop. Négociants, on the other hand, were active in the bulk cod trade, in import and export shipping and in other long-range and wholesale dealings. Louisbourg was by its nature oriented towards international dealings and bulk transactions, so négociant found wider use there than the size or wealth of the port might otherwise have indicated.

However, marchand and négociant did not simply distinguish between two scales of enterprise, for there was an evolution in the meanings of the terms. Négociant was not common in Louisbourg usage until the 1720s, and may not have asserted a difference in status and prestige until later. An early-established merchant might have been content to style himself marchand even after the appearance of the newer term, while a later arrival might have used négociant to refer to an identical business. Négociant slowly established itself over marchand, but the changing relationship of the terms makes it impossible to determine the nature of a merchant's business by the title he chose.

Furthermore négociants were less specialized in Louisbourg than in France. In France, part of the attraction of the new term was the clear distinction it gave a wealthy businessman from street vendors and poor shopkeepers.<sup>1</sup> In Louisbourg many négociants ran retail boutiques in addition to their wholesale activities. Altogether, marchand and négociant do not adequately define the varieties of merchant trade at Louisbourg. A knowledge of the varieties must come, not from terminology but from a description of the different merchant activities.

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1. Carrière, Négociants Marseillais, Chapter 3. The nobility in France could participate in le négoce, but not in shopkeeping.

## 2. THE ACTIVITIES OF MERCHANTS

### The Merchant-Fishermen

Even during Ile Royale's existence, the French cod fishery was not restricted to a single area, nor limited to colonial residents. As the ordonnateur stated in a note added to Ile Royale's catch figures for 1736:

Il y a chaque année nombre d'autres vaisseaux employés à la pesche de la morue sur les cotes de terre-neuve, de l'Acadie, et du Chapeau rouge (Fortune Bay, Nfld.) dont on n'a pas le produit parce qu'ils font la pesche en degrats, c'est à dire qu'ils ne vont point dans les ports habités.<sup>1</sup>

In 1745 an English estimate put the total French cod fishery on the Banks and in the Gulf of Saint Lawrence at one million quintals per year, with less than a fifth coming from Ile Royale.<sup>2</sup> Part of the fishing industry did all its work at sea, using salt rather than sunshine as the preserving agent, but there was also a "dry" fishery which required shore bases on which to dry the cod and collect the cod oil.<sup>3</sup> The residents of Ile Royale were not the only ones to carry on dry fishing from their island. Vessels from France came each summer to join the residents in the shore-based fishery. These vessels brought supplies for their own use and some for sale. Since these supplies were registered as imports to Ile Royale, it was natural to add the visitors' catch to the total exports of the colony.

Once the Ile Royale colony was established, the residents took a firm lead over the visitors in the production of cod. In 1721 more than 60% of the cod catch of Ile Royale was made by the colonists themselves and that proportion increased fairly steadily until 1739. Though the

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1. A.N., Col, C11B, Vol. 18, fol. 170, LeNormant à Maurepas, no date.

2. J.S. McLennan, Louisbourg, Appendix IV. Accounts which convert small amounts of cod (measured in livres) to quintals show that the quintal was one hundredweight in Ile Royale. One quintal = 100 livres, or 112 modern English pounds, or 50.9 kilograms.

3. One hundred quintals of cod produced one barrique of cod oil worth about 100 livres in value.

visitors usually operated two-thirds of the schooners and other large vessels, the residents had the majority of the shallops and also monopolized the winter fishing season. Despite the larger average catches of the schooners, the large number of shallops gave the residents the edge in total production.

Between 1739 and 1745, the residents' lead in total production shrank. While schooner catches were increasing, the number of schooners owned by local residents declined. At the same time, the winter fishery became unproductive, apparently due to temporary changes in the migration pattern of the fish.<sup>1</sup> As a result, both the total catch and the residents' proportion declined sharply. This period apparently created the most serious crisis for the fishermen and their dependents. The same commitment of men, vessels and supplies was producing much smaller catches of cod. Not producing enough fish to pay for their supplies, the fishermen suffered shortages and growing indebtedness. The war which began in 1744 simply added further hazards.

Between 1749 and 1755, fish catches did not recover to the volumes caught in the 1730s, but the catches were larger than those of the 1740s. In addition, the residents by then owned the majority of both shallops and schooners. The number of non-residents visiting Ile Royale to fish declined in the 1750s, leaving 80% or more of the total catch to the residents. The catch of the residents began to approach its former levels, though with little contribution from visitors the total catch remained well below records. According to ordonnateur Prévost, the residents' catch was limited by a shortage of employees.<sup>2</sup> Before the war many of the workers had

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1. "Il n'y a pas eu la moindre apparence de pêche d'autonne, lequel etonne fort nos habitants pêcheurs." A.N., Col., C11B, Vol. 24, fol. 170, Bigot à Maurepas, 13 decembre 1742. The size of the decline may be seen from Table 2.08.

2. A.N., Col., C11B, Vol. 29, fol. 206, Prévost à Rouillé, 10 décembre 1750.

been recruited in France, travelling back and forth each season on the vessels of the visiting fishermen. When the number of non-resident vessels fishing at Ile Royale declined, many of these hired fishermen lost their transportation. Whether this and other problems restricting the size of the catch could eventually have been overcome is unknown. In 1755 fishing and trade were hit by renewed Anglo-French naval conflict.

Table 2.07. Ownership of Vessels in the Ile Royale Fishery

Year	-----Shallops-----			-----Schooners-----		
	1)Residents'	2)All Shallops	3)1 as % of 2	4)Residents'	5)All Schooners	6)4 as % of 5
1721	250	448	55.8%	20	40	50%
1723	210	352	59.3	34	92	36.9
1726	285	365	78	23	68	33.8
1727	280	385	72.7	20	67	29.3
1729	327	379	86.2	26	75	34.6
1730	329	406	81	33	94	35.1
1731	366	444	82.4	21	74	28.3
1732	382	454	84.1	24	79	30.3
1733	338	491	68.8	34	95	35.7
1734	299	323	92.5	29	80	36.2
1735	271	305	88.8	25	73	34.2
1736	290	333	87	15	62	24.1
1737	317	341	92.9	14	64	21.8
1738	286	314	91	17	61	27.8
1739	245	281	87.1	20	60	33.3
1740	250	279	89.6	15	69	21.7
1741						
1742		257			67	
1743	223	243	91.7	14	52	26.9
1744	181	235	77	6	34	17.6
1750						
1751	125	198	63.1	35	54	64.8
1752		148			46	
1753	209	250	83.6	36	50	72
1754		114		45	48	97.7

Source: The statistics delivered yearly to the Ministry of Marine by the Admiralty and the ordonnateur at Louisbourg. Specifically: AN, Col., C11B, Vol.6, fol.245; Vol.8:230 (1726); Vol.9:259 (1727) Vol.10:211 (1729); Vol.11:69 (1730); Vol.12:64 (1731); Vol.13:243 (1732); Vol.14:232 (1733); Vol.16:120 (1734); Vol.17:90 (1735); Vol.18:170 (1736); Vol.20:326 (1737); Vol.20:220 (1738); Vol.21:152 and Vol.26:225 (1739) Ibid. and Vol.23:160 (1740); Vol.26:216 (1742); Vol.26:209 (1743); Vol.26:227 (1744); Vol.33:436, 437 and 495 (1752,53,54); Vol.34:180 (1754). AN, Col., C11C, Vol.9:09 (1721); AN, Marine, G, Vol.54 (1751,52).

Since much of the fluctuation in total fish catch was due to the changing level of involvement of non-resident vessels, the colonists were partly insulated from the decline in the total catch. Except for the 1739-45 period, the lower catches of the later years can largely be attributed to the disappearance from Ile Royale of many of the non-resident vessels. The resident industry maintained most of its population and most of its tonnage of fish landed, so it did not suffer the full extent of the fall in total catch. The stability of the residents' fishery was greater than that of the Ile Royale fishery as a whole, though a decline can be seen in Table 2.09.

Table 2.08. Average catch of Fishing Vessels, in quintals

Year	----Shallops-----		Schooners and other large vessels (fished in summer only)
	Summer	Winter	
1723	180	100	400
1726	210	130	400
1727	200	110	400
1730	210	130	400
1731	220	110	400
1733	215	100	500
1734	230		520
1735	245	110	520
1736	250	110	580
1738	250	120	650
1739	260	180	850
1740	200	90	650
1742	150		600
1743	200	40	600
1744	200	30	500
1753	230	45	720
1754	250		760
Average	217.6	100.3	555.8

Sources: Same as Table 2.07.

Note: Increasing schooner catches may have been due to an increase in average size and number of fishermen carried. Shallop sizes also increased, but three men remained the standard crew.

The fishing industry of the Ile Royale residents consisted of a large number of private businesses run by proprietors called habitants-pêcheurs. Each proprietor owned or rented a piece of shoreline property in one of the harbours of Ile Royale. There he assembled buildings, wharves,

Table 2.09. Proportion of Fish Catch Taken by Local Residents

Year	1) Residents' catch	2) Total Catch	3) 1 as % of 2
1721	78,000 quintals	125,600 quintals	62.1%
1723	72,000	121,160	59.4
1726	104,000	140,900	74.2
1727	80,305	114,680	70.0
1729			
1730	121,454	165,630	73.3
1731	128,645	167,540	76.7
1732			
1733	108,904	165,345	65.8
1734	107,272	139,810	76.7
1735	109,017	142,495	76.5
1736	112,957	151,110	74.7
1737			
1738	116,859	152,470	76.6
1739	100,161	143,660	69.7
1740	82,228	123,150	66.7
1741			
1742		83,410	
1743	61,249	88,720	69.0
1744	44,612	69,430	64.2
1751		95,580	
1752		83,130	
1753	78,940	98,450	80.1
1754	86,240	97,729	88.2
Average	93,600	123,300	

Sources: Same as Table 2.07.

Note: The ordonnateurs' reports give the number of resident and visiting ships and shallops. They also give the average catch of schooners, shallops in summer and shallops in winter. Building this table required the unproven assumption that resident shallops and schooners had the same average catches as visiting ones.

cleared drying areas and fishing boats. In theory, the habitant-pêcheur was the central figure in the fishing industry. He owned the property and all the fishing equipment. He hired and directed from half a dozen to fifty men during the two fishing seasons, April to September and November into January. At the end of each season, the proprietor paid his employees their share of the value of the catch. Before paying, however, the proprietor deducted the cost of all the food, drink and clothing he had sold each man on credit during the season. The proprietor was therefore both employer and

merchant to his men, and he had legal priority in all sales to his employees. To operate his business for a season, the proprietor had to outfit himself not only with vessels and fishing equipment, but also with substantial volumes of food.

The costs of operating a fishing business can be estimated from contemporary accounts. In 1733 a group of fishing proprietors began petitioning for government assistance to their industry. Their agitation continued for ten years, until a royal ordonnance set limits on the wage demands of the hired fishermen. During that decade, studies of the industry analysed the costs of operation.

The estimates were based on a hypothetical small business which used two shallops for a projected catch of 600 quintals.<sup>1</sup> In 1733 the proprietors claimed that such a business would have to spend the equivalent of 625 quintals to catch those 600 quintals. Their itemization showed forty percent of expected production spent on equipment and sixty percent on salaries.<sup>2</sup> In 1739 ordonnateur LeNormant made a similar analysis, finding 38% of the projected 600 quintals going for supplies while 59% went in wages.<sup>3</sup> The large expenditures required for supplies are further demonstrated by the debts of an actual two-shallop fishery. In 1731 Pierre-Henri Nadau dit Lachapelle bought 185 quintals' worth of goods for a year's fishery. If amounts for depreciation on his vessels and various other expenses are added on, Nadau's supply costs would easily be greater than a third of his potential catch.<sup>4</sup> Both LeNormant and the proprietors had reason to

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1. At 200 quintals in summer and 100 in winter per shallop, an estimate which is supported by the evidence in Table 2.08.
  2. A.N., Col., C11B, Vol. 14, fol. 62-66v, Representation des habitants qui font la pêche, Septembre 1733.
  3. Ibid., Vol. 21, fol. 297, LeNormant, Mémoire sur les habitants, 1739.
  4. A.N., Outre-Mer, G3, Vol. 2038-1, pièce 37, obligation de Nadau vers Jean Dupré, 27 décembre 1731.

exaggerate costs, for they wished to justify government intervention on the proprietors' behalf, but Nadau's case suggests that a third if not 40% of the earnings of a small fishery went on supplies.

Larger operations could reduce these costs. In 1735 Antoine Perré's eight shallows produced 1641½ quintals of cod, and supplies cost only 330½ quintals, or 20% of production. Wages in this case were about 52% of earnings. Twenty-six percent of the Perré's catch remained for overheads and profit, though by the usual measure of 300 quintals per shallop, their catch was less than 70% of capacity.<sup>1</sup>

The most pessimistic of the above accounts considered that supplies would cost 40% of annual earnings. The most optimistic cut that figure in half. For the whole industry, an estimate that supply costs were one-third of production earnings seems acceptable, for many of the fishing businesses were small. With this yardstick, one can measure the value of the fishing supply trade of Ile Royale.

In 1727, a poor year, the fishing industry produced about 115,000 quintals of cod. In one of the best years, 1731, the catch totalled 165,000 quintals, while 1742 was disastrous at about 82,000 quintals. Prices for cod were generally stable up to 1745, with about ten livres per quintal being standard at Louisbourg.<sup>2</sup> If supply costs were one-third of production earnings, the value of the supply trade would have ranged from a minimum 255,000 livres in 1742 to a maximum 495,000 livres in 1731.

1. A.N., Outre-Mer, G2, Vol. 195, pièce 83, Succession d'Antoine Perré, 1735.

2. There is no detailed price and wage study of Ile Royale. Prices of both supplies and cod varied according to availability and quality. However, many Louisbourg sources testify to the stability of cod prices around 10 livres from 1713 to the 1740s. Most prices rose in the 1750s. The fact that the fishing proprietors had to lobby for wage restrictions instead of raising prices may imply that cod prices were set by the market in Europe more than by production costs in Ile Royale.

Figures above the minimum would be likely in bad years, for an unpredicted low catch would still have consumed the normal volume of supplies. In any case, the supply of the Ile Royale fishing industry was a tradeworth between 250,000 and 500,000 livres each year, depending on the number of men and vessels engaged. Not all of these earnings accrued to the Louisbourg merchants of course. They were only one group among several competing for the fishing proprietors' business.

To acquire supplies, the fishing proprietor relied on credit from wholesale merchants. The procedure was standard. The merchant advanced supplies to the fishing business and was repaid out of the proprietor's stock of cod at the end of the season. Many examples of contracts between resident proprietors and Louisbourg merchants survive. In 1723 the fisherman Grandin, of the outport called l'Indienne, promised to pay Michel Daccarrette nearly 61 quintals of cod and 167 livres cash:

pour solde de compte jusqu'a ce jour des fournitures  
que le dit Sieur Daccarrette m'a fait pour mon automne  
et ma peche d'été derniere.<sup>1</sup>

In 1751 Pierre Faribault stated

il y a un an il fit des avances et fournitures de  
peche à plusieurs particuliers de l'isle  
Saint-Jean aux conditions qu'il auroit leurs  
morues par preference à toutes autres personnes.<sup>2</sup>

and many other documents acknowledge fishermen's debts for "fournitures faites pour ma peche".

Once large volumes of cod were committed in this way, a kind of commodity futures market was possible. In September 1752, for instance,

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1. A.N., Outre-Mer, G2, Vol. 211, dossier 539, Beaubassin Sylvain et Cie vs la veuve Grandin, 1723-57.

2. A.N., Outre-Mer, G2, Vol. 188, fol. 361, J. Aymard dit Thezin vs Pierre Faribault, juin 1751.

merchant Julian Fizel approached the fishermen Daugan and Hamon looking for high quality dried cod. They had "une belle pille" of cod, but told him:

que les engagements qu'ils avoient ne leurs laissoient pas la liberté d'en vendre jusqu'a y avoir satisfait, mais qu'il (Fizel) pouvoit s'adresser au Sieur Jacques Mulot et à sa mere auxquels ils en doivent cent quelques quintaux de la plus belle et premiere, et que s'ils tomboient d'accor de prix avec lui, ils lui liveroient des premieres qui se pezeroient.<sup>1</sup>

Fizel bought the Mullots' interest and took delivery of the cod. Unfortunately the documents do not state what profit the Mullots may have made on the transaction.

The completion of all these transactions depended on the fisherman making a successful catch. If the season was good, the fishing proprietor had additional stocks of cod to sell after he had paid his debts. In a bad year, an unsuccessful fisherman would not produce enough cod to cover his debts. Since the fishing property was normally put up as security for the debt, a fisherman chronically unable to meet his debts lost possession of his land. Grandin and later his widow were unable to pay Michel Daccarrette the debts cited above, and were forced to give their supplier the rights to their property's future earnings. Jean Lechaux of Laurembec had to cede his fishing property to merchant Daniel Augier in 1755 to pay for advances previously made to him. The agreement between them gave Lechaux the right to repurchase if he could repay the debt over two years, but in 1756 he acknowledged Augier as "proprietaire incontestable". Augier thereupon rented the property to Lechaux for 250 livres a year, payable in cod. Lechaux's residence and daily activity were unchanged, but he had changed from an independant entrepreneur to a tenant and virtual employee

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1. A.N., Outre-Mer, G2, Vol. 201, dossier 255, Requête de J. Fizel, 4 octobre 1752.

of Augier.<sup>1</sup>

A straightforward fishing business always ran serious risks, for its earnings fluctuated with the weather and the quantity of fish available to be caught, while its debts to its supplier remained constant. However, not all fishermen remained so specialized. Various individuals rapidly broke down the separation between fishing and the supply trade. Pierre Martissans, for instance, began as an habitant-pêcheur with a fishing property near Louisbourg, but by 1725 he was also a commission agent, a wholesale supplier to many other fishermen and a shipowner with wide commercial interests.<sup>2</sup> Blaise Cassaignolles and Bernard Detcheverry, on the other hand, began as merchant suppliers working from a warehouse in Louisbourg, but within a few years they owned a fishing property outside Louisbourg and employed many fishermen.<sup>3</sup> The partners may have been less involved than Martissans in daily supervision of fishing operations, but from different origins the two firms developed similar diversified operations. Firms such as these, which combined fishing operations with merchant interests, appear to have been among the most successful businesses of the colony. With cod from its own property and from other producers, such a firm had a reliable export to pay for its imports. It reduced its dependence on the fish catch by shifting some of the risks to less diversified fishermen who bought its supplies and paid it in cod. From that base the firm could diversify into other commercial operations.

