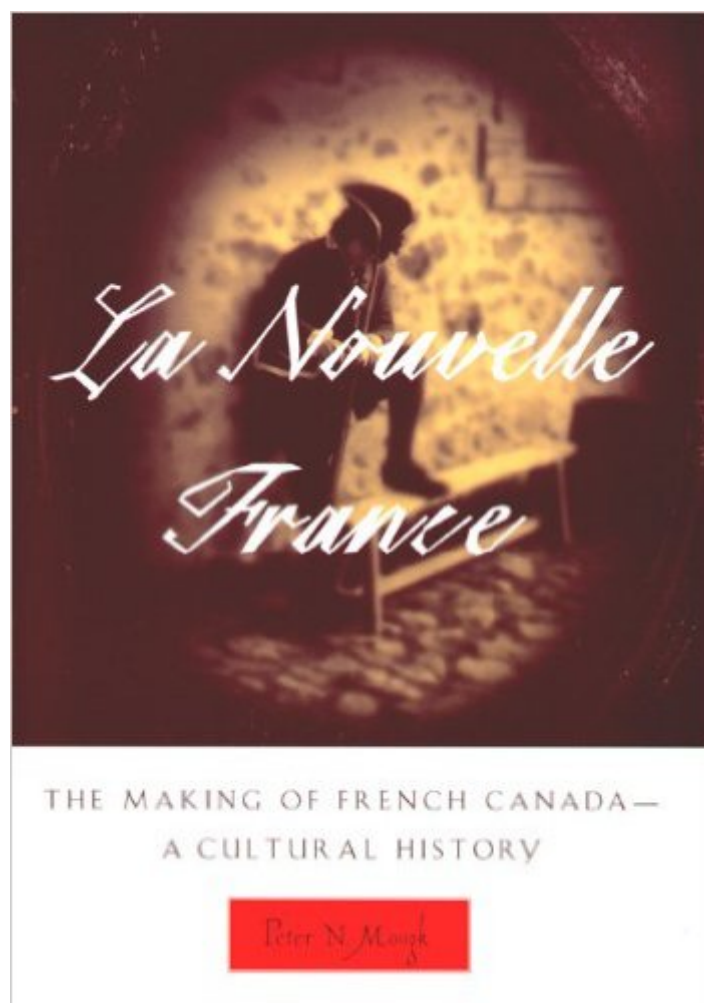


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La Nouvelle France: The Making Of French Canada--A Cultural History



Synopsis

On one level, Peter Moogk's latest book, *La Nouvelle France: The Making of French Canada* "A Cultural History, is a candid exploration of the troubled historical relationship that exists between the inhabitants of French- and English- speaking Canada. At the same time, it is a long- overdue study of the colonial social institutions, values, and experiences that shaped modern French Canada. Moogk draws on a rich body of evidence "literature; statistical studies; government, legal, and private documents in France, Britain, and North America" and traces the roots of the Anglo-French cultural struggle to the seventeenth century. In so doing, he discovered a New France vastly different from the one portrayed in popular mythology. French relations with Native Peoples, for instance, were strained. The colony of New France was really no single entity, but rather a chain of loosely aligned outposts stretching from Newfoundland in the east to the Illinois Country in the west. Moogk also found that many early immigrants to New France were reluctant exiles from their homeland and that a high percentage returned to Europe. Those who stayed, the Acadians and Canadians, were politically conservative and retained Old Regime values: feudal social hierarchies remained strong; one's individualism tended to be familial, not personal; Roman Catholicism molded attitudes and was as important as language in defining Acadian and Canadian identities. It was, Moogk concludes, the pre-French Revolution Bourbon monarchy and its institutions that shaped modern French Canada, in particular the Province of Quebec, and set its people apart from the rest of the nation.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Non-Traditional View of Francos: An Author Speaks By Juliana L'Heureux
A recent telephone interview with author Peter N. Moogk, 60, a Canadian professor currently living in Vancouver, British Columbia, brought out a surprisingly non-traditional point of view on Franco-American culture. So much of Franco-American culture is embellished in nostalgia about the past, but Moogk cuts through the heroic veneer presented by some earlier writers like Francis Parkman. Moogk's most recent book was published in the United States in 2001, titled "La Nouvelle France: The Making of French Canada- A Cultural History". It's an ambitious historical effort. To his credit, Moogk provides extensive research covering the entire 400 year scope of the French experience in North America, not just a little slice of it. In a nutshell, Moogk avoids all prevailing points of view about French-Canadian culture. There's no embellishments or cultural nostalgia. Instead, Moogk's research drives home the difficult circumstances of French history in North America. Moogk teaches early French North American history at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. He's a citizen of both England and Canada. He's not a French-Canadian but he attended McGill University in Montreal for a brief time and he speaks French. One reason he wrote La Nouvelle France was because he wasn't happy with what his students were learning about French-Canada. Popular Canadian histories assume that New France has no influence upon the present. The French Regime is presented as colorful but not serious. It's a sequential era of heroic missionaries, valiant warriors, explorers and hardy fur traders.

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