

At the risk of producing “encore un autre ouvrage sur les rebelliions de 1837 et 1838” (Rheault and Aubin, p. 7), the authors of these two volumes have offered a further glimpse into the Lower Canadian Rebellions of 1837 and 1838, illustrating the essential roles played by both doctors and notaries, including a collection of biographical information pertaining to the individuals of their respective professions during this often studied episode in Canadian history. While Marcel Rheault and Georges Aubin demonstrate the central role played by doctors in the rebellions, as well as in the political realm in the years leading to the uprising, Julien Mackay has chosen to focus his work on notaries in general during the uprisings, not exclusively on those who were involved in the rebellions. Rheault, a retired surgeon and historian, having previously published a related work, *La médecine en Nouvelle-France* (Septentrion, 2004), has collaborated with Aubin, a scholar well versed in the history of the *Parti Patriote*, to produce *Médecins et patriotes, 1837–1838*. Mackay, a professional notary and history enthusiast, has offered *Notaires et patriotes, 1837–1838* as his fourth work on the subject of notaries in Quebec. Though the works bear a striking resemblance in title, cover art, and overall theme, they differ quite substantially in their historical contextualization as a result of the slight variation in their approach to related topics.

Mackay acknowledges that his work is not that of an historian and instead was produced to assemble the abundance of information concerning notaries in the archival material and historiography of the rebellions. The first 50 pages of the book are divided into five separate sections, three of which written by Mackay himself: the introduction and sections entitled « Jules Verne et sa vision des patriotes » and « La nomination des notaires », in which the author provides a general historical background for notaries in Lower Canada. Essentially a summary of Jean-Paul Bernard’s *Les Rébellions de 1837–1838* and Allan Greer’s *Habitants et patriotes*, the section entitled « Contexte sociopolitique des rebelliions » was produced by Jean-Philippe Tremblay, and there is also a « Liste des notaires en fonction en 1837–1838 ». The bulk of Mackay’s book is its final section, composed of approximately 125 alphabetized biographical entries of varying lengths. Though some are as short as one sentence, where information has been available, these entries include dates of birth and death, as well as information concerning marriages, children, and education, and usually conclude with a summation of the notary’s involvement in the rebellions. Primarily collected through the use of other biographical secondary sources, including the *Dictionnaire biographique du Canada* and Alain Messier’s *Dictionnaire encyclopédique et historique des Patriotes de 1837–1838*, Mackay’s biographies also benefit from additional primary sources taken from the *Événements de 1837–1838* collection at the *Archives nationales du Québec*.
While both works seek to present biographical references to demonstrate which doctors and notaries were involved in the rebellions, Rheault and Aubin, unlike Mackay, also examine the underlying reasons why these professionals became actively involved in Lower Canadian politics and, more specifically, in the Parti Patriote and the uprisings themselves. Due to their differing approach, Rheault and Aubin have produced a book that is largely a reversal of Mackay's work, placing more emphasis on the historical context surrounding the rebellions (some 35 short chapters in almost 200 pages) and less emphasis on individual biographical histories. This results in a shorter final biographical section that includes roughly 90 entries in slightly more than 100 pages.

Rheault and Aubin begin their book in the same manner as most on the subject of the rebellions, with a discussion of the Conquest of 1760 and the formation of a new French-Canadian elite during the first decades of the nineteenth century, during which time the number of francophone liberal professionals such as doctors, lawyers, and notaries grew substantially in Lower Canada (chapters 1–3). Chapters 4 to 8 focus on the medical profession in Lower Canada from 1760 to 1832, highlighting specific events that drew doctors of the province into the political realm, the most important being their appointment to the Bureau médical des examinateurs for the district of Quebec, established by the Medical Act of 1788. The nominative quality of the board assured that anglophone doctors dominated these positions and thus controlled the medical practice and its instruction within the province. The authors point out the importance of several individual doctors in the early manifestations against British domination in Lower Canada and their roles within the Parti Canadien and eventually the Parti Patriote, including François Blanchet, Edmund Bailey O'Callaghan, and brothers Robert and Wolfred Nelson. Largely through the efforts of these men, a new Medical Act was established in 1831, allowing the positions of the Bureau médical des examinateurs to become elective and thus giving francophone doctors a greater voice in the practice and instruction of medicine in Lower Canada.

Chapters 9 to 13 chronicle the role of doctors in the events that led to the rebellions from 1834 to 1837, including the repeal of the Medical Act of 1831. The 92 Resolutions of the Parti Patriote, the Gosford Commission, Lord Russell's resolutions and the beginning of public protests are all discussed with specific references to the involvement of doctors, in particular, Dr. Wolfred Nelson, who had become a leading voice among doctors in Lower Canada and the Parti Patriote. Chapters 14 to 34 serve largely to recount the major events of the rebellions in 1837 and 1838, once again paying special attention to the activities of the doctors involved. In chapters 14 and 16, the authors detail the roles played by doctors in the public protests that erupted throughout Lower Canada during this period and illustrate the influence these individuals had on public opinion. The actions of various doctors in the armed conflicts at Saint-Denis, Saint-Charles, Moore’s Corner, and Saint-Eustache are chronicled, as is their involvement with L'Association des Fils de la Liberté. In chapter 35, “Engagement des médecins dans les événements de 1837–1838”, which should have served as a conclusion, the authors demonstrate quite eloquently that, without the actions...
of more than 100 doctors, largely politically engaged due to their concerns over medical practice and instruction, the Lower