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1. A.N., Outre-Mer, G3, Vol. 2044, pièces 27,28, Convention et acte de vente de terrain entre Jean Lechaux et Daniel Augier, 26 novembre 1755 and 26 novembre 1756.

2. Martissans, discussed in more detail below, first received a concession of land in 1717, as an habitant-pêcheur. First cited as a merchant in 1722 (G3, 2057, pièce 6, 25 mai 1722). Appointed to Superior Council 1750 (G2, 193, Registre 2, fol. 25,3 septembre 1750). Died 1754.

3. Partnership was founded in 1730 (G3, 2041-2, pièce 129) but did not then include any fishing properties. Detcheverry died 1750, Cassaignolles remained in Louisbourg until 1758.

By this sort of growth, the Daccarrette business, originally a fishing operation, became one of the largest merchant firms of Ile Royale. When the Daccarrette family moved from Plaisance to Ile Royale in 1714, branches of the family established themselves in several of the island's ports. By 1726 they were producing fish at Niganiche, Baleine, Forchu, Saint-Esprit and also at Louisbourg, where Michel Daccarrette directed their merchant operations. The Daccarrettes exported cod and imported supplies for themselves and for other fisheries. They also traded other goods with New England and Québec. Planning further expansion, they borrowed heavily from financiers in Bayonne, but in 1745, with the firm still heavily in debt, Michel Daccarrette was killed during the siege of Louisbourg. Nevertheless a consortium of heirs led by Michel's son-in-law Philippe LeNeuf de Beaubassin renewed the business after the restoration of the colony in 1749. Under the name Beaubassin Sylvain et Compagnie, the firm rebuilt its extensive fishery and enlarged its shipping and wholesaling interests. It even considered bidding for the contract to build the fortifications of Louisbourg, a project otherwise monopolized by French builders.<sup>1</sup>

#### Other Wholesale Traders

Though theirs may have been the largest such operation, the Daccarrettes were only one of many firms which based their commerce upon fish production combined with supply trade.<sup>2</sup> Other wholesale traders survived without actually owning fishing properties, either by supplying goods and

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1. Biography of Michel Daccarrette by T.J.A. LeGoff in Dictionary of Canadian Biography Vol.3 (University of Toronto Press, 1974) p. 156. Documents on Beaubassin Sylvain et Cie include their partnership agreement (A.N., Outre-Mer, G3, 2047-1, pièce 83, 16 octobre 1749) and their acceptance of Daccarrette's debts (2047-2, pièce 42, 15 décembre 1752). Their fortification bid is cited in A.N., C11B, Vol. 33, fol.461, 9 octobre 1753. Beaubassin described other company activities in a mémoire of 25 janvier 1757 (C11C, Vol. 9, fol. 196).
  2. Other examples of Louisbourg merchant-fishermen include Nicolas

buying fish from independent fishing proprietors or by finding markets other than the fishing industry.

After the trade in fish and fishing supplies, the largest market for merchant trade may have been the local administration. The sums spent in Ile Royale for government purchase of goods rose rapidly. Government supply was a relatively important sector of the colonial economy in its later years.

About three quarters of annual government expenditures on Ile Royale were actually spent in the colony. Of that amount, however, most was initially for payment of wages rather than for purchase of goods, so merchants benefited only indirectly. The food, weaponry and equipment which the garrison and administration needed were normally shipped to Ile Royale in naval transports. Up to the mid 1730s, the Louisbourg treasurers paid more money locally for firewood and transport than for imported commodities.

As the colony grew, the administration began to purchase more goods locally, letting private shipping begin to supplement the naval transports. In 1740, local government purchases of imported supplies may have reached 30,000 livres. By 1744, that amount had risen to 80,000 livres in routine expenditures and another 70,000 livres to outfit that year's expeditions against Canso, Annapolis Royal and British shipping. The Government spent about 125,000 livres at Louisbourg for imported supplies in 1750 and perhaps 200,000 livres in 1754.<sup>1</sup>

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Bottier dit Berrichon (active 1714-24), Joannis-Galand Dolhabarats (rarely: d'Olobaratz) (1721-45), Martin Benoit (1737-40), Etienne Heguy (1733-56), George Rosse (1726-45), Julien Fizel (1739-57), the Milly Lacroix family (1714-58) and the partners Imbert and Lannelongue (1749-58)

1. Details of government spending are itemized in the Bordereaux of revenues and expenses (AN, C11C, Vols. 11-14) but the distinction between supply of merchandise and supply of firewood, labour, transport, etc. is not always rigorously maintained. Figures here, intended to chart government expenditures on the goods in which merchants dealt, are necessarily approximations. The distribution of government spending is discussed in Chapter 4.

In 1754 the government took over the building of fortifications, previously done by a contractor who received a lump sum payment and met his own costs of labour and materials.<sup>1</sup> In that year, the accounts show about 45,000 livres, or 40% of the fortifications budget, being spent on the purchase of materials. If, in earlier years, the contractors had spent a similar proportion of their fees on local purchases of goods, merchant trade in Louisbourg would have drawn an additional benefit from these almost direct government expenditures. Given the normal size of the fortifications budget, the contractors may have spent 50,000 to 60,000 livres annually at Louisbourg for the purchase of bricks, timber, stone and other building materials, thereby greatly increasing government-related expenditures on commodity purchases.

These figures suggest that merchant earnings from sales to government were becoming sizeable by the 1740s. By the mid 1750s, government was challenging the lagging fishing industry as the largest market for imported goods. Certainly supply to government was the most rapidly growing sector of merchant trade after 1740. Like the fishing supply trade, government supply trade was competitive. The local merchants shared the market with many non-resident visiting traders.

Another market for wholesale traders was ship chandlery. Every vessel visiting Louisbourg sought food stocks for its crew before departing, and most would have needed a mast, a sail, or some other replacement gear. This trade benefited merchants as well as caulkers and carpenters. Individual ships have left record of their large expenditures for outfitting and repair,<sup>2</sup> so ship chandlery and the purchase and resale of

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1. The subject is covered at length in F.J. Thorpe The Politics of French Public Construction in the Islands of the Gulf of St. Lawrence (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Ottawa, 1973).
  2. For instance, A.N., *Outre-Mer*, G2, Vol. 186, fol. 180, Jouet vs Barbel, septembre-octobre 1740.

vessels may have been a major part of some merchant businesses, though the total value of such trade resists any precise estimation.

By the 1750s, the re-export of imported goods was becoming a significant part of Ile Royale's commerce. If 700,000 livres of imported goods were being exported annually by 1752, as estimated in Chapter One, then even the brokerage commissions on the purchase and resale of West Indian sugar and New England lumber and livestock were sufficient to support many merchant houses.

Some of the smaller local markets for wholesale merchant business are discussed in more detail below. The few local industries (principally lumbering, shipbuilding and agriculture) and the artisans of Louisbourg were a source of earnings through their purchases of supplies, often on credit.<sup>1</sup> The small population formed a retail market to be supplied through the wholesale traders. All in all, the government, the re-export trade, ship chandlery and a variety of small local markets provided additional opportunities for merchant fishermen and alternate markets for merchants without fishing properties.

Guillaume Delort, one of the first merchants established in Louisbourg, had only minor investments in fishing properties, and there is little to suggest that he maintained a large fleet of ships. Delort may simply have been successful early enough to be able to continue buying and selling in bulk lots without producing his own supply of cod, and he had some interest in nearly all the markets described above.

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1. For instance, Daccarrette advanced the equipment with which ship-builder Brisset of Port Toulouse rebuilt a wrecked vessel in 1742. A.D. Charente-Maritime, B, Registre 276, fol. 100.

He supplied fishing operations and exported cod, made some sales to the government, and had interests in retail sales and ship chandlery. He was also a financier, as in 1733 when he loaned 12,000 livres à la grosse aventure to underwrite a shipping venture by merchant-fisherman Joannis Dolhabarats.<sup>1</sup>

Delort's apparent prosperity may have been unusual for a merchant without large fishing investments in the colony's early years. The other early merchants who built up businesses without the base of a fishing property were frequently sailors who added merchant trade to their earnings in the transportation industry. Jean-Baptiste Rodrigue and his son Michel, both seacaptains, developed a wholesale trading business out of their shipping to and from the West Indies and Québec.<sup>2</sup>

As markets for goods multiplied in the later years of the colony, more merchants survived in wholesale trade without a base in fishing, shipping or some other industry. Some new merchants still bought fishing properties, but many of the new arrivals of the 1750s appear to have found adequate opportunities in fishing supply, sales to government, re-export dealings and other markets. It is possible, however, that many of these individuals depended less on their own resources than on the commissions they earned as agents for other merchants.

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1. A loan à la grosse aventure financed a specific voyage. If the voyage was successful, the borrower repaid principal and interest, 25% in this case. If the ship was lost at sea, the borrower repaid nothing. Such an agreement was a loan and an insurance policy at once. This is the only example I know of a Louisbourg merchant making such a loan. It is described in passing in another transaction, and the actual agreement was evidently neither notarized nor preserved. There is no way of knowing whether or not such loans, made privately like this one, were a routine business of Delort or any other merchant. Delort's career is summarized in the biography of him by Barbara Riley in DCB 3, p. 173. The loan is discussed in A.D. Charente-Maritime, B, Registre 267, fol. 27.
  2. A biography of Michel Rodrigue will appear in DCB 4. Other seacaptains with merchant interests include Claude Perrin (1737-57), Louis Lagroix (1749-58) and Joseph Brisson (1731-58). The last two were Canadian-born, and West Indian and Canadian shipping routes were the specialty of all three.

Shipowning, Cargo owning and Factorage.

Few of the vessels bringing goods to Ile Royale were owned and operated by local merchants. Though a shipping table of 1721 shows a Louisbourg merchant among those owning vessels arriving that year from France and though several merchants were routinely sending vessels to Québec and the West Indies in the 1730s,<sup>1</sup> the size of the local shipping fleet remained small. The number of resident commercial vessels showed little increase between 1730 and 1753. Since the total ship traffic grew, the residents' share fell. Furthermore, the majority of locally-owned commercial vessels served in the coastal trade, supplying Louisbourg with fish, wood, coal and other local products and distributing Louisbourg's imports among the out-ports. When coasters are removed from consideration, the residents' share of extra-colonial shipping falls as low as five percent.

Table 2.10 Commercial Vessels at Ile Royale, 1730-53

Year	1)Commercial Vessels	2)Resident-owned	3)2 as % of 1	4)Vessels other than coasters	5)Resident-owned non-coasters	6)5 as % of 4
1730	244	76	31.1			
1731	241	72	29.8			
1732	237	66	27.8	213	24	11.2
1733	210	83	39.5	149	22	14.7
1734	181	60	33.1	142	21	15.4
1735	228	67	29.3			
1736	205	73	35.6			
1737	156	37	23.7	126	7	5.5
1738	198	54	27.2			
1739	208	59	28.3			
1740	213	49	23			
1742	197	40	20.3			
1743	250	75	30			
1744	134	65	48.5			
1753	337	80	23.7			

Sources: Same as Table 2.06, except for 1737, which is A.N., Col., C11B, Vol. 19, fol. 145 and 288v. The 1737 figure, from a different series of documents than the others, probably under-registers the numbers of vessels. On the other hand, it probably eliminates fishing vessels more completely.

1. The shipowner of 1721 was Nicolas Bottier dit Berrichon. A.N., Col. C11C, Vol. 9, fol.10, *Batiments venus à l'Isle Royale*, 7 déc 1721. Other shippers: Michel Rodrigue to Québec in 1732, Michel and J-B Rodrigue to Québec in 1733; same two and Claude Perrin in 1737. In 1740 André Carrerot, M. Rodrigue, Louis Delort sent ships to the West Indies, while Louis Jouet sent two. AN, Col., F2B, Vol,11. passim.

Yet the residents of Ile Royale traded actively in ships. Admiralty registers kept between October 1733 and June 1743 record the sale at Louisbourg of 181½ fishing and trading vessels. Of the 357 sales and purchases where the participants can be identified, Ile Royale residents were involved in 157½, or 44.1%, more than any other group. The residents were the most frequent buyers of vessels, but they sold almost as many as they bought, for a net purchase of only 9½ vessels in ten years. Local shipbuilders, producing about ten vessels a year, added to the colony fleet, but many locally-built vessels were sold when new. Total additions to the local fleet seem barely adequate to counter the effect of attrition.<sup>1</sup>

Table 2.11. Sale and Purchase of Vessels Before the Louisbourg Admiralty, 1733-1743.

Participant	Selling	Buying	Net Sale or Purchase
New Englanders	86	0	sell 86
Ile Royale	74	83.5	buy 9.5
-merchants	29	48.5	buy 19.5
-officers	10	8	sell 2
-others	35	27	sell 8
French	14.5	75	buy 60.5
West Indians	2	19.5	buy 17.5
Acadians	1	0	sell 1
Canadians	0	1.5	buy 1.5
unspecified	4	2	sell 2
	<u>181.5</u>	<u>181.5</u>	

Source: A.D., Charente-Maritime, B, Registre 267 (1733-39) and 276 (1739-43).

The constant turnover of vessels strongly suggests that the merchants (though their net purchase was larger than the colony's as a whole) saw ships as another kind of merchandise to be bought and sold, rather than as a means to invest in the transportation industry. Further evidence comes from the way ships were owned. The sales and purchases registered were nearly all of complete vessels owned by a single person. Only 15 half shares and 3 third shares were recorded as sold while 21 half shares and 6 thirds were bought. French and West Indian captains acting

1. Attrition resulted from sinking and shipwreck, from ice damage in winter anchorage, and from routine wear and tear. The discussions of fishing industry expenses suggest four years as a shallop's useful lifetime. In 1732, fifteen schooners and other large fishing vessels were shipwrecked around Ile Royale. A.N., Col., C11B, Vol. 13, fol. 240, 22 déc. 1732.

for principals at home may have been buying for partnerships, but the residents mostly bought and sold whole vessels. In the North Atlantic shipping industry as a whole at this time, investors in ships commonly spread their risk, for example, by buying an eighth share in each of eight vessels rather than buying one outright.<sup>1</sup> Ile Royale's general lack of interest in such divisions of ownership may mean that vessels were only to be held for a short time and then sold.

If the merchants (and other residents) could afford to buy and sell so many vessels, frequently for cash, why did few merchants build up fleets of revenue-producing merchant ships? In the first place, the Louisbourg merchants' main interest was in the movement of goods. A conflict of interest exists between the shipper of goods looking for the cheapest freight costs and the shipowner looking for the largest freight earnings. Since the local merchants could rely on Ile Royale's location, demand for goods and supply of cod to attract sufficient shipping, they may simply have found it practical to pay freight rates rather than own their own transport. Ordonnateur LeNormant estimated that one-quarter of the goods reaching Louisbourg in 1737 was owned by individuals who chartered cargo space. His successor Prévost asserted in 1754 that local merchants had substantial interests in the cargoes coming from France.<sup>2</sup> There are enough examples of freight rates charged and entire ships chartered to confirm that one did not have to own vessels to ship goods to and from Ile Royale.

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1. The practice is analysed in Ralph Davis, The Rise Of the English Shipping Industry (Newton Abbot, David and Charles, 1962) Ch. 5; Bernard and Lotte Bailyn, Massachusetts Shipping 1697-1714 (Cambridge, Belknap Press, 1959) p. 27-41.
  2. A.N., Col., C11B, Vol. 19, fol. 143, LeNormant à Maurepas, 31 décembre 1737. Ibid., Vol. 34, fol. 180, Prévost à Machault, 19 déc 1754. Several Louisbourg documents show local merchants hiring agents to ship goods to Louisbourg for them. A.N., Outre-Mer, G2, Vol. 190, f. 25, P. Harismendy vs J. Dallemand, 31 oct 1738; Ibid., Vol. 184, fol. 74v, G. Maujot vs J. Bellefontaine, 15 octobre 1731.

However, the merchant's preference for investing in goods rather than in ships cannot be the whole explanation. Many of the French merchants who exported to Ile Royale owned both vessels and cargoes and not all sold their cargoes in wholesale lots as soon as the vessels reached Ile Royale. Many French merchants employed local merchants as factors to market their goods. Instead of buying the imported goods himself, the merchant factor undertook only to find buyers and to remit the earnings to the exporter for a commission.

Up to 1745, merchants who sold goods for commission normally had many other activities. Factorage was part of their cooperation with distant correspondents, who responded by marketing goods consigned to them from Ile Royale. After 1749, closer ties between agents and principals may have become more common. Still, the classic image of the commission agent as the merchant's nephew despatched to serve the company's interests in some distant port needs to be applied with care at Louisbourg. The case of Louisbourg suggests that, by the eighteenth century, trade had expanded beyond the reach of familial networks. Until Louisbourg's later years, few French firms had such a large proportion of their interests committed to Ile Royale as to demand the placement there of a family member or full-time factor. Commission sales, when not handled by the ship's captain or cargo director, frequently meant only a temporary contract between the exporter and a local merchant known for his reliability. Even the few family agents and salaried managers sent out to Louisbourg tended to find additional suppliers or supplementary interests.<sup>1</sup>

Some local merchants did have longstanding factorage agreements

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1. The best example is Antoine Didion, described in J. Boshier, "A Fishing Company of Louisbourg, Les Sables d'Olonne and Paris", French Historical Studies, #2, Fall 1975. See also G3, 2041-1, pièce 82, 1 déc. 1751.

with French exporters. As well as running a fishing operation, Pierre Martissans handled yearly consignments from the Nantes merchant Villetteux Perré from 1722 until at least 1738.<sup>1</sup> Léon Fautoux was factor to Robert Dugard et Compagnie of Rouen from 1738 until 1744. While ordonnateur, François Bigot described the latter firm as:

une compagnie de Rouen qui fait beaucoup de bien  
à la colonie. Elle envoie tous les ans un magasin  
plein de vivres qu'elle vend à un an de credit.  
L'habitant ne peut acheter autrement car il ne  
peut payer comptant.<sup>2</sup>

Commissions on these consignments were obviously important to Fautoux, but the Dugard Company was not his only source of business. At the same time, he was handling consignments from the brothers Medoux of Bordeaux and purchasing ships for clients in Bordeaux and Martinique. Independently Fautoux exported cargoes of cod to the West Indies and paid a factor there to sell them for him. He had been personal secretary to Governor Saint Ovide de Brouillan, whom he assisted in various land transactions. He also had his own property interests, loaned money on occasion and for a time owned an inn. Factorage commissions may have been a sizeable part of Fautoux's income, particularly after 1738, but that activity should be seen as one aspect of an independent merchant's career.<sup>3</sup>

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1. A.N., Col., C11B, Vol. 20, fol. 304, Lettre des habitants-pêcheurs, 26 novembre 1738.
  2. Ibid., Vol. 23, fol. 134, Bigot à Maurepas, 28 novembre 1741. On Dugard, see Dale B. Miquelon, Robert Dugard and the Société du Canada of Rouen (Univ. of Toronto, unpublished PhD. thesis, 1973).
  3. Fautoux's biography, by Dale Miquelon, is in DCB 3, p. 216. Other information on Fautoux's career includes A.D. Charente-Maritime, B, Registre 275, fol. 35, 27 juin 1741; Registre 276, fol. 8, 30 juillet 1739, and fol. 73v, 12 septembre 1731; Registre 274, 12 septembre 1733; A.N., Col. B, Vol. 59, p. 530v, Maurepas à St Ovide, 26 mai 1733, and C11B, Vol. 12, fol. 221, Saint-Ovide à Maurepas, 19 janvier 1732.

