



A Medieval Family: The Pastons of Fifteenth-Century England (Medieval Life)

Frances Gies, Joseph Gies

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The Pastons family of Norfolk, England, has long been known to medieval scholars for its large collection of personal correspondence, which has survived five centuries. Revealing a wealth of information about manners, morals, lifestyle, and attitudes of the late Middle Ages, the letters also tell the story of three generations of the fifteenth-century Paston family that treads like a historical novel full of memorable characters: Margaret Paston, the indomitable wife and mother who fought the family's battles; her husband, John Paston I, tough, hardheaded, and thrice confined to Fleet Prison but never yielding to his enemies; daughter Margery, who scandalized family and friends by falling in love with the Paston bailiff, Richard Calle; lighthearted, chivalric Sir John; and cheerful, sensible John III, who against all odds succeeded in marrying for love.

A Medieval Family traces the Pastons history from 1420, through the stormy Wars of the Roses, to the early 1500s. The family's story, extracted from their letters and papers and told largely in their own words, shows a side of history rarely revealed: the lives and fortunes not of kings and queens but of ordinary middle-class people with problems, tragedies, and moments of happiness.

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