For his services in marketing the goods and collecting payments, the Louisbourg factor could apparently expect a commission of five percent of the goods' sale price. That was the figure paid in Québec, and Louisbourg exporters paid it to their factors in the West Indies.<sup>1</sup> The factor generally added various extra charges and overheads, but in some cases he was paid a higher commission to cover those costs. One Louisbourg agent received an eight percent commission in 1754 but he paid storage costs and other expenses out of that figure.<sup>2</sup>

Acting in a similar capacity to local factors were cargo directors, who accompanied shipments of goods in transit and remained in Louisbourg to direct their sale. It may have been through transient cargo directors that family business networks were maintained, for metropolitan merchants rarely settled a son or brother permanently in Louisbourg but often sent such relatives on visits there to sell the cargo of a company ship. When Martin Larreguy, merchant of Saint Jean de Luz, rented a fishing property in Ile Royale, his brother Bertrand began making lengthy visits to Louisbourg to supervise operations. He spent a full year there in 1736 and 1737, but had visited the colony as early as 1727.<sup>3</sup> Another case, that of Abraham Tabois, suggests that these visitors could find substantial amounts of business during these sojourns at Louisbourg. Tabois, with his Irish servant Thomas Eaton, arrived in Louisbourg in 1732 as cargo director of the merchant ship Rondeau. He rented the house of a recently deceased merchant, Antoine Paris, "ou il a pris magasin pour y mettre les effets et marchandises... du navire le Rondeau" which included wine, brandy,

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1. The Québec figure is given in Miquelon, Robert Dugard, p. 145. Fautoux paid 5% plus costs to his Martinique factor Pascal Borié in 1733. A.D. Charente-Maritime, B, 274, n.p., 12 novembre 1733.
  2. A.N., Outre-Mer, G3, Vol. 2043, pièce 5, 22 août 1754.
  3. A.N., Outre-Mer, G2, Vol. 185, fol. 52, Succession de feu Bertrand Larreguy, mort à Québec 1737. Also G3, Vol. 2058, pièce 29, 22 octobre 1727.

cloth and other goods. During a year's residence, Tabois supplied various fishing proprietors in return for stocks of cod. He also made sales to the colonial administration, but his interests were not restricted to local markets. New England records show him trading with Peter Faneuil of Boston at this time.<sup>1</sup> In late 1733 Tabois sold the local debts owing to him, chartered a 70 tonneaux schooner and left with a cargo of cod. The ship was chartered to sail "de cette isle Royale à Bilbao, de Bilbao à la Rochelle Bordeaux ou Nantes et de la faire son retour en ce port de Louisbourg", but apparently Tabois himself did not return.<sup>2</sup> An extreme example of a non-resident trading at Louisbourg was Gratien Duccas (or Ducost) cadet. Duccas resided in Louisbourg from 1737 to 1743, but always referred to himself as a merchant of Saint Jean de Luz temporarily at Louisbourg. Little detail on his business is available, but a 1743 dispute over a commission implies that he acted for a trading or fishing enterprise of Saint Jean de Luz.<sup>3</sup>

Some visiting merchants eventually settled in Louisbourg. Pierre Boulet, merchant and seacaptain from Martinique, had traded at Louisbourg before its capture in 1745. On another trip in 1751, he married a local resident and settled to practice trade in Louisbourg until 1758.<sup>4</sup>

Though the factors are perhaps best seen as independent contractors doing commission work for various merchants in addition to their other activities, some Louisbourg merchants had closer ties with their French counterparts. Daniel Augier and his associate Elie Allenet, for

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1. A.N., Outre-Mer, G2, Vol. 181, fol. 489, Procédure pour vol chez Tabois, octobre 1732. A.D. Charente-Maritime, B, Registre 274, 19 décembre 1733 and 21 décembre 1733. For information on Tabois' links to New England, I am indebted to Donald Chard, who mentions the case in his forthcoming thesis The Impact of Ile Royale on New England (Ph.D., University of Ottawa).
  2. A.N., Outre-Mer, G3, 2038-2, pièce 23, Police d'affretement, 21 octobre 1733.
  3. A.N., Outre-Mer, G3, pièce 65, Convention entre Cannonier et Ducos, 31 octobre 1743.
  4. A.N., Marine, C7, 41, Dossier Pierre Boulot, 1774.

instance, went to Louisbourg in 1750 on behalf of the Augier family firm of Tonny in Aunis, which intended to establish a fishing and trading link with Ile Royale.<sup>1</sup> Nicolas Larcher went to Québec in 1747 and then to Louisbourg to represent the interests of his father, a Parisian merchant. Larcher remained in Ile Royale until the fall of the colony in 1758. His large investments in fishing, shipping and industrial projects show that he was not simply a local agent for the family firm. Rather, he was authorized to develop a large business by investing the company's funds in Ile Royale.<sup>2</sup> The fishing company of Baron d'Huart is another case of a French firm settling a local manager for a business operating on both sides of the Atlantic.<sup>3</sup> A different version of this trend was the business of the Rodrigue brothers, which began in Ile Royale and later established itself in France. Michel Rodrigue, oldest of three brothers raised in Louisbourg, settled in La Rochelle in 1745 and became very wealthy. His trade with Ile Royale rested on his association with his brothers Pierre and Antoine, who returned to Louisbourg in 1749 to build a variety of merchant activities in addition to their dealings with Michel. All these transatlantic firms existed after 1749. It appears that the last period of Louisbourg's existence saw the heaviest investment there by French merchants, and ties between colony and metropolis became correspondingly closer during that time. However, even in this period, the distinction between partnership and factorage was not absolute. Some factorage agreements specified that the agent

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1. Augier and Allenet, both Protestants, are described in John Boshier, "French Protestant Families in Canadian Trade, 1740-1760" in Histoire sociale/Social History, Vol. VII, #14 (November 1974), p. 179-201. The other Louisbourg merchants cited in this article as possible Protestants were Catholic. No other Protestants have been found.
  2. Biography of Nicolas Larcher by Christopher Moore in DCB 4 (forthcoming).
  3. John F. Boshier, "A Fishing Company of Louisbourg, Les Sables d'Olonne and Paris: La Société du Baron d'Huart 1750-1775" in French Historical Studies, Vol. IX, #2 (Fall 1975), p. 263-277.

would share in the profits rather than take a fixed percentage, while contracted partners or employees could develop interests of their own.

### Wholesale to Retail Sales

The most immediate market for goods imported to Louisbourg was the local population, but retail sales were reduced in potential not only by the smallness of the population but also by the large numbers of people insulated from the retail market. Fishermen were housed, clothed and fed by their employers. Soldiers received their supplies from military stores and could buy their small luxuries from military canteens. Furthermore most of the goods imported to Louisbourg were bulk packaged and easy to preserve. Since goods arrived seasonally, stockpiling and wholesale purchases of these goods were encouraged. The number of householders who undertook a daily round of marketing for food and other essentials may have been small.

Wholesale lots of merchandise were stored in magasins. These were not unique to merchants, for they simply provided storage space - the term was not limited to commercial warehouses. Anyone with sufficient wealth, property and foresight built a magasin in which to store personal effects. Inventories of magasin stress that they were stocked with bulk commodities: barrels of wine, rum or flour, yards of rope, quantities of salt, rolls of tobacco and above all quintals of cod. The magasin was essentially the landed equivalent of the ship's hold in which the same goods travelled. Merchants' magasins were unusual only in the way the stock was used for commercial exchange rather than personal consumption. Merchants' magasins also tended to be large buildings, secured against theft by barred windows and padlocks. They were sometimes partitioned into two or more rooms and they included such equipment as hoists, scales and cooperage equipment. There is no evidence that magasins included an office

or accounting room, and inventories show that merchant papers were usually found in the house rather than in the magasin.<sup>1</sup>

Despite the incentives to wholesale trading, there was a retail market in Louisbourg. For sales of small amounts of specialized goods, the magasin gave way to the boutique. While the magasin was a storage area where large lots could be stored, examined, bargained over and repackaged, the boutique was part of the merchant's house, stocked with small items for retail sale. The physical separation between retail and wholesale trade is well described in a 1753 deposition by Louis Marie, a merchant and innkeeper:

son beaufrere Dubordiau ayant été luy demandé une barrique de taffia à acheter, il auroit été dans son magasin en percer une et apres en avoit tiré dans un gobelet d'argent pour luy faire gouter, il auroit posé le gobelet avec du taffia dedans sur la table de la chambre ou il mange à cotté de sa boutique. Qu'un instant apres un homme qu'il ne connoit point ayant été luy demander une tabatière et du fil d'archalle, il auroit entré avec luy dans la boutique. Que comme il etait à luy livrer ces articles, un soldat dont il ignore le nom se seroit presenter à la porte de la Boutique pour luy demander la monnoye d'un ecu de six livres, et luy ayant dit d'attendre un moment, le soldat seroit rentré dans la chambre qui communique à la ditte Boutique de luy déposant pensant qu'il etoit à se chauffer au poelle....<sup>2</sup>

Cloth, clothing and accessories, housewares and small imported items were important sale items for boutiques. Food was generally retailed by specialists, so the boutique was essentially a dry goods store. There are no

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1. The description of the magasin is compiled from scattered details. See for instance the partial descriptions in A.N., Outre-Mer, G2, Vol. 209, dossier 517, Vol chez Castaing 11 novembre 1751; Ibid., Vol. 197, dossier 134 pièce 2, Vol chez L. Delort 8 août 1740; Ibid., Vol. 204, dossier 471, fol. 127v, Martin Vallois vs. Sieur Willeray, 23 juillet 1753. The architecture of magasins is covered in Christian Pouyez, "Magasins", Fortress of Louisbourg Preliminary Architectural Studies (Unpublished manuscript report, 1972).
  2. A.N., Outre-Mer, G2, Vol. 202, dossier 266, Procédure contre Antoine Pelegrin dit Jolicoeur, pièce 7, 13 fevrier 1753. Marie was testifying at the soldier's trial for the theft of the silver goblet.

better descriptions of boutique interiors than Marie's, but the quantities of goods inventoried suggest that boutiques must have had considerable amounts of shelving or display space.

Not every boutique had a magasin behind it, for some merchants were retail traders only. Joseph Dallemand, a bachelor from Provence, lived and worked in a rented apartment in Louisbourg from 1726 to 1738. The papers left at his death show that he bought his stock from local wholesalers and from ships arrived from Marseilles, Saint-Malo and other French ports. The inventory of his boutique is dominated by clothes and bolts of cloth, together with such housewares as scissors, tobacco holders and knives.

Dallemand's cahier de comptabilité, or credit account, between May 1737 and August 1738 shows that he had extended credit, in amounts ranging from 12 sols to 79 livres, to 36 individuals, including four from Port Dauphin and one from Miré. One had to be a good risk to get credit from Dallemand, for the clients included eight military officers, four administrators (including LeNormant the ordonnateur), five merchants, four tailors, two surgeons and two innkeepers. If Dallemand sold to fishermen, soldiers, or servants, he must have demanded cash from them.

Dallemand's prestige clientele may partly have been attracted by his stock. He was one of the few Louisbourg merchants from Mediterranean France, and Marseillais merchants were among his suppliers, so he may have special access to southern goods which would have distinguished his stock.<sup>1</sup>

In sharp contrast to Dallemand's prestige clients were the credit customers of another retail merchant, Jean-Pierre de Gregoire. De Gregoire's accounts are dominated by credit sales to soldiers of the garrison, to whom he sold tobacco, soap, liquor and other small items, and to whom he occasionally lent small amounts of money. De Gregoire's largest debts were to the

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1. AN., Outre-Mer, G2, Vol. 185, fol. 218, Succession J. Dallemand, nov. 1738.

Louisbourg wholesalers Solignac, Dulong et Cabarrus, who advanced him wholesale lots of merchandise. He made regular payments to them and at his death his outstanding debt to them was small.<sup>1</sup>

Jacques-François Rolland, who went bankrupt shortly after opening his boutique in 1743, provides further evidence of boutique operations. Blaming his wife's relatives for undermining his suppliers' confidence in him, Rolland testified:

qu'il est impossible qu'un jeune homme s'etablie sans avoir aucune avance en s'etablissant, et il a été obligé d'acheter toutes ses marchandises et effets à credit et avoir fait toutes les depenses de vivres et ameublement de la ditte maison.<sup>2</sup>

The seventeen creditors who foreclosed on Rolland included local merchants, travelling merchants and cargo directors of merchant ships. Since he was unable to pay them all, a large stock was seized from his boutique on October 8, 1743. The inventory taken at that time, dominated by cloth and clothing but including items as diverse as twenty bouquets of artificial flowers, forty-five books of music and twenty-two rosaries, is the most complete record of a Louisbourg boutique's stock.<sup>3</sup>

Handling retail sales in a boutique was a full time occupation for Dallemand and Rolland, but like de Gregoire who had a tavern, boutique owners sometimes had other interests and their wives frequently participated in operating the boutique. When innkeeper Claude Mullot opened a boutique in 1736, he authorized his wife Julienne Minet

a acheter et vendre toute sorte de marchandises concernant la profession qu'ils font d'aubergiste et marchand de cette ditte ville comme les marchands publiques ont pouvoir de faire conformement aux ordonnances du Roy.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Ibid., Vol. 209, dossier 507, Succession J-P de Gregoire, 21 mars 1757.
  2. Ibid., Vol. 198, dossier 183, fol. 19, Procédure contre J-F Rolland, 9 octobre-31 octobre 1743.
  3. A.N., Outre-Mer, G2, Vol. 198, dossier 180, pièce 3, 8 octobre 1743.
  4. A.N., Outre-Mer, G2, Vol. 2039-2, pièce 21, 22 septembre 1736.

The shop became known as the "boutique de la Mullot, marchande", and it was the wife who was named in virtually all the records of the business. When the Mullots' son Jacques joined the business in the 1750s, mother and son expanded into wholesale trade and the supply of fisheries.<sup>1</sup>

Some of the wholesale merchants of Louisbourg maintained boutiques as a sideline, even if they did not have hired fishermen to supply. Clerks and employees evidently did the routine work in these shops. In one instance, a passerby bought food and drink from Therese Dironbere, a fisherman's wife who supervised the stock of merchant-fisherman Joannis Dolhabarats. However, if the stock was often used for retail sales, the clientele would have been limited to Basque fishermen and sailors, for Dironbere spoke only Basque.<sup>2</sup>

Similar to the boutique-operating merchant was the travelling merchant known as a pacotilleur. A pacotilleur bought passage on a merchant ship and carried a stock of goods, known as a pacotille, as his personal effects. Once arrived in Louisbourg, the pacotilleur rented accommodation until he could sell his stock and move on with profits and a new collection of goods. Ordonnateur Bigot gave an example in a letter:

Les només Estienne Devaux et Jean Jacques Chevela sont arrivés dans cette ville le onze juillet 1739 venant de Nantes sur le navire le thetis, capitaine Jean Genevois, avec un pacotille de quincaillerie et de mercerie d'environ 6000 livres, ils y ont levés boutique et ont vendus au detail jusqu'a la fin de novembre de la même année.<sup>3</sup>

Pacotilleurs tended to escape documentation, but their mobile trade may have been a way of assessing the commercial potential of a number of potential residences. Quintin Lelievre arrived in Louisbourg in 1737 as a pacotilleur.

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1. Several women ran boutiques, but women in wholesale and fishing businesses were generally widows maintaining a family enterprise.
  2. A.N., Outre-Mer, G2, Vol. 203, dossier 373, 6 octobre 1755. The goods of Dolhabarats were probably more for his own employees than for general retail sale.
  3. A.N., Col., C11B, Vol.24, fol. 94, Bigot à Maurepas, 15 septembre 1742.

He remained, a merchant, until 1756.<sup>1</sup>

### Conclusion

There is ample evidence that merchants, from boutiquiers to négociants, were numerous in Louisbourg and that they found a diversity of economic opportunities to exploit. With this knowledge of who the merchants were and of what their businesses consisted, we may begin investigating how they operated, by analyzing the nature of the business firm and the financial and legal framework of Ile Royale's trade.

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1. A.N., Outre-Mer, G2, Vol. 184, fol. 387, Destouches vs Lelievre, novembre 1737. Ibid., Vol. 206, dossier 414, Lelievre vs Butel 7 août - 19 octobre 1756. A dossier on Estienne Devaux suggests that he also had intended to settle in Louisbourg. A.N., Col. E 131, Dossier personnel d'Estienne Devaux.

CHAPTER THREE  
THE CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

1. BUSINESS PRACTICES

Louisbourg's merchant firms were usually individual enterprises. Of the 118 firms formed by the 147 best-documented merchants, only seventeen were associations of two or more partners. Many partners were brothers or close relatives, but even family ties did not always lead to business association. Some sons and brothers of Louisbourg merchants formed their own firms rather than enter a family business.<sup>1</sup> Both economic conditions in Ile Royale and the nature of the business firm of the period appear to have favoured the survival of the small merchant business.

There was little in the economic environment to facilitate monopoly or concentration. Virtually anyone who chose could start a fishing business, for land on the Ile Royale coast was conceded to fishermen without charge and the necessary capital investment was available on credit from buyers and suppliers who arrived yearly from dozens of different ports. There was no point at which the business could be controlled or centralized. The fishing industry was therefore fragmented, and provided a large number of clients for large numbers of competing merchant suppliers.

Within Louisbourg itself, the small firm benefited from the town's size. The local economy supported specialist boatmen, coopers, carters and other artisans as well as a pool of unskilled labour. The individual merchant could draw upon these services as he needed, and was freed from the necessity of maintaining a staff of longshoremen, coopers and other employees. Like the fisherman, the merchant depended at least as much on

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1. Michel Daccarrette films traded on his own rather than join Beaubassin Sylvain et Cie. Louis Delort had little to do with the business of his father or his brothers. Antoine Morin's career was apparently separate from that of his father Claude Morin.

skill as on wealth, and so the merchant did not urgently need partners or investors to add to a new firm's capital.

The nature of the business partnership may also have inhibited associations. Though merchants and others frequently formed brief partnerships to carry out particular operations, forming a longer-lasting association was a difficult step. The partnerships which existed virtually created an artificial family, in which personal ties reinforced business ones. Only a few merchants were prepared to make such a commitment.

Among them were Blaise Cassaignolles and Bernard Detcheverry. Their partnership agreement, signed in 1730, obliged them not only to hold their business interests in common, but also to live together:

les dits Sieurs associés reconnoissent que tous les biens meubles, immeubles, battiments de mer, effets, marchandises, or, argent, billets, lettres et papiers ils possèdent tant l'un que l'autre sont en comun de quelle nature qu'il soyent.... Sont convenus de loger ensemble et qu'ils se nourriront et s'entretiendront de leurs necessaires aux frais communs de leur societté....<sup>1</sup>

Their close partnership lasted until Detcheverry's death in 1750. Throughout that time, Detcheverry, Cassaignolles and the latter's family resided together on the property which also held their business premises. When Detcheverry died, his share of the business passed to his nephew, Pierre Damestoye, a fisherman until that time. Cassaignolles, unable at work with Damestoye as he had with Detcheverry, turned over half the property and half the business's assets to Damestoye in order to split their partnership and go on in business alone.<sup>2</sup> The Cassaignolles-Detcheverry partnership was not unique. The partnership of François Solignac, Fabien Dulong and Léon Cabarrus was similar, as was that of Pierre Goget and Joseph

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1. A.N., Outre-Mer, G3, 2041-2, pièce 129, Renouvellement de société, 18 décembre 1742.

2. Ibid., 2041-1, pièce 79, Dissolution de société, 4 novembre 1751.

Cabouty, though close association did not prevent the rapid breakup of both firms.<sup>1</sup>

If business success depended principally on skill and initiative, rather than capital, these close partnerships would be the only feasible kind of long-term association. It would be impossible to measure the precise share of each partner's vital, non-monetary contribution, and only close associates such as Cassaignolles and Detcheverry, willing to share everything equally, could comfortably continue to pool their assets and earnings over a long period. Short-term associations, by contrast, normally involved strictly measured financial interests in a ship or a cargo, with the proceeds to be divided and the partnership dissolved after a brief operation. When three merchants and a ship's captain became co-owners of a ship and cargo in 1757, for example, their shares were divided carefully into two shares of seven-eighteenths, one of three-eighteenths and one of one one-eighteenth. The partnership was to end after a single voyage to La Rochelle and back.<sup>2</sup> Temporary poolings of closely defined assets were common when the goal was a specific project, but such agreements were very different from permanent partnerships.

The only force encouraging firms to combine would seem to be shortages, particularly labour shortages. Demand for fishing employees, for instance, caused competition between employers and raised wages. Labour costs should have encouraged employers to combine, but the government legislation controlling fishermen's wages made consolidation less necessary.<sup>3</sup>

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1. A.N., Outre-Mer, G2, Vol. 207, dossier 473, fol. 20v., Contrat d'association entre Solignac et Dulong et Leon Cabarrus. Ibid., G3, 2041-2, pièce 53, Dissolution de société Goget Cabouty, 7 novembre 1753.
  2. Ibid., G3, 2045, piece 3, Société sur la Brigantin l'Hazard, 15 janvier 1757. The partners were Gabriel Revol, J-B Levivrais and Jean Senau, merchants, and Andre Pifre, captain.
  3. A.N., Col, F3, Vol. 50, fols. 254-9, Règlements concernant l'exploitation de la pêche de la morue à l'Isle Royale, 20 juin 1743.

Even very small fishing firms survived, if precariously, until the end of the colony.

Another type of shortage, that of goods, created some attempts at monopoly. Due to the difficulty of importing livestock and developing local herds, fresh meat remained rare and expensive until a butchery monopoly was established. The exclusive rights to slaughter and sell fresh meat compensated the butcher for his range of duties, which included the obligation to import certain amounts of livestock each year. The butchery monopoly, during its brief life, was a unique example of a controlled, centralized trade.<sup>1</sup>

A different form of monopoly appears to have been the aim of a military officer in 1738. By pressure, by denying some ships entry to the port and by use of his family's wealth, Captain François DuPont Duvivier attempted to buy all the available cargoes in Louisbourg for resale to the fishermen. Fishermen and merchants protested, for Duvivier demanded higher prices and wanted payment in ways other than the usual credit arrangements. The complaint which exposed Duvivier's attempt gives the impression that he controlled the entire supply, but it is doubtful whether he could have bought the cargoes of all the ships. Some would belong to cargo directors, some to local importers, and others would be consigned to commission agents. It is more likely that Duvivier bought most of the cargoes available for sale, and came to control enough supplies to be able to dictate terms of sale during the shortage he had created. That none of the merchants tried such a project suggests both the limits of their wealth and the difficulty of monopolizing trade at Ile Royale.

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1. A butchery run by Duvivier, merchant Louis Jouet and Joseph Dugas before the first siege was short-lived. A 1748 *mémoire* testifies to the cost and rarity of meat. A.N., Col. C11B, Vol.27, fol.308, *mémoire* d'Alain Legras. In 1752 Beaubassin Sylvain et Cie and Antoine Rodrigue took over the monopoly (A.N., Outre-Mer, G3, 2042, 19 décembre 1753).

Duvivier's attempt depended on his police powers, on information from official sources and on assistance from government authorities more than on his wealth.<sup>1</sup>

Despite the persistence of the small firm, there probably were advantages to partnership. The Daccarrettes, Milly Lacroix, Rodrigues and other families were able to develop more properties, equip more ships and handle more goods than most of the independent merchants, and the trans-atlantic partnerships of the 1750s were evidently able to invest more heavily than the local merchants. Nevertheless, the difficulties of partnership and the continued potential for an individual merchant to survive seem to have out-weighed the benefits of size in the judgment of many Louisbourg merchants.

#### Business Skills

Bookkeeping may have been the essential difference between the major and the minor merchant, even between the marchand and the négociant. Some of the minor merchants kept only the simplest of accounts, such as de Gregoire's disorganized lists, while many specialist fishing proprietors and some of the artisans were completely illiterate. By contrast, the papers of the more prominent merchants evidently were orderly and comprehensive. The merchants who kept them had a sound practical knowledge of the principles of bookkeeping. Civil courts routinely based their judgments on contracts and other papers presented to them. Merchant-fisherman Jean de Lasson lost a case in which he was the plaintiff when it was found that his business accounts did not conform to the Code Marchand's regulations.<sup>2</sup>

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1. A.N., Col., C11B, Vol. 20, fol.304, Lettre des habitants-pêcheurs de l'Isle Royale, 26 novembre 1738, lists the complaints against Duvivier.

2. A.N., Outre-Mer, G2, Vol. 191, registre 1, fol. 30, 7 octobre 1732.

When Michel Daccarrette demanded payment of a debt however, he supported his case more successfully by presenting his ledgers:

il nous a ouvert son livre journal cotté K folio 256 sur lequel nous avons trouvé que le debit du dit Sieur Larreguy est de deux cent quatre vingt dix huit quintaux.<sup>1</sup>

When Antoine Didion came into conflict with his employer Baron d'Huart, the arbitrating authorities could investigate the entire business by ordering:

que Didion remettra dans ce jour tous les livres de compte, brouillard, journaux, facture, lettre missive et autres concernant commerce qu'il a fait pour le compte du dit Sieur d'Huart.<sup>2</sup>

Running a business in which long delays between supply and payment were standard, and in which many debts were paid by exchanges of goods and services rather than with cash, the merchant depended on the accuracy of the records he kept, which were the basis of his knowledge of assets and liabilities on hand and distant. In the merchant's office or comptoir, debts and credits, purchases and sales were recorded in the daily journal and incorporated into the ledger to give the merchant a running account of his business. No specific references or example proves that double entry bookkeeping was used in Louisbourg, but the technique was well known in France at the time. Since merchants and bookkeepers in Louisbourg were recruited from French merchant circles, it is likely that double entry was at least familiar, if not routine usage, in the major firms.<sup>3</sup> The clear

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1. A.N., Outre-Mer, G2, Vol. 185, fol. 56v, Succession Larreguy, 4 novembre 1737.

2. Ibid., Vol. 193, registre 2, fol. 82, 29 juillet 1752.

3. The double entry technique, developed in Italy by the fifteenth century, records every transaction twice, once as a debit, once as a credit. For example: a merchant selling goods for cash registers a decrease in his stock of merchandise but an increase in his stock of cash. Using the cash to buy office supplies, he records both a decrease in his cash and an increase in his capital equipment. By registering both aspects of the transaction, he always has an up to date statement of the condition of his business, showing the state of his fixed capital, his merchandise and his cash on hand.

Charles Carrière, Négociants Marseillais discusses the development of the double entry system in French merchant commerce.

script and standard form of account statements and other surviving documents suggest a fairly high development of accounting practise at Louisbourg.

All this paperwork led many of the merchants of Louisbourg to hire their only full-time business employees, clerks whose main duty was book-keeping. Since clerks were expected to have been educated in commerce, they were sometimes recruited from France:

Daccarrette, ayant besoin d'un commis et sachant que le Sieur Fautoux avoit quelques connoissances à Bayonne, s'adressa à ce dernier et le prie de luy en demander un qui soit sage, assidu, et au fait de tenir des livres et, en un mot, un jeune homme sur qui l'on peut compter.<sup>1</sup>

Accounting skills were the principal test of a clerk's ability. Pierre Martissans fired one clerk because:

cet engagé n'a peu tirer au net un compte qu'il luy a donner<sup>2</sup>

and Daccarrette referred to another clerk's

peu de capacité: à peine est-il capable de porter sur un brouillard ce qu'il livre journellement.<sup>3</sup>

Jean-Baptiste Lascorret, the clerk whom Daccarrette had hired from France and whose competence he later doubted, described himself and his duties in the following statement:

Il estoit plus que capable de tenir des livres du Sieur Daccarrette et livrer une pipe à un compaignon, un echeveau de fil à l'autre et donner quelques quintaux de pain pois et farines suivant ce qu'il luy estoit prescrit par le Sieur Daccarrette...apres quoi il marquoit cette livraison sur le brouillard et de la raportoit sur la grande livre.<sup>4</sup>

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1. A.N., Outre-Mer, G2, Vol. 183, fol. 436, Daccarrette vs. Lascorret, 12 septembre 1736.
  2. Ibid., G2, Vol. 191, registre 2, fol. 16v, Martissans vs. Dagorette, 5 septembre 1731.
  3. Ibid., G2, Vol. 183, fol. 436, Daccarrette vs Lascorret, 12 septembre 1736.
  4. Ibid., fol. 443, 13 septembre 1736.

The fact that merchants recruited qualified clerks from Europe and fired those who were poor bookkeepers testifies to the importance of keeping records of all commerce. Clerking experience, once acquired, was valuable enough to be the basis of a merchant career. Many Louisbourg clerks eventually left their employment to establish a firm of their own. Jean-Baptiste Lannelongue was a clerk in Louisbourg at the time of its capture in 1745. He was then about thirty-three, so he may well have been a clerk in Bayonne and then in Louisbourg for fifteen years. In 1749, Lannelongue returned as a merchant to practise trade at Louisbourg until 1758 and then at Bayonne.<sup>1</sup> Even dismissed clerks, accused of incompetence by their Louisbourg employers and having neither family ties nor private wealth, established themselves in trade. Few were notably successful, but the regularity with which individuals made the transition from clerk to merchant is further evidence of the importance of the specific merchant skills: ability to read, write, figure, keep accounts and generally calculate profit, loss and opportunity. Pierre-Henri LePaumier, clerk to a Louisbourg merchant fisherman from about 1734 to 1741 was by 1753 a négociant of Saint-Malo commissioning agents to represent him in his old home. Both LePaumier and Lannelongue made some independent ventures during their time as clerks, and gradual transitions may have been the normal route of advancement.<sup>2</sup>

### Credit and Loans

The merchants' chief financial dealings were in the arrangement of credit. Most credit at Louisbourg was given for short periods of time,

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1. Lannelongue, son of a Bayonne merchant, arrived in Louisbourg around 1743. See A.N., Outre-Mer, G3, 2041-1, pièce 101, témoignage de J-B. Lannelongue, 27 septembre 1751, and his biography by T.J.A. Le Goff in DCB 3, p.349.
  2. On LePaumier, A.N., Outre-Mer, G2, 191, registre 1, fol. 128, 5 juillet 1734 (first reference as clerk to Elie Thesson Laflourie);

nearly always less than a year. Credit was usually arranged either by a billet or a lettre de change.

The billet was a simple acknowledgement of debt and a promise to pay.

Billet de Jean Etubin au profit du Sieur LeBreton:  
141 livres 18 sols 6 denier payables aoust prochain.  
Signé à Louisbourg 10 novembre 1734 Jean Etubin<sup>1</sup>

Whether notarized by a royal notary at Louisbourg or arranged privately between the contracting parties, the billet was simple and straight forward. The other instrument of credit, the lettre de change or bill of exchange, was closer to a modern cheque, involving three parties rather than two. One written by Guillaume Delort in 1731 is a simple example. It is in the form of a letter addressed to Simon Lapointe, négociant of La Rochelle, requesting that he pay a specified sum to Jacques d'Espiet de Pensens, a military officer of Ile Royale. Delort had established credit with Lapointe, either by depositing funds or goods with him in advance or by promising to reimburse him. With the bill of exchange, Delort was using that credit like a bank balance in France, drawing on it to pay de Pensens.<sup>2</sup> Bills of exchange within firms were also common, as when a visiting merchant named Darquibel addressed several to the family firm Darquibel pere et fils of Saint Jean de Luz, asking that it pay individuals for cod supplied to the firm's vessel at Louisbourg.<sup>3</sup> The addressee of such bills was requested to pay the bearer within a short period, often forty days. However, bills of exchange circulated for longer than that, for a letter signed at Louisbourg could not be presented in France for immediate payment. Governments as well

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and Ibid., Vol. 204, dossier 471, fol. 137v, 10 août 1753 (négociant).

Other clerks who became merchants include Cyprien Lagoanere, J-B.

Lascorret, Jean Morin, Pierre Faribault and Jean Salva.

1. A.D. Charente-Maritime, B, Registre 274, unpaginated, 10 novembre 1734.
2. Ibid., 21 décembre 1731.
3. Ibid., 24 octobre 1734.

as individuals issued bills of exchange. The Ministry of Marine treasurer at Louisbourg was authorized to address lettres de change to the Marine treasurer in France. Bills of that sort were used to finance the occasional deficits incurred by the Ile Royale administration.

Bills of exchange were valuable for several reasons. First, since the "banker" asked to honour the letter was normally a merchant, much of the circulation of the bills was kept within the merchant community. Bills written at Louisbourg were generally addressed to merchants in Bayonne, Bordeaux, Saint Malo or other ports well known to Louisbourg. Consequently they were reliable and easy to cash. Second, bills of exchange replaced vast amounts of bullion or goods, which would otherwise have had to travel back and forth covering routine debts. When Darquibel paid his Louisbourg expenses by bills of exchange addressed to his father, the creditors who took the bills could use them to order essential supplies from the Saint Jean de Luz firm. If Darquibel had brought cash, the money would simply have returned to France for purchases, causing risk and inconvenience on each voyage. A third quality of bills of exchange was their negotiability, which let individuals accept them without personally going in search of payment for them. A boutiquier such as Joseph Dallemand with a small local business extended credit to his customers, some of whom must have offered to pay him with assets they held elsewhere. However, by accepting a bill of exchange drawn on a Québec merchant, he was not obliged to enter into commerce with Québec. Bills of exchange were negotiable, so Dallemand could endorse the bill in favour of one of his creditors who did trade with Québec. The negotiability of bills thereby enabled Dallemand to make a sale he would otherwise have had to refuse. There are many examples of bills of exchange being endorsed several times at Louisbourg before being notarized, copied

and sent away for payment. Reliable lettres de change circulated as a form of currency and some contracts specified payment in "argent, morue marchande ou bon lettre de change". While one was not obliged to accept a private bill of exchange in lieu of currency (unless such was specified in a prior contract) a valid lettre de change drawn on the Ministry of Marine had legal status equivalent to coinage, and could not be refused as a form of payment.<sup>1</sup>

The vast majority of bills of exchange notarized at Louisbourg were addressed to French merchants and signed by visiting merchants or captains. Others were drawn on merchants in the French West Indies or other regions with which Louisbourg traded. The bills do not show whether the signatories were closely associated with those to whom they were addressed. A dispute in 1744 suggests that it was accepted practice to address bills of exchange to any of one's recognized debtors, or to any merchant to whom a sufficient value of goods had been consigned.<sup>2</sup>

A rough overall balance of trade between regions was essential to the good order of the bill of exchange system. Since Louisbourg could not continue to address bills to France without also sending money or goods to cover them, the bill of exchange was not a substitute for trade, but only a way to simplify reciprocal exchanges over long distances. Bills were affected by the supply of currency in the colony. To be reliable and easily negotiable, the bill had to be easy to convert into cash. During shortages of currency such as the one Prévost reported in 1754, bills of exchange were difficult to convert into cash unless the holder was willing to

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1. A.N., *Outre-Mer*, G2, Vol. 204, dossier 470, fol. 66v, L. Jouet vs J. Claparde, 24 août 1751. Jouet was obliged to accept bills on the Marine treasury.
  2. *Ibid.*, Vol. 188, fol. 306, Duvivier vs. Iger, 21 avril 1744, especially fol. 309 v, where Duvivier speaks of shipping goods to cover a bill.

accept a large discount.<sup>1</sup>

Both billets and bills of exchange were intended for payment within a short period, with no interest charged during that time. Neither type of loan carried any reference to a cost of credit, and the Code Marchand prohibited the hiding of credit charges in the principal. However, if a debtor was convicted of non-payment after the agreed due date, interest could be charged as a penalty. Merchants evidently accepted these interest rates as the price of converting free, short-term credit into longer term, interest-bearing loans. It was fairly common for an evidently prosperous merchant to appear in court, be convicted for non-payment and be sentenced to pay court costs and a rate of interest on the debt. Interest rates apparently varied from six to twelve percent per annum according to circumstances.<sup>2</sup> Such conversions of short-term credit into interest-bearing loans seem to have required the agreement of both the court and the creditor about the credit-worthiness of the debtor. Some unpaid debts led only to a rate of interest being charged, while others caused an immediate seizure of goods, yet few billets or bills of exchange stated the consequences of non-payment. Of the few which did, some carried a statement of the goods put up as security, some cited another person as guarantor, and rarely one stated:

au deffaut de payement de ladite somme aux echeances  
cy dessus, l'interet de chaque terme qui n'aura point

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1. A.N., Col., C11B, Vol. 34, fol. 192, Prévost à Machault, 20 décembre 1754. Billets were negotiated occasionally, as when a visiting merchant transferred all debts owing to him to a local merchant before leaving the colony. A.D. Charente-Maritime, B, Registre 274, 21 décembre 1733.
  2. It is difficult to prove that merchants (and others) accepting an interest charge were actually solvent and able to pay if obliged, but the frequency with which they declined to pay or simply failed to appear in court to defend themselves seems best explained by their willingness to pay interest. Examples are A.N., Outre-Mer, G2, Vol.199, dossier 195, fol. 11v, 15 novembre 1743, J-B Morel sentenced to an interest payment; Ibid., Vol. 191, registre 2, fol. 31v, 29 novembre 1737, J. Dallemand sentenced to an interest payment.

point été paye (sera payé) aux taux de l'ordonnance.<sup>1</sup>

The paperwork of merchants and clerks was not limited to business accounts. In the absence of bankers, insurance agents and lawyers, the colonial merchants inevitably took on a wide variety of legal and financial responsibilities. In doing so, they not only extended their own activities, but also helped to maintain the systems of international commerce, further justifying for themselves the title négociant, the business man who did a little of everything.

The lettre de change system was a form of banking run by the merchant community, and merchants used billets and bills of exchange for occasional cash loans as well as for merchandise trading. Boutiquier Jean-Pierre de Gregoire's records show that he made small cash loans to soldiers and workmen. There are a few examples of larger cash loans, such as merchant Antoine Morin's loan of 6200 livres from an Admiralty official.<sup>2</sup>

Whether any Louisbourg merchant followed Guillaume Delort in insuring voyages by the granting of loans à la grosse aventure is not known. However, Louisbourg residents could insure a ship, its cargo, both, or part of either by writing to insurers in France. Voyages were not always insured, for Jean Jung, Bordeaux correspondent of Antoine Paris, wrote to inquire whether Paris's ship should be insured for a voyage which Jung was arranging.<sup>3</sup> In 1750, ordonnateur Prévost reported that fishing, coastal trade, voyages from Ile Royale to North American destinations and some transatlantic sailings went uninsured because of the difficulties of arranging insurance

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1. A.N., Outre-Mer, G3, Vol. 2047-1, pièce 1, 28 octobre 1743, Obligation de C. Arot vers N. Poullard Bruiere.

2. Ibid., pièce 145, 14 mars 1750, A. Morin vers A. Lartigue.

3. A.N., Outre-Mer, G2, Vol. 181, fol. 108, Succession A. Paris, 31 aout 1731. An example of an insured voyage is the contract à la grosse aventure between M. Rodrigue and a Bordeaux merchant in 1731. A.D. Charente-Maritime, B, Registre 274, 31 décembre 1731.

in France before sailing. He proposed that the new "Chambre d'asseurances generalles" in Paris could be asked to station agents in Louisbourg to arrange policies more conveniently.<sup>1</sup>

As substitutes for lawyers, merchants took on many legal duties. They frequently supervised complicated inheritances, arranged real estate transactions and appeared in court for a wide variety of clients.<sup>2</sup> Merchants in different ports routinely acted as legal as well as commercial representatives for each other. They also acted for government, either as salaried officials or as expert examiners.

Though Louisbourg had no formal Exchange, merchants cooperated. They traded debts and assets, negotiated bills of exchange, and exchanged information and merchandise. They associated in many short-term projects and even passed clients on to one another. Since the agent's duty was only to find a buyer or seller rather than to buy or provide the goods himself, merchants naturally worked together for mutual benefit in many transactions, despite the generally competitive nature of trade.

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1. A.N., Col., C11B, Vol. 29, fol. 177, Prévost à Rouillé, 27 novembre 1750.  
2. One clerk had the macabre duty of representing a corpse which was tried and convicted of the crime of suicide. A.N., Outre-Mer, G2, Vol. 193, Registre 4, fol. 19, Procès contre le cadavre du nommé Payen, 19 juillet 1757.

## 2. MERCHANTS AND GOVERNMENT: THE LEGAL SUPERVISION OF TRADE

The same body of law applied to Ile Royale as to the rest of the French empire. The Coutume de Paris normally regulated private property and its disposal in the colony, and the Code Louis, a series of ordonnances enacted between 1667 and 1681, formed the basis of civil, criminal, commercial and military law. For business operations, the most important parts of the Code were the Ordonnance du Commerce, or Code Marchand, of 1673 and the Ordonnance de la Marine of 1681.<sup>1</sup> The 1673 legislation regulated business practice in such matters as the training of merchants, the formation of companies, the use of credit, bookkeeping and bankruptcy. The Ordonnance de la Marine specified proper usage for seagoing vessels and their crews, policed ports and coasts, regulated ship charters and insurance, and specified proper practice in the fishing industry. These codes set out the legal structure in which commerce operated, and both the authorities and the merchants of Louisbourg had copies of the codes and commentaries on them.<sup>2</sup>

These laws, designed to cover the entire French realm, included many provisions principally applicable to the large commercial centres of France. They authorized courts and administrative positions which never existed in the smaller colonial administrations, and presupposed a greater degree of formal social organization than was ever reached in Ile Royale. Consequently, application of the codes was modified for local use, partly by the acceptance of local custom, partly by ordonnances which applied only in Ile Royale. The Code Louis, for example, gave powers to merchant courts and

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1. The ordonnances are collected in François-André Isambert et al, eds., Recueil générale des anciennes lois françois (Paris, Berlin-LePrieur, 29 vols., 1821-33), particularly Volume 19 (1672-86).
  2. Gilles Proulx, Les Bibliothèques à Louisbourg (Fortress of Louisbourg unpublished manuscript report, 1975).

left certain regulations to be supervised by guilds of merchants. Neither the courts nor the guilds existed in Ile Royale, but the judges of the Bailliage there were authorized to invoke the Code Marchand when it was applicable. When professional advice was needed, individuals "reconnus comme experts et hommes de probité" were called to take the place of merchants' guild representatives.

Modifications such as these were simple and straightforward, but local custom was also influential in law, particularly in the fishing industry, where certain traditional practices had acquired the force of law. By general consent, the first captain to arrive for the spring fishing season was named Admiral for that year and had wide-ranging authority to allocate shore space and settle disputes in the fishing fleet. This custom did not entirely disappear after the establishment of local authorities in Ile Royale.<sup>1</sup> Saint Michael's Day (September 29), the traditional closing day of the summer fishing season, remained important as the day on which debts and rents were paid. The tradition of settling accounts at "la Saint-Michel" appears to have had more influence than the Code Marchand's regulations on debt deadlines. When the power of local custom was questioned, its defenders produced certificates signed by long-established residents attesting that such practices were standard in the colony.<sup>2</sup>

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1. A.D. , Charente-Maritime, B, Registre 272, fol. 136, déclaration d'arrivée, 28 avril 1743. Captain Joannis Dalfouet claimed to have been that year's first arrival and requested the consequent privileges.
  2. Beaubassin Sylvain et Cie, certainly familiar with the written law, refused a demand to supply cod in August, "les paiements et pesée de morue d'été ne se faisant dans la colonie qu'à la Saint Michel ainsi que cela est pratiqué et passé en usage dans la ditte colonie depuis son établissement". They presented the court with affidavits to that effect..A.N., Outre-Mer, G2, Vol. 193, registre 1, fol. 86, Beaubassin vs. Lachoue de Vildé, 17 août 1752.

In one case, a resident pleaded against conviction on an ordonnance's minor clause, arguing that detailed legal advice was unavailable,

n'y ayant aucun avocat ny procureur en cette colonie pour instruire les habitants.<sup>1</sup>

The implicit argument was that the full rigour of French law should not apply in the colonies due to their simpler social and administrative structure. In general, however, local custom did not conflict with written law but only governed situations where the law did not apply.

Proclamation of specific ordonnances was a more orthodox way to adapt the law to local conditions. Ordonnances covering only Ile Royale were issued either in France by the King or the Minister of Marine or locally by the governor and ordonnateur, but prior consultation between local authorities and the ministry was normal for any major ruling. Many of these ordonnances affected temporary problems or intervened in short-term crises. Some, however, had major importance for commerce, at least in theory. Various ordonnances abolished the duties which would otherwise have been charged on Ile Royale cod in French ports, restricted foreign trade, and ruled on the right to practice trade in Ile Royale and on the prices and wages to be observed.<sup>2</sup>

On first examination, rulings such as these give the impression of a powerful and paternal administration regulating the nature of commerce in Ile Royale. However, closer examination suggests that business largely established its own course. Some ordonnances merely institutionalized existing situations. Others were intended to promote business more than to

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1. A.N., *Outre-Mer*, G2, Vol. 202, dossier 272, fol. 9, 24 avril 1752, Perrine Desroches vs Bertrand Imbert.

2. The Ile Royale ordonnances are compiled and discussed in Gilles Proulx, *Tribunaux et Lois de Louisbourg* (Fortress of Louisbourg unpublished manuscript report, 1975).

direct it. Trade with foreign territories, the rights of resident and non-resident merchants, and the regulation of wages in the fishing industry are important examples of the limits to government power.

Trade between French colonies and foreign territories had long been forbidden, and in 1727 a royal edict restated the ban. This ruling forbade trade between colonists and foreigners entirely, to encourage the shipping trade of French subjects, the growth of inter-colonial trade and the economic development of the French empire.

Ile Royale had traded with New England before 1727 and continued to do so. New England ships had traded at Louisbourg at least by 1719 if not earlier and before Ile Royale's foundation, Plaisance had had trading links with New England, despite the Anglo-French wars and the recurrent struggles between French and English colonists in Newfoundland.<sup>1</sup> At the foundation of Ile Royale, the Ministry of Marine initially permitted trade with New England 'until the colony was better established'.<sup>2</sup> The authorized foreign imports were of construction materials, livestock and fresh provisions, not readily available elsewhere and not sufficiently supplied by Ile Royale itself. Throughout the 1720s, thirty or more New England vessels arrived at Louisbourg each year. The captain of each submitted a cargo manifest to the governor and ordonnateur, and, after receiving their permission, unloaded and sold the permitted goods. Guards placed aboard the ships prevented unauthorized sales.<sup>3</sup> Under this system, trade continued smoothly from the beginning of the colony until the appearance of the new

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1. Examples of Plaisance's foreign trade can be found in A.N., *Outre-Mer*, G3, Vol. 2055.
  2. A.N., Col., C11B, Vol. 10, fol. 22, *Décision du Conseil de la Marine*, 10 juin 1727.
  3. *Ibid.*, Vol. 7, fol. 396, *DeLaforest à Maurepas*, 17 décembre 1725 and *ibid.*, Vol. 8, fol. 201, *DeMesi*, 16 mai 1726.

ban in 1727.

When the strict new prohibitions appeared in 1727, the edict was not immediately forwarded to Ile Royale. When it did arrive, in 1729, the governor declined to have it made public or registered by the colony's Superior Council, on the grounds that a temporary shortage of food imports from Canada made purchases from New England essential. When informed, the Ministry of Marine accepted the decision but asked that the edict be registered.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly the registration was made in the fall of 1730, near the end of the trading season. In the fall of 1730 and throughout the following summer, the edict was enforced. New England vessels were turned away from Ile Royale with only a very few sales.<sup>2</sup> In the fall of 1731, however, Governor Saint-Ovide de Brouillan returned from France and began to authorize purchases from the New Englanders. He justified this policy by pointing out that the goods which he permitted to be imported (construction materials, hardwares and fresh provisions) were not otherwise available and brought "quelques douceurs" to the colony, particularly by supplementing a diet of dried and salted food.<sup>3</sup> Saint-Ovide may have won some measure of assent for this policy while in France, for the Minister's response was mild. He approved Saint-Ovide's refusal to admit New England's flour and pitch, since those goods could be imported from Canada. He also expressed the hope that foreign purchases were being paid for with sugar products from the French West Indies, because that would encourage trade between Ile Royale and the Caribbean and

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1. A.N., Col. C11B, Vol. 10, Fol. 250, Levasseur à Maurepas, 16 décembre 1729 and reply, A.N., Col., B, Vol. 54-2, fol. 498, 30 juin 1730.

2. Ibid., C11B, Vol. 11, fol. 111, Levasseur, 5 décembre 1730.

3. Ibid., Vol. 12, fol. 42, St Ovide à Maurepas, 26 novembre 1731.

prevent the export of cash or cod from Ile Royale into foreign hands.<sup>1</sup>

With that tacit approval, foreign trade revived. In 1732, thirty-nine New England vessels visited Louisbourg. All received permission to sell the authorized imports and thirteen of the vessels themselves were sold.<sup>2</sup> In the spring of 1733, the Ministry of Marine gave specific approval to Ile Royale's trade with New England. Ile Royale could import those foreign ships, construction materials and fresh provisions which the colony needed but could not obtain elsewhere.<sup>3</sup> In effect, the 1727 edict's impact on Ile Royale was nullified. Supervised by colonial officials, New Englanders sold large volumes of their products at Louisbourg. Local authorities interpreted the clause on essential commodities fairly loosely, but they normally denied entrance to flour, pitch and other goods when those commodities were available elsewhere, particularly from Canada. The practicality of foreign trade evidently prevailed over royal intentions. By 1755, Governor Drucour, a career naval officer with no vested interest in the trade, could explain the link to New England with the observation that

Tout pays est susceptible d'avoir des liens  
avec ses voisins.<sup>4</sup>

While the law maintained some limitations on Ile Royale's foreign trade, by restricting the range of permitted goods and forbidding French vessels to visit New England, the colony's trade with New England was virtually unaffected by legislation. Some smuggling went on, particularly in the outports closest to Canso, but the volume of smuggled goods must have been fairly small, since most of New England's exports to Ile Royale were permitted to

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1. A.N., Col., B, Vol. 57-2, fol. 760, Maurepas à Saint-Ovide, 19 juin 1732.
  2. Ibid., C11B, Vol. 13, fol. 243, Liste generale des batiments; fol. 244 Etat des batiments....achettez, 22 décembre 1732.
  3. Ibid., B, Vol. 59-2, fol. 523v, Maurepas à Saint Ovide et LeNormant, 19 mai 1733.
  4. Ibid., C11B, Vol. 35, fol. 109, Drucour à Machault, 10 novembre 1755.

enter, while the penalties for illicit trading were harsh.

The right of residents to monopolize some aspects of trade in the colony was another case where government rulings were less influential than their texts might indicate, for the ordonnances which protected the residents from the competition of visiting merchants had little impact. In 1717, at the request of Louisbourg residents, the Conseil de Marine in France ruled that only residents could engage in retail trade there.<sup>1</sup> A local ordonnance prohibited non-residents from buying up cargoes of imports for resale to the colonists.<sup>2</sup> The impact of these rulings appears to have been negligible. Unlike ordonnances issued in Quebec,<sup>3</sup> they would have been difficult to enforce, since they did not establish the criteria a merchant had to meet to be accepted as a resident. In any case, there are many examples of French merchants spending a year or more in Louisbourg and carrying on a widely-diversified trade without interference. The activities of the pacotilleurs make clear that even the restrictions on retail trade had little influence.

If there had been friction between the local merchants and visiting traders, the colonial administration would have been divided. While local authorities frequently acted 'on the representations of the residents of this colony', their superiors in France were influenced by the lobbying of commercial associations in French ports. However, serious conflicts was generally avoided. Local and metropolitan merchants had close ties and an identity of interest on many points. The local merchants' need to remain on good terms with their counterparts in France and elsewhere made it impractical for them to attempt to monopolize the local market. The term

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1. A.N., Col., C11B, Vol. 2, fol. 211, St-Ovide, 11 avril 1717.

2. Ibid, fol. 311, Extrait des ordonnances de police, 17 avril 1727.

3. Edits, ordonnances royaux, declarations et arrêts du Conseil d'Etat du Roi concernant le Canada (Québec, E.R. Frechette, 3 vols., 1854-6) particularly Vol. 2, pp. 65 and 87, law of May 1676.

"marchand forain" was almost unused in Ile Royale, as merchant operations moved easily about the Atlantic. Though the ordonnances showed a concern for protecting the local merchants and might have been invoked if their livelihoods had been endangered, they had little direct impact on trade.<sup>1</sup>

One ordonnance which did affect local business conditions was the royal ordonnance of 1743, the principal clauses of which restricted the wages to be paid to hired fishermen.<sup>2</sup> Due to shortages of fishermen, the proprietors had been competing with each other so intensely that many small fisheries were unable to pay wages and still make a profit. The proprietors themselves requested government intervention, and so did ordonnateur LeNormant. LeNormant felt obliged to justify the intervention by describing the fishing proprietors as too ignorant, quarrelsome and incompetent to regulate matters themselves, but the ruling was made to assist the industry at its own request, rather than to control it.

The major contribution of the legal and administrative apparatus to economic development was not in specific ordonnances which rarely controlled or redirected the activities of commerce. The administration made a greater contribution to business conditions by stabilizing and organizing colonial society and by providing capital investment in the colony.

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1. In 1753, merchants of Saint Malo protested to the Ministry of Marine that, far from needing protection, the Ile Royale residents were driving out French traders by dealing so extensively with New England. However, one of the four colonists cited as examples was Nicolas Larcher who, as agent for a Paris firm and a new arrival in Ile Royale, was hardly a good example of colonial interests defeating metropolitan ones. A.N., Col., C11C, Vol. 9, Observations sur ce que s'est passé, 1753.

2. A.N., Col., F3, Vol. 50, fol.254, Règlements concernant l'exploitation de la pêche..., 20 juin 1743. LeNormant's draft of the legislation, with his comments, is in *ibid.*, C11B, Vol. 21, fol. 297, Mémoire sur les habitants, 1739.

Government provided the most basic service, an assurance of physical security, to the merchants as to the whole community. In Ile Royale's early years, merchant ships were occasionally pirated in Louisbourg's vicinity, and even the ports were thought vulnerable to pirate attacks.<sup>1</sup> A few cannon placed around Louisbourg harbour, and later the full array of batteries and bastions, eliminated the threat to the town, while regular naval patrols near Ile Royale and the fishing areas appear to have reduced or eliminated the incidence of piracy at sea. In time of war, ships at sea could not be guaranteed safety from the British navy or privateers, but the fortified port was secure against all but formal siege forces. In Louisbourg itself, the garrison acted as a police force, maintaining regular patrols about the town, keeping order in the streets and protecting property.

Apart from providing protection of this sort, the government aided the development of the community through planning and investment. Louisbourg was an orderly, well-designed town because royal engineers enforced a detailed town plan, with wide straight streets, squares, a quay and wharves and many other amenities maintained by the government.<sup>2</sup> The administration undertook road and bridge construction and financed a lighthouse for the greater safety of shipping. All these investments contributed to Ile Royale's success in its role of entrepôt and relieved the merchant community of the necessity to make these heavy expenditures.

Several branches of government provided services to commerce in Ile Royale. The Admiralty provided passports, took customs declarations,

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1. A.N., Col.,C11B, Vol. 6, fol. 178, Saint-Ovide, 1723; Ibid., fol.233, DeMesi à Maurepas, 23 novembre 1723.

2. A.N., Col.,C11C, Vol. 16, ordonnance établissant le plan de la ville de Louisbourg, 31 mai 1723.

inspected ships and cargoes and received depositions on wrecks and accidents. The port captain supervised the anchorage of ships, charted reefs and sandbars and administered the harbour. Civil officials in the office of the ordonnateur kept records of trade and the fishery, prevented abusive trade practices and supervised seamen's papers. The admiralty court, court of Bailliage and Superior Council provided civil and criminal justice. Their records are full of merchants demanding payment of debts, fulfillment of contracts and arbitration of commercial disputes.

The government presence not only assisted the smooth functioning of business at Louisbourg but also helped to integrate the colonial economy into a wider economic system. Louisbourg's trade operated within the same legal structures as every other commercial centre in the French empire. A contract notarized in Louisbourg could be enforced anywhere in the empire. A agent given power of attorney in France could have his authority recognized on a fishing property in Ile Royale. As a consequence, the Ile Royale trade was at once less remote and more impersonal. A French trader had the same legal protection in Ile Royale as in his own port or the next port along the coast. In his dealings with Ile Royale, he could rely on legally-binding, enforceable contracts rather than depending entirely on acquaintance and personal trust. The merchant still benefited from good communications, of course, but the development of administrative systems in places such as Louisbourg must have facilitated the expansion of imperial trade beyond the limits of the extended family firm.

The administration levied charges for some of its services.<sup>1</sup> The Admiralty required every ship arriving or departing to make a series of

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1. The ordonnances which authorized and revised the charges levied are compiled in Gilles Proulx, Tribunaux et Lois de Louisbourg.

declarations and it charged fees at every stage of the process. After 1732, all vessels were assessed a tonnage rate to contribute to the cost of maintaining the lighthouse. The authorities also enforced payment of a dime of one quintal per shallop levied to support the Louisbourg parish.<sup>1</sup> The courts charged costs to the losers in civil disputes. The colonial administration required payment from users of the services of its hospital staff, surveyors, notaries, bailiffs, criers and other officials. In a complicated inheritance or other drawn-out legal matter, such charges could become very large.

However, these government charges were mostly direct charges for services rendered. The colonists faced no head tax, no property tax, no income tax, and no charges proportional to wealth or earnings. Ile Royale cod was exempted from import duties in all French ports and, though Prévost complained that Ile Royale's re-export of imported goods to Canada was hindered by an extra duty levied by the Domaine d'Occident,<sup>2</sup> most merchandise trade at Louisbourg appears to have been scarcely influenced by import and export duties. It is difficult to avoid concluding that the government services provided to Ile Royale were heavily subsidized by the French crown and empire.

### Conclusions

Supported by their specialized business skills and by the administrative structures of the colony, the members of the merchant community should have been able to enter actively into the economic system described in Chapter One. We may now attempt to define the merchants' role in that system.

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1. A.N., Outre-Mer, G2, Vol. 191, registre 2, fol. 108v, 29 septembre 1740, Père Athanase, curé de la paroisse de Notre Dame des Anges, vs Rochefort et Dutraque, au sujet de dixme de chaloupe.
  2. A.N., Col., C11B, Vol. 33, fol. 111, Prévost, Mémoire sur le Commerce, 1 janvier 1753.

## CHAPTER FOUR

## MERCHANTS AND ECONOMIC GROWTH IN ILE ROYALE

## 1. THE ECONOMIC POWER OF THE LOCAL MERCHANTS

Merchant activity was clearly extensive in Ile Royale. The colony supported a sizeable merchant community with a broad range of activities, and a fair degree of stability and professional competence. The description of merchant activities would seem to reinforce the hypothesis that the merchants are the likeliest candidates for the role of the commercial elite which could organize and finance the economic growth of the colony. First, however, it is necessary to establish more firmly the degree of merchant power in the local economy and to consider the extent to which they directed their own activities.

Merchant Power in The Fishing Industry

The censuses of Ile Royale provide an opportunity to measure the extent of the merchants' participation in the fishing industry. That industry, the censuses show, always supported a large number of individual businesses, most of which had close to the minimum number of vessels and employees. The pattern was established by 1724, when the first detailed census was taken. A total of eighty-two individuals ran fishing businesses in a dozen different harbours. Between them, the eighty-two proprietors employed 1056 men, 168 shallops, and 36 schooners, for an average of nearly 13 employees and either one schooner or three to four shallops each. Since two shallops and about nine employees was the smallest feasible operation, only the presence of a few large operations (the Daccarrettes had 12 shallops and 60 men at Louisbourg alone and Antoine Paris had eight shallops and 40 men) raised the average above the bare minimum. This situation did not change greatly over the years. The number of proprietors, hired fishermen

and vessels grew, but the firms remained small. The average firm had only a few vessels and never employed more than 18 employees.

Table 4.1. Fishing Business of Ile Royale Residents, Various Years

Year	Owners	Employees	(per owner)	Shallops	(per owner)	Schooners
1724	82	1056	12.8	168	2.0	36
1726	86	1551	18.0	278	3.2	21
1734	106	1625	15.3	263	2.5	28
1753	119			225	1.9	62

Source: Census data, A.N., Outre-Mer, GI, Vol. 467, except for 1753 figures which are taken from material in the Fonds Surlaville (P.A.C., MG 18, F30).

Note: It is not certain that all schooners listed were used entirely for fishing.

Among these small firms, the fishing operations of the merchant-fishermen stood out. In every census, the merchant fishermen owned more vessels and employed more fishermen than the average proprietor. In 1724, merchants were only 12% of all proprietors, but they employed 20% of the work force and 17% of the shallops. Their strength was even more apparent by 1734 when, as 24% of all owners, the merchants had 44% of all employees,

Table 4.2. Merchant Participation in the Local Fishing Industry

	Merchant Owners	Merchants' Employees	Merchants' Shallops	Merchants' Schooners
1724 Numbers:	10	209	28	4
% of total:	12.2%	19.7%	17%	11.1%
1726 Numbers:	18	362	63	1
% of total:	20.9%	23.3%	23%	4.8%
1734 Numbers:	25	711	96	13
% of total:	23.6%	43.7%	36%	46.4%
1753 Numbers:	18		85	37
% of total:	15.1%		37.9%	59.6%

Sources: Same as Table 4.1.

36% of shallops and 46% of schooners. In 1753, eighteen merchants formed only 15% of all proprietors, but they dominated the industry, employing more than a third of all shallops and three-fifths of all schooners.<sup>1</sup> If the average catch figures of Table 2.08 are applied to the vessel estimates

1. Schooner ownership cannot be taken as proof of progress through technical innovation. Schooners have not been shown to be more efficient than shallops, and could be used for other purposes. Among the first to buy schooners were fishermen of Scatary Island, who probably used them to travel to the main island as well as to fish.

of Tables 4.1 and 4.2, it appears that the merchant proprietors had the potential to take fifteen to twenty percent of the resident catch in the 1720s, 37% in 1734 and no less than 47% in 1753.<sup>1</sup>

Since they owned up to a fifth of all fishing businesses themselves and tended to run larger than average fishing operations, the merchants had direct control of a large part of the residents' fish production. These operations provided them with large quantities of fish to market, and the size of their operations probably allowed them to profit more than the average proprietor. The debate over wage controls and the example of Antoine Perré's earnings, cited in Chapter 2, suggest that while the small operation was chronically in danger of failure, a larger fishery could quickly achieve economies of scale.

Merchant participation in the fishing industry was not limited to direct involvement. Operators of small fishing operations depended on merchants to supply equipment to them on credit. The merchants could make additional earnings and secure further stocks of cod in this supply trade, though they had to compete with visiting ships' captains and other non-residents for this business. The Louisbourg merchants' share of this trade cannot be measured precisely, but it may have been substantial. Not only do the notarial and judicial records hold many cases and contracts for fishery supply involving the resident merchants, but the surviving papers

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1. Note that the vessel estimates of the censuses (Table 4.1) differ from those of the ordonnateurs' reports (Table 2.07). The differences are fairly small until 1753. In that year the ordonnateur reported a catch of 78,940 quintals, but the vessels recorded in the census would have produced, at the same average catch, 106,515 quintals (merchants' share: 50,280 qtx). If the size of the catch projected from the census figures is partly due to the inclusion of schooners actually used for trade, then a reduction of the merchants' share of the catch would be necessary, to eliminate merchant-owned trading schooners from the calculation.

of fishing proprietors often show a large proportion of their debts were owed to Louisbourg merchants.<sup>1</sup> Relative to their numbers, the Louisbourg merchants had a disproportionately large influence in the fishing industry and its supply trade.

#### Merchant Power in Government Supply

Government records provide precise information on the individuals who supplied goods to the local administration, and this data throws light on the merchants' share of wholesale trade.

In 1735, when sales of imported goods to the local administration were worth less than 20,000 livres, local merchants' earnings from such sales were about 15,000 livres, almost 80% of the total. Though this amount was small compared to the amounts purchased in France and shipped by naval transport, it suggests that the residents held a large share of local markets. Among the others selling to government in 1735 were visiting merchants, local artisans, government employees and military officers. Their shares of the growing government market increased in later years, but local merchants held a majority share in the supply of goods to government in most years up to 1754.<sup>2</sup> That year, sales of construction material for the fortifications,

1. The succession papers of both François LeBreton and Thomas Milly LaCroix, for example, show more than 50% of their outstanding debts owed to local suppliers. A.N., Outre-Mer, G2, Vol. 198, dossier 173, Succession LeBreton, 1743; *ibid.*, Vol. 182, fol. 602, Succession Milly, 1733.

The Louisbourg merchants' share may have been smaller in the more distant harbours, particularly Niganiche, the second fishing port of the colony until 1745. Niganiche had merchant fishermen of its own (Eustache Lagarande Leparthuis and a brother of M. Daccarrette were among the most prominent) but was visited by many non-resident vessels each summer.

2. In 1744, 61,000 livres or two-thirds of merchant sales to government were made by Jean-Baptiste Lannelongue. Lannelongue was then a clerk employed by Captain François DuPont Duvivier, and it is likely that his sales to government should actually be credited to the commercially active military officer.

However, the case is probably exceptional. Officers routinely traded in their own names. Duvivier, as commander of the expeditions against Canso and Port Royal, was the consignee of much of 1744's government purchases, so on that occasion he had special reason to conceal

previously made to a private contractor, were included in the accounts.

Table 4.3. Government Purchases of Imported Goods at Louisbourg  
(approximate).

Year	1) Value of Goods purchased	2) Goods bought from merchants	3) 2 as % of 1	4) Number of merchants involved
1735	19,200	15,300	79%	15
1740	20,700	10,900	53%	10
1744	114,900	92,200	80%	26
1750	132,900	93,900	71%	10
1754	240,000	78,800	33%	12

Source: A.N., Col., C11C, Vols. 11-14, Bordereaux des recettes et  
depenses de l'Isle Royale.

Note: Purchases of services - wages, freight charges - and purchases  
of local products such as firewood have been excluded.

Those sales had probably always been dominated by the New Englanders who brought the bricks, lumber and tools to Louisbourg. When their sales appeared on the government lists, the residents' share of the market fell steeply.<sup>1</sup>

#### The Merchant Role in Re-export Trade

In 1753 ordonnateur Prévost reported that if anyone was prone to trade illicitly with the New Englanders at Ile Royale, it was not the local merchants but those from Saint Malo and La Rochelle. The Malouins used New England contacts obtained through dealings with Jersey and Guernsey, he said, while the Rochelais were often related to Huguenot merchants in New England.<sup>2</sup> Prévost was probably trying to shift responsibility for illicit trade from his own jurisdiction, but his statement illustrates a process

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his involvement. Other officers' sales to government were dominated by firewood, probably cut by their soldiers.

1. Though well-connected officers like Duvivier or a favoured official like André Carrerot found sales to government a source of easy income, the number and diversity of individuals on the government lists suggest there were limits to government patronage. Despite patronage, government money seems to have reached most people who had goods or services to sell.
2. A.N., Col., C11B, Vol. 34, fol. 180, Prévost à Machault, 19 décembre 1754. By illicit trade, Prévost presumably meant trade in prohibited goods and exchanges which avoided supervision by Louisbourg authorities.

which applied as easily to legal trade in all the goods brought to Ile Royale for re-export. West Indian, French, and New England merchants bringing cargoes to Louisbourg could meet and exchange goods directly, without using local wholesalers at all.

Direct exchanges certainly took place, and sometimes Louisbourg merchants participated only through warehousing and brokerage services. However, there were limits to the direct exchanges, and Louisbourg merchants were never eliminated from a role in the re-export trade. In the first place, re-exports were never dominant in Louisbourg's exports. Cod was the principal export even in the colony's later years and, as demonstrated above, the merchants had a secure place in cod production. Second, the re-export trade regularly became a three-way exchange, since the non-residents did not have matching demand for each others' goods. West Indians did buy some lumber and horses from New Englanders at Louisbourg, but not in quantities sufficient to match the New England demand for sugar and rum, so the cod producers tended to be included in the transactions. Ile Royale cod went to the West Indies, West Indian sugar went to New England and New England hardwares and foodstuffs went to Ile Royale. Though all the voyages went to or from Ile Royale, the trade was essentially a triangular exchange of three types of goods from three regions. Finally, the West Indian trade was the one in which Louisbourg shipowners seem to have concentrated their efforts. Since they held a small but steady share of the vessels trading between Ile Royale and the West Indies, Louisbourg merchants assured themselves of a continuing supply of re-exportable Caribbean products. For all these reasons, it seems fair to assume that the local merchants held a share of the re-export trade of Ile Royale.

### The Merchant Role in Other Trades

Chapter two has shown the leading role of the local residents, including merchants, in the import and re-export of ships. Local merchants were probably active in shipchandlery and the other local wholesale markets. There is, unfortunately, little evidence of the extent to which local builders and other artisans depended on merchants for supply in the way fishermen did. No measure of merchant influence can be built from a few examples of merchants advancing materials to shipbuilders, selling tools and hardware to craftsmen or (on one occasion only) "putting out" cloth to seamstresses and then selling the clothes they made.<sup>1</sup> Artisans and pacotilleurs competed with resident merchants for retail sales, but the merchants surely had a large share of all these local markets.

### The Independence of the Local Merchants

It would be possible to judge from the preceding evidence that the Louisbourg merchants' economic power was substantial, if it were certain that they were acting on their own behalf. However, Louisbourg records are full of procurations authorizing local merchants to act for non-resident ones, and an undetermined number of merchants dealt in other people's consignments rather than in their own goods. When Léon Fautoux appears on a list of suppliers to government, he may have been disposing of a cargo consigned to him by Dugard et Cie of Rouen, though neither Fautoux nor any other agent was prone to mention his source of goods. The impossibility of measuring the extent of this hidden metropolitan interest in local commerce raises doubts about the independence of the Louisbourg merchants.

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1. A.N., Outre-Mer, G2, Vol. 201, dossier 223, Procédure contre Jacques Pacquet dit Navette, accusé de vol chez Jean Marguerie marchand, 26 mars 1751, particularly pièce 22.

It is difficult to settle this problem without the use of information about the French merchants which (to the extent it exists at all) must be in business records and departmental archives of the west coast of France, but the colonial evidence provides good reason to believe that the local merchants were not to any large extent dependents of great merchant houses of the French ports.

In the first place, trade to Ile Royale was not the preserve of large firms in large ports. In France, voyages to Ile Royale were initiated by many individual fishing and trading operations in small ports, such as Saint Jean de Luz, which retained their interest in Ile Royale throughout its history.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, the local origin of many of Louisbourg's firms, particularly those of the merchant fishermen, shows that an important part of the local merchant community developed through their own ability to produce cod, not through backing from French principals. The nature of the Louisbourg firm - local, individual, and unlikely to tie up capital in anything but warehousing and fishing property - further suggests that local merchants did not depend on support from French investors. They could apparently move cargoes without owning a large fleet of vessels, and their relations with French merchants often seem a matter of cooperation rather than of control and dependence.<sup>2</sup> Commission sales were important to some merchants, but cases where the agent received half the sale profits rather than a fixed percentage hint that factorage could sometimes have been as

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1. The volume of shipping to Ile Royale from small ports is detailed in Christopher Moore, Commodity Imports of Louisbourg (Fortress of Louisbourg unpublished manuscript report, 1975) page 28.

2. For example, the cooperation between A. Paris and Jean Jung of Bordeaux, detailed in the Paris succession papers, A.N., Outre-Mer, G2, Vol. 181, fol. 45, 1732.

profitable as buying and reselling merchandise.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, among the French firms with interests in Ile Royale, some were primarily fishing operations which did not become deeply involved in local commerce and were unwilling to risk long-lasting credit ties with local customers.<sup>2</sup> For all these reasons it is doubtful whether a large portion of profits earned by the trade of the Louisbourg merchants automatically passed to principals in France.

Contemporary opinion on questions of power and control says little to support a belief in metropolitan dominance. In a 1762 *mémoire*, the Bayonne Chambre de Commerce claimed:

on peut dire avec vérité que Louisbourg n'étoit propre que pour enrichir l'habitant et ruiner l'européen.<sup>3</sup>

One might note that Bayonne never gave up fishing and trading at Ile Royale, or cite Bigot's report in 1743 that French traders had made profits of 100% on their sales in Ile Royale that summer, but both sides imply competition between local and metropolitan interests. The merchants of Saint Malo complained in 1753 of the local merchants' power, and Prévost, though he rejected those complaints, mentioned the local merchants' holdings in cargoes carried to Ile Royale. French traders did have important interests in the trade of Ile Royale, and doubtless profited from them, but there is little to show that their interest extended to control of business in the colony. The apparent success of the Louisbourg merchant enterprises was probably real.

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1. For instance, the commission agreement between merchant J.F. Morel and captain G. Renaud, A.D. Charente-Maritime, B, Registre 275, fol. 10, 27 août 1739. Antoine Paris shared profits equally with merchant Perraud of Quebec in their joint transactions. Paris succession, G2, Vol. 181, fol. 214, 3 septembre 1727.
  2. French outfitters regularly instructed their captains to make every effort to sell the entire cargo, and only to leave goods for commission sale if a complete sale during the season was impossible. A.D. Charente-Maritime, B, Registre 275, fol. 35v, Ordres pour J. Labady, 27 juin 1741; Ibid. Fol. 87, Ordres pour capitaine Goynetche, 30

Much of the success of the local merchants stemmed from their production of cod. Yet cod production declined from about 1740. Cod exports were of declining importance among all the colony's revenues. As a result the competitive position of the merchant community may have been weakening even as the number of merchants increased after 1749. As local production became a smaller proportion of total trade, more goods may have been handled by non-residents, and commission earnings from the handling of imported goods may have become more important to the local merchants. If so, a larger share of the total trade of Ile Royale would have gone to non-resident producers in the 1750s, though locally produced cod remained the colony's largest single export earner.

It is difficult to know whether the setbacks to the local fishing industry were incidental and temporary, or the start of a major structural change in the local economy. The larger absolute value of re-export earnings was probably permanent, but the reasons for the low cod catches of the 1750s are not entirely clear. What is clear is that further reductions in local cod production would have harmed more than the position of the local merchants. Virtually all of the colony's trade (other than supply to the military) required a healthy fishing industry, since cod was a vital component both in the trade with Europe and in the Caribbean-Ile Royale-New England exchange. Unfortunately the renewal of war in 1755 and the subsequent fall of Ile Royale makes it impossible to judge whether the long term trend of the local economy would have been toward renewed growth in the fishing industry.

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octobre 1744; A.N., Outre-Mer, G3, Vol. 2041-1, piece 6, Ordres pour J. Cassan, 1752.

3. Archives de la Chambre de Commerce de Bayonne, Série B, 41, Mémoire... sur les endroits les plus propres à la pêche, 21 janvier 1762.

## 2. MERCHANT WEALTH AND MERCHANT ATTITUDES

There are few good inventories of Louisbourg merchant estates. Though it was common practice to have government officials make detailed inventories of estates whenever the succession was complicated, merchants seem either to have ended their businesses in the chaos of siege and deportation or to have passed on their estates quietly and in good order. There is no good inventory of Michel Daccarrette, Pierre Martissans, Guillaume Delort, Nicolas Larcher or of many another prominent or well-established merchant. The sample of available inventories is too small to be reliable, and the lack of such information restricts analysis of both the merchants' wealth and their range of investments.

The few available property estimates give some information. Louis Delort, son of Guillaume, left property totalling 82,917 livres at his death in 1753.<sup>1</sup> Twenty years previously, Antoine Paris' estate amounted to 27,000 livres, though most of it went to cover his debts.<sup>2</sup> In 1758 Bertrand Imbert and Jean-Baptiste Lannelongue claimed that the fall of Louisbourg had ruined a partnership worth 124,000 livres,<sup>3</sup> and Nicolas Larcher estimated that the business he had lost was worth 250,000 livres.<sup>4</sup>

From Ile Royale's trade volume and the number of its merchants, a different estimate of merchant prosperity in Louisbourg can be attempted.

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1. A.N., Outre-Mer, G2, Vol. 202, dossier 296, 22 décembre 1753, Delort had about 15,000 livres in real estate and furnishings, 18,000 in cod and merchandise, 16,000 in cash, 12,000 in fishing vessels, and debts owed to him of 22,000. He owed 7000 livres.
  2. Ibid., G2, Vol. 181, fol. 45, 1732. Other merchant inventories, such as Julien Fizel's, seem incomplete, making no mention of merchandise, cod, cash on hand or other assets.
  3. A.N., Col., E, Dossier 227, Dossier sur Imbert et Lannelongue.
  4. Ibid, dossier 256, Dossier Nicolas Larcher, fol. 11, Requête de N. Larcher, 25 mai 1778.

Imports and exports of Ile Royale in 1737, for example, amounted to about 3.4 million livres. If the forty-five merchants then resident had handled half of that trade, their volume of business would have been about 37,800 livres per merchant. Half, however, is an entirely conjectural figure and seems overgenerous, considering the competition of other residents and the many non-resident traders, and remembering that up to forty percent of the local cod catch was made by non-resident fishermen. If the local merchants held a quarter of the trade, their average volume of business would have been about 18,900 livres. Business volumes in 1754 would have been similar, but only if the local merchants are credited with the same degree of market power. With a trade volume of about 4.6 million livres and a merchant population of about sixty, a quarter of the trade would have provided a volume of about 19,150 livres per merchant in 1754.

However, this form of calculation disguises the diversity which certainly existed among the resident merchants. Many shopkeepers were probably no more prosperous than the two pacotilleurs cited in Chapter Two, who spent five months plus their travelling time to sell just 6000 livres of goods. Small operations such as these left more for others, such as the Daccarrette family, which by 1726 was producing about 100,000 livres worth of cod annually, quite apart from its activities in the supply of other fishermen and in import and export shipping.<sup>1</sup> It seems likely that several members of the local merchant community could have expected an annual turnover in the area of 100,000 livres. With such a volume of business, even a small percentage taken as profit would have given these individuals a good living and the opportunity to accumulate capital for investment.

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1. Biography of Michel Daccarrette by T.J.A. LeGoff in DCB 3, p. 156-7. The estimate of value is based on 34 shallops producing 300 quintals each at 10 livres per quintal.

Comparison of these wealth estimates with those of merchants elsewhere is restricted by the tendency of the few available studies to concentrate on different periods or on particularly wealthy individuals, but a few figures may be cited. Merchant Charles de Couagne of Montréal, who in 1706 left an unusually valuable estate estimated at 205,000 livres, apparently had a volume of business between about 12,000 and 20,000 livres in most years from 1690 to 1705.<sup>1</sup> As agents for Robert Dugard et Cie of Rouen in the 1730s and 1740s, Havy and Lefebvre of Québec handled up to 400,000 livres worth of imports and exports annually, an amount that put them far beyond the volume of other Québec traders of that period.<sup>2</sup> The available evidence on Thomas Hancock, a leading merchant of Boston by about 1735, implies that his scale of business was beyond any of these.<sup>3</sup>

Whether the highly competitive cod trade, where prices could not easily be adjusted to match rising operational costs, was as profitable as trade in other products is unclear. However it seems, granted the tentative nature of the evidence, that several Louisbourg merchants ran businesses which were at least respectably large by the colonial standards of the time.

The merchants' social standing and the cohesion of the merchant community are difficult to state simply, at least without a more wide-ranging social study than is attempted here. The judgment rendered by a number of historians,<sup>4</sup> that the more successful merchants had social ties

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1. Anna-Marie Dumont, The Composition and Division of the Estate of Charles de Couagne (Concordia University, unpublished M.A. Thesis, 1975).
  2. Dale B. Miquelon, Robert Dugard... (University of Toronto, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, 1973), p. 169.
  3. W.T. Baxter, The House of Hancock: Business in Boston 1724-1775 (New York, Russell and Russell, 1965).
  4. J.S. McLennan, Louisbourg, pp. 88-92; MacLean and Morgan, "Social Structure and Life in Louisbourg" Canada, Vol. 1, #4, p.61; and to some extent, T.A. Crowley, Government and Interests, p. 286-304.

to the officer corps and administrative elite while the less prominent ones shaded into the society of innkeepers and master artisans, is based largely on impressions from marriage records, the distribution of appointive offices, and by evidence of material possessions and lifestyle. The conclusion seems reasonable, but to buttress it with hard data would be difficult.

Further indications about the merchants' place in colonial society can be drawn from cases in which the merchants themselves attempted to define their status. Valuable in this respect are the court disputes initiated by merchants protecting their business reputations from rumour and innuendo. These cases were not simply libel actions. Accused of "friponnerie" or of having a criminal past, a merchant sued for defamation of character like anyone else. In questions of business reputation, however, the actionable statement was usually the suggestion of insolvency. The aggrieved party's demand was for recognition as an honourable businessman. In 1751, Pierre Labrouche asked in court that his fellow merchant Jean-Baptiste Duboé be obliged to recognize him as "un négociant d'honneur et un homme de probité" and to retract claims that he was insolvent.<sup>1</sup> Three years later, Duboé was again in court, retracting a similar allegation about Pierre Rodrigue and acknowledging his honour and reputation. Rodrigue sought no damages, but received the apology in the presence of a representative group of his fellow merchants, as well as several visiting merchants and captains.<sup>2</sup> Merchants actively defended their commercial reputations, for rumours of impending bankruptcy could cut off their access to credit and trust. In his 1743 bankruptcy, Jacques-François Rolland admitted he could not pay all his

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1. A.N., *Outre-Mer*, G2, Vol. 200, dossier 210, fol. 76, Labrouche vs. Duboé, 16 juillet 1751.

2. A.N., Col., E 140, Dossier J-B Duboé, 8 juin 1754.

debts, but claimed that only his mother-in-law's attacks on his management had undermined his creditors' confidence.<sup>1</sup> In a business which depended on learned skills as much as on capital, moreover, clerks were as protective of their business reputations as established merchants. They frequently sued former employers less in hopes of recovering their jobs than to disprove allegations about their lack of business skills. Jean-Baptiste Lascorret claimed that Michel Daccarrette had underpaid him, but he was also eager to prove that he was a capable, trained clerk and, as such, entitled to respect and to a place at his employer's table.

The merchant's consciousness of his business reputation and his status extended beyond the defence of his good name as a négociant d'honneur. As in Lascorret's case, questions of lifestyle became involved. Again, an example is provided by the abrasive Jean-Baptiste Duboé, who in 1755 fought an entire case over the lifestyle appropriate to a merchant and his family. Duboé had agreed to care for the daughter of a travelling merchant, Thomas Power. On his return to Louisbourg, Power sued Duboé, claiming that the girl had been made to work as a servant. Duboé denied this and brought witnesses to testify that the girl had lived in the proper style. Duboé's witnesses declared that even on working days she had been dressed as on a Sunday, she had always worn powder, and a dancing master had been hired to instruct her. She had dined at Duboé's table amid the proper company and, as Duboé put it, the only work demanded of her was that she learn the doctrines of the Catholic church. She had, in fact, been "entretenu dans la propriété", as was suitable for a merchant's daughter in a merchant's home.<sup>2</sup>

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1. A.N., Outre-Mer, G2, Vol. 198, dossier 180, pièce 14, 31 octobre 1743.

2. A.N., Outre-Mer, G2, Vol. 203, dossier 361, Power vs. Duboé, 12-27 mai 1755.

Clearly a merchant expected to live better than his servants, but merchants were conscious of a higher status than most working people, as artisans who developed merchant interests discovered. In a 1751 civil dispute over the ownership of some merchandise, merchant Jean Claparede, a former locksmith, had not only to prove his own case but to counter the allegation that he was

un élève de vulcain qui tache depuis tres peu de  
jours mettamorfofer son marteau dans une plume,<sup>1</sup>

which implied that a manual worker could hardly be compared to a pen-wielding merchant. The boundary between merchants and those of lower status was not impermeable, for Claparede and a few artisans became accepted as négociants, but the merchants would have regarded such changes of activity as a definite rise in status.

If the Louisbourg merchants were conscious of their status as négociants d'honneur, did they identify themselves with the ruling elite of the colony, the military officer corps and the senior administrators? Merchants were sometimes connected to them by marriage, and often shared business interests with them, while some merchants served as Superior Councillors and in a variety of administrative roles.<sup>2</sup> Yet the identification should not be carried too far. Even the most commercially-minded officer would have been unlikely to take the pen as his symbol. The most detailed study of the colonial administration suggests that the principal goals of officers and administrators were promotions, honours and gratifications not available to merchants.<sup>3</sup> Though the Carrerots are an example

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1. Ibid., Vol. 188, fol. 368, Claparede vs Duchambon, décembre 1751.
  2. Of the 13 Councillors not appointed ex officio, 6 were merchants (Guillaume Delort, Pierre Martissans, Louis Delort, Guillaume Delort fils, Philippe Le Neuf de Beaubassin, Nicolas Larcher). All the others were officers or administrators.
  3. T.A. Crowley, Government and Interests (Duke University, unpublished Ph.D., 1975), Chapter 3, particularly p. 132-33.

of a family which did shift from trade toward administration, there was a substantial degree of continuity in many merchant careers. Merchants' sons entered trade in fairly large numbers, and many merchants remained in trade after the final fall of the colony. By building new businesses in France (as did Daccarrette filis and Antoine Castaing in Bordeaux and Imbert and Lannelongue in Bayonne), in the Caribbean (Joseph Brisson), or in the new colony of Saint Pierre and Miquelon (Beaubassin, Sylvain), the Louisbourg merchants survived the fall of Ile Royale. Merchants were largely absent from the rolls of colonial refugees supported by state assistance into the revolutionary and imperial periods. Military officers and administrators, while they availed themselves of colonial opportunities to increase their personal wealth, never had this lifelong professional commitment to merchant careers. The career patterns and goals of the two groups appear to have been distinctly different, despite the commercial and social ties between them.

### 3. MERCHANTS AND THE ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION OF ILE ROYALE

The merchants of Louisbourg were among the principal beneficiaries of the trade of Ile Royale. They were numerous, professional, aware of their merchant status, and probably fairly successful. To what use did they put their economic strength?

One simple theory of economic growth assumes that in a situation like Ile Royale's, capital accumulation will become the special role of one group, whose reinvestment of earnings for further expansion and profit fuels the growth and diversification of the economy.<sup>1</sup> In Ile Royale, the merchant community would seem to be prime candidates for this role. They lived in the area and could expect to profit from its development. They had the opportunity to accumulate capital and had the business training to manage its reinvestment. As major beneficiaries of Ile Royale's trade, the merchants should have been the entrepreneurial elite of the colony, if such a group existed.

The development of Ile Royale's resources other than the codfish might be expected to provide evidence of merchants directing the growth and diversification of the colonial economy. There were readily available resources, steady demand, and frequently noted opportunities for profit. Well before the settlement of Ile Royale, the island's resources had been surveyed in detail. Proposals for the colony's establishment accepted that cod fishing would be the principal industry, but pointed out the other industries which would support the colonists. Large deposits of coal lay

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1. Such a model underlies the investigations of the growth of New France in Hamelin, Economie et Soci t  and Nish, Les Bourgeois-Gentilhommes. It also figures in Shepherd and Walton's study of the contribution of shipping and trade to growth in New England in Shipping, Maritime Trade and Economic Development.

close to the surface and near the coast. The island was well stocked with timber, limestone, plaster and other minerals. Pastures and arable land where livestock and food crops could be raised surrounded many of its harbours and inlets. Nor were all the potential areas for diversification interior ones. Increased participation in ocean shipping would have increased employment and revenues in Ile Royale and made it less dependent on externally-owned vessels. The exploitation of all these opportunities, it was assumed, would improve the quality of life in the colony.<sup>1</sup> Increasing local self-sufficiency would also make the colony less vulnerable to naval blockade and other interruptions in supply.<sup>2</sup>

Despite the increased security and additional profits which such development might have brought, the local merchants did not take much part in such projects. Few merchants invested in logging industries, mines or commercial agriculture. In fact, the inland resources of Ile Royale never were thoroughly exploited during the French regime. Despite early investigations of the coal fields and some small exports, the French produced little coal until they took over mines developed by the British between 1745 and 1749. Lumbering and firewood cutting had more success, but mainly as a seasonal sideline for fishermen and soldiers. Even full-time logging operations appear to have lacked the investment in sawmills and skilled employees that might have fostered growth. Shipbuilding, though it produced several vessels a year, was practised without formal shipyards or specialized equipment. Attempts at agricultural development, though not

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1. The inland potential of the colony was summed up most enthusiastically in the anonymous *mémoire* "Sur l'établissement d'une colonie sur Cap Breton", A.N., Col., Cl1C, Vol. 8, fol. 10, 30 novembre 1706.
  2. Development for self-sufficiency and increased exports was discussed in the 1750s, particularly by Governor de Raymond's "Mémoire de la Commerce, 1751", Service Historique de l'Armée, Series A1, Article 3393, pièce 33.

entirely unsuccessful, disappointed the colonial officials who promoted them. The colony failed even to maintain permanent herds of livestock. The colonists' preference for re-exporting the ships they bought from New England rather than using them to build up their own merchant fleets has already been noted.

The merchants' general refusal to invest in these fields, particularly the interior resources, meant that they were left to other investors. Along with individual craftsmen, discharged soldiers and refugee Acadians who started farming or logging with no investment other than their own labour and some government assistance, the major backers of inland resource development were investors not directly involved in merchant trade.

Military officers and administrators were an important part of this group. Several officers ran firewood and timber-cutting operations, employing their soldiers and selling to the administration. Administrators as well as officers regularly bought or were conceded large properties where they attempted to develop farms. Senior officials did this to set an example to potential farmers, but others like Duvivier, who in the 1730s combined a cattle ranch with butchering interests, had commercial ambitions.<sup>1</sup>

The other important investors in resource projects might charitably be called industrial entrepreneurs or, less kindly, dreamers. These were usually newcomers to the colony with large industrial ambitions, often backed from France. The seigneuries of Ruelle d'Auteuil on Ile Madame, the Boularderie family on Ile de la Boularderie and Jean-Pierre Roma on Ile Saint-Jean all aimed at commercial fishing and agriculture on a large

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1. A.N., Col., Cl1B, Vol. 22, fol. 236, undated, unsigned *mémoire* (c1740).

scale.<sup>1</sup> None met their objectives, though the last two struggled on for many years, due more to the perseverance of their operators than to their commercial successes. The fortifications contractors (generally builders from France) frequently had industrial ambitions. Contractors Ganet and d'Arrigrand spent many years trying to start a logging and milling project near Louisbourg, and Bernard Muiron, who succeeded them in the contract, established a tannery which consumed 10,000 livres but collapsed in three years.<sup>2</sup> In 1735, Etienne Gombert of Marseilles formed a construction firm to build ships of twelve hundred tonneaux in Ile Royale. He brought carpenters and equipment to the colony but, told that the local timbers were too small for such vessels, he dissolved the company rather than build ships of a more reasonable size.<sup>3</sup> None of these large industrial projects looked for the participation of the local merchant community.

Another investment opportunity arose in the Anglo-French war which began in 1744. Though the war threatened the trade of Ile Royale, it also created privateering opportunities in Louisbourg. Documentation on the 1744-45 privateers is limited, but records of the vessels Cantabre, Saint-Charles, Brasdor and Cezar show that the investors were almost all administrators or military officers. Apart from a one-fifth share owned

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1. On Ruelle d'Auteuil, see François-Madelaine-Fortuné Ruelle d'Auteuil, "Lettres et Mémoires..." in Rapport de l'Archiviste du Province de Québec pour 1922-23 (Québec, 1923), pp. 1-114. On Boularderie, see the biographies of LePoupet de la Boularderie pere et fils in DCB #3 and DCB 4, respectively, by Dale Miquelon. On Roma, the biography by Margaret Coleman in DCB #3, p. 566.
  2. Biographies of Arrigrand, Ganet, and Muiron by F.J. Thorpe in DCB 3, pages 20, 234, and 478 respectively.
  3. A.N., Outre-Mer, G3, Vol. 2039-2, pièce 46, compromise entre Gombert et Boularderie, 17 juillet 1736; ibid., G2, Vol. 192, Registre 1, fol. 13, Gombert vs Duval, 15 mars 1736. At 1200 tonneaux, the ships would have been twice as large as the largest merchant ships ever to visit Ile Royale, and much larger than the frigates which normally represented the French navy around Ile Royale.

by its captain, the Cantabre was the project of Captain Duvivier, Governor Duquesnel and ordonnateur Bigot. The Saint-Charles belonged to the same three plus Lieutenant de Gourville. Brasdor and Cezar show that merchants were willing to invest in privateers. Seven merchants had shares in these vessels, together with as many officers and officials, but most of the merchants' investments were small. The merchants' main interest in the privateers of 1744 was evidently in supplying them with food and equipment which would have gone to fishing properties in other years.<sup>1</sup>

What explains the merchants' general refusal to participate in the diversification of the colonial economy?

One reason could be the great obstacles to be faced by colonists who did attempt to start such industries. Farming suffered from the poor quality of the soil, from the brevity of the growing season and from the lack of seed, equipment, and experience. New lumbering and building-supply operations had to compete with well-established competition (particularly in New England) eager to export lumber, bricks, and shingles to Ile Royale. Coal mines required a discouragingly large investment before they could produce enough to justify converting heating systems from wood. In addition, all local industries faced labour shortages. Even the fishing industry was short of men at times, and its long-established recruiting techniques provided strong competition for new industries in search of labourers. Obviously resource development carried substantial risks.

Merchants considering investment in the resource industries would have faced all these problems. Nevertheless there were strong incentives to

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1. The details on the four privateers are from A.D. Charente-Maritime, B, Registre 275, passim.

their participation. Food, fuel, lumber and other local products could all expect a ready market in Louisbourg, if produced at competitive rates. Sales would not have been limited to the local market: coal could have been sold in France and New England, lumber and timber in the West Indies. Export earnings from the sale of local products would have brought additional earnings, increased imports and larger volumes of trade. With their access to marketing and transportation systems, the merchants could have expected to dispose of goods they produced, and to profit from the increase in trade, particularly if they invested in shipping and moved the goods themselves.

Merchants should have been better equipped than most to overcome the difficulties of resource production. They had reduced their risks in the fishing industry by running larger than average operations and by combining fish production with supplying and marketing activities. In the same way, they could have avoided some of the risks run by small scale operators in logging and shipbuilding.

Motives of survival as well as of profit should have encouraged the merchants to diversify. Even when the shipping lanes were open between May and November, war, weather and distant economic fluctuations could easily interrupt vital imports. Inadequate food imports were a fairly common problem, particularly after the decline in Canadian wheat exports that followed the crop failure of 1737. Some deprivation of diet may have been the rule rather than the exception in Ile Royale's winters, and the regular possibility of war and other disruptions of trade should have encouraged local development by everyone with a stake in the colony's survival, despite the obstacles.

The merchants' reluctance to invest in the development of the

colony's resources does not seem to have stemmed from a failure to perceive such fields as a potential opportunity for investment. For one thing, the merchants had great experience in investing in one industry, the fishery, in which their participation was central to their success. In any case, there are just enough examples of merchant investment to show that the idea of diversifying their holdings was not foreign to the merchant community. Despite their inclination to sell vessels soon after purchase, the merchants did hold some share of the shipping industry. A few also had resource investments. Like a fisherman moving into merchant trade, carpenter Nicolas Hamelin had expanded a wood trade into an import-export business without losing his interest in commercial logging.<sup>1</sup> There are a few examples of merchant investment in shipbuilding<sup>2</sup> and agriculture. In 1751 merchant Antoine Morin rented a farm to tenant sharecroppers, taking part of the crop as rent and reserving the right to buy and market his tenants' share.<sup>3</sup> In the colony's last years, merchant Nicolas Larcher became an active industrial investor, while maintaining fishing and trading interests. He developed a farm and a sawmill on the Miré river and, in 1755, became the garrison's major supplier of coal.<sup>4</sup> These activities, particularly Larcher's, show that merchants were aware of the commercial potential of the island's resources, but such cases were exceptional.

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1. Hamelin frequently called a "marchand de bois" was apparently unique in qualifying his title of merchant. See A.N., Outre-Mer, G2, Vol. 197, dossier 154, Hamelin vs Lafitte, 17 novembre 1741; Ibid., Vol. 211, dossier 536, Hamelin vs Bernard, 1743-58.
  2. For instance, A.N., Outre-Mer, G3, Vol. 2041-1, pièce 82, engagement de charpentiers avec Didion et Castaing, marchands, 1 décembre 1751.
  3. Ibid, Vol. 2047-2, pièce 5, Bail à loyer entre A. Morin et Catherine Dinan,
  4. Biography of Nicolas Larcher by Christopher Moore in DCB 4, forthcoming. Coal sales in 1756 and 1757 amounted to about 50,000 livres a year and provided work for many coastal vessels, the costs of which are documented in the Bordereaux from 1749 to 1757.

The merchant's small participation in industrial projects in Ile Royale was not due to a preference for investing elsewhere. There is virtually no evidence in Louisbourg sources of merchants resident in Ile Royale investing in businesses or property in other regions. Some merchants who left the colony certainly took their earnings to France for investment there, but many of the merchants of Ile Royale were tenacious colonists. A significant portion of them had roots in Plaisance, Acadia or Canada and most of the deported merchants of 1745 chose to return to Ile Royale when they got the chance in 1749. Many eventually settled in Saint Pierre and Miquelon. The will of many merchant families to remain in France's insecure maritime colonies throughout the eighteenth century makes it unlikely that they were actively moving their money from Ile Royale to France.

One very important factor encouraging the merchants to specialize in fishing and merchandise trade was Ile Royale's achievement in those areas. Ile Royale cod competed successfully for markets and attracted large numbers of trading vessels to Louisbourg. Those achievements integrated Ile Royale into a North Atlantic market, obliging all its potential products to compete with imported alternatives. Though men whose main income came from the fishing industry might build a few vessels to make work in the off-season, a commercial shipyard operating on its sales earnings would have faced stiff competition from New England vessels, which were cheap enough to attract buyers from France. Since this kind of competition faced shipping, lumbering, brickmaking and agriculture as well as shipbuilding, merchants probably found it practical to concentrate on the sectors where they were well established, relying on earnings from cod and trade to pay for extra-colonial purchases. The merchants' avoidance of many fields of

enterprise may well have reflected their judgment that the prices set by competition in these industries would not permit a return on investment equivalent to fishing or merchant trade.

The merchants' increasing share of the local fishery apparently confirms their preference for reinvestment in that industry. On the other hand, the local fishing industry showed little growth during the history of Ile Royale. Merchant-run fisheries may have been larger and more efficient, but increasing merchant participation had little apparent success in ameliorating the industry's labour shortages, in stabilizing catch per vessel ratios or in increasing the production of the industry as a whole. If the merchants avoided other investments to increase their holdings in the fishing industry, the results of merchant investment there were small.

A factor more important than competition from other regions in limiting the merchants' contribution to economic growth may simply have been the brevity of Ile Royale's existence. Growth rates were small in pre-industrial economies, and a region attempting to develop largely through its own earnings should not be expected to have financed rapid growth or diversification. From this point of view, the scattered attempts to exploit the island's interior and its west coast are signs of strength, not of weakness. Furthermore, merchant interest in new investments seems to have been increasing in the colony's last years. In the 1750s, Beaubassin Sylvain et Cie secured the butchery monopoly, which had previously required the support of a wealthy military officer. The firm also considered a bid for the fortifications contract. The investments of Morin, Larcher and others were all in the 1750s. Local merchants' shipping interests may have been increasing at this time,<sup>1</sup> and merchant-owned

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1. This was part of the complaint of the Saint-Malo merchants against the "gros négociants" of Louisbourg in 1753. Firm data on ship ownership is even less available for the 1750s than for earlier periods.

privateers were more active from 1756 to 1758 than they had been in 1744-45.<sup>1</sup> This late surge of merchant investment is a reminder of how brief was Ile Royale's history. The colony had barely two decades of growth between its establishment and the onset of depression in the 1740s. After the siege, deportation and exile of 1745-49, the colony had only six years of renewal before another war cut its economic base. Under those conditions, survival rather than prosperity and diversification must have been the major challenge for many businesses.

Even prosperity would not have made diversification feasible immediately. The evidence on merchant wealth suggests that some merchants did become quite prosperous and must have had some disposable income. However, the small, individual firms which the Louisbourg merchants found practical for fishing and merchant trade were hardly adequate vehicles for developing most of the potential new industries of Ile Royale. Commercial development of shipping, lumbering, mining and many other areas required capital investment and long-term planning far greater than was the norm in the merchant community. Capital and new methods of business organization might have been borrowed from Europe, or might have arrived through increasing direct investment like Larcher's. The creation of such firms, however, would have required a major evolution in the business community of Ile Royale. Even had there been time for such an evolution, there is no reason to assume that the merchants would have been inclined to abandon the more personal business organizations and methods which served them adequately in fishing and merchant trade.

Consequently the third step of the theory outlined in the Intro-

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1. Beaubassin Sylvain et Cie, Imbert and Lannelongue, and Louis Lagroix were some of the merchants outfitting privateers between 1756 and 1758.

duction and Chapter One must be rejected. Ile Royale's trading position does appear to have encouraged the growth of a local merchant community. The merchants probably did accumulate a substantial share of the colony's earnings. Their successes, however, did not necessarily produce rapid growth or prompt them to diversify their interests. The Louisbourg merchants, whatever their interest in new investment opportunities, did not have the time to benefit from any large growth in the local economy. In addition, their business organizations, adapted to fishing and trade, were not well suited to major industrial projects. Though all the important Louisbourg merchants called themselves négociants, the businessmen with an interest in everything, there appear to have been significant limits on the scope of their activities.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Despite Pierre Léon's definition quoted in Chapter Two ("le négociant fait tout simultanément ou successivement"), some research on French business suggests a division of labour, by which merchants specialized in merchandise exchange, transportation and business services, leaving large capital investments and industrial projects to wealthy financiers, nobles and office-holders. See G.V. Taylor, "Types of Capitalism in Eighteenth Century France" English Historical Review, Vol. 79 (1964), p. 478. The fishing company of Baron d'Huart, as described by J.F. Bosher, "A Fishing Company of Louisbourg, Les Sables d'Olonne et Paris", French Historical Studies, Vol. 9 (1975), p. 263, appears to be a case of the latter type. (Despite Bosher's title, there was no colonial participation in d'Huart's company).

## CONCLUSIONS

The first conclusion to be drawn from this study is simply that there was a merchant community in Ile Royale, and that it was sizeable, professional and perhaps even prosperous. The statement needs to be made, for much of the historiography of Ile Royale from Parkman and Garneau to Innis and Eccles has ignored the implications of Ile Royale's merchant trade. With the notable exception of J.S. McLennan, historians treating Ile Royale have as a rule made brief reference to a society of fishermen and soldiers and then turned to military events without much consideration of the economic and social systems in which even fishermen and soldiers must live. This practice had influenced economic history as well as political narratives: studies of the shipping and maritime trade of New France give only cursory reference to Ile Royale, which had more shipping and as much trade as the larger Canadian colony.

The size of Ile Royale's trade is significant for the study of the economic history of New France, particularly during the early eighteenth century. Students of Canadian trade more aware of Ile Royale's flourishing trade with other regions might find in the limited contact between Louisbourg and Québec important evidence of the economic problems of Canada. The total volume of Ile Royale's trade makes unrealistic the assumption that its small population was the limiting factor in trade between it and Canada. Geography, which facilitated Ile Royale's integration into the Atlantic economy more than Québec's, may have had a major influence in the nature of the business communities of the two regions.

Routes and volumes of trade are not the only subjects in which

evidence from Ile Royale could influence our understanding of larger areas. The long life of the myth that the major economic actor in Ile Royale was the corrupt official who welcomed New England smugglers has prevented evidence about business conditions in Louisbourg from influencing the discussion of merchants, business conditions and economic attitudes in New France. Once the recurrent image of the shrewd New England trader dominating the corrupted fortress has been erased, Louisbourg's trade with New England might provide the essential link in a study of the cross-cultural similarities between the merchant of Boston or Halifax and his French counterpart in Louisbourg or Québec. Louisbourg's participation in an Atlantic economy also suggests ways to compare these colonial merchants with merchants in Europe and around the trading system.

However, since this study is local rather than comparative, most of its conclusions must concern the place of the merchant in the economy and society of Ile Royale. Chapter Four has already taken up that topic, but some more general conclusions are possible. First, the fishing industry created the merchant community and not vice versa, yet economic systems in the colony can only be understood when the merchants' central role is understood. The cod fishery and its time-honoured methods had undergone an important change when France began to turn over a share of its cod production to settled colonists. When colonists produced the cod for Europe, France's shipping to the fishing regions could become trading rather than fishing ventures. This process must have influenced the development of France's fishing and trading ports, but the impact on the colonies is clear: a place was created for colonial merchants to handle the exchanges between colony and metropolis. Once fishing and trading became distinct occupations, the

traders, holding a strong intermediary position and armed with specialized business skills, obliged the fishery to develop from a craft to a business in which merchants could participate and dominate. This process had begun at Plaisance but it leapt forward at Louisbourg, promoted by the general increase in French overseas trade following the Treaty of Utrecht and by the French crown's contribution to making Louisbourg a major port.

The merchant community of Louisbourg retained its links to the fishing industry. Merchant's methods and business organisations which had evolved from the fishing industry did not make a conclusive break from it, nor evolve to the point of considering the fishing industry as one potential market or investment among many. Increased sales to government, the beginning of a coal trade and other developments providing new interests for merchants may be signs that such a break was coming, but Ile Royale was essentially a fishing economy throughout its existence. Nevertheless, the addition of merchant trade to the fishing industry was important to both the colony and the industry. Merchant direction made the industry capable of responding quickly to changing circumstances, such as the increasing market for cod in the West Indies, and thereby aided the fishing industry to keep pace with the development of the Atlantic economy as a whole. In a similar way, the merchant presence gave a measure of diversity to the colony, providing goods and services for livelihoods outside the fishing industry and helping Ile Royale to become something more than a collection of transient fishermen.

Merchants in Louisbourg had a fair degree of autonomy, if that word has any meaning in an international economy based on exchange and interdependence. The trade of Ile Royale, drawing supplies from many regions, selling to scattered markets and supporting many small businesses,

resisted concentration and monopoly. The individual merchant or merchant-fisherman of Ile Royale apparently could join in the trade much like a merchant-outfitter in Bayonne or Saint-Malo. Despite the appearance of some French firms with hired employees in Ile Royale, the activities of most Louisbourg merchants suggest cooperation with rather than dependence on French merchants. In that sense, Louisbourg is best seen not as a subsidiary of Bordeaux or Bayonne but as their counterpart on a smaller scale across the Atlantic.

Autonomy, however, can only be considered at the level of the individual firm and merchant. The colony as a whole had no existence outside the Atlantic trading system. By the 1750s, Europe was only one of several trading partners for Ile Royale, but the proliferation of trade links only heightened Ile Royale's dependence on the smooth functioning of the entire system. The Louisbourg merchants could only bring in goods and ship out cod as long as the system itself continued undisturbed, and they had no alternative businesses to occupy them. Despite the money spent to fortify it, Ile Royale turned out to be powerless when disputes over the colonies and their trade began. In each war, Ile Royale's collapse was military rather than economic, but the exodus of merchants between 1755 and 1758 demonstrates the colony's difficulties in maintaining itself through the crises of the Atlantic trading system.

If merchants were central to the economy of Ile Royale, merchant trade should have had important social consequences. While this thesis is not intended as a social analysis, the evidence here provokes some hypotheses about the society of Ile Royale. In a number of ways, the influence of merchant trade makes Ile Royale seem curiously modern. Located on the frontier of the European/Atlantic economy, Ile Royale borrowed technology easily, whether it was a vessel type such as the schooner, a business

technique such as the bill of exchange or a commodity such as West Indian coffee. Socially and culturally, however, the colony's borrowings were much more limited and specific. Many of the social structures basic in traditional societies in Europe and even in the colonies never appeared in Ile Royale. The seigneurial system was insignificant in Ile Royale, and while the officer corps came from the Canadian, Acadian or French nobility, no one was ennobled or sought ennoblement in Ile Royale. With religious matters left to the Brittany Recollet order, parish structures were rudimentary and the influence of religious organization in local society appears small. Militia organizations, which had a place in the social structure as well as in the defence of Canada, had little importance in Ile Royale. Finally, the limited development of agriculture meant there was nothing resembling a self-sufficient domestic sector to balance the influence of external commercial trade. In the absence of all these institutions, merchant capitalism had a nearly free hand. Defence, welfare, justice, and community services were all turned over to the state, while the economy was left to a private sector largely free of traditional social responsibilities. The cash economy and commercial exchange faced no competition from the fixed reciprocal duties which regulate the relationships between social orders in traditional societies. Apart from the rule of law and the influence of bureaucratic and military hierarchies, the relationships between individuals and between social groups in Ile Royale seem to have been determined mainly by wage relationships between employers and employees and the commercial exchange of goods and services. Surely such is the very definition of a society designed to foster the interests of merchants and merchant trade.

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My research in these primary sources was greatly facilitated by the many indexes and finding aids of the Fortress of Louisbourg Archives, and by the assistance of many members of the research staff there.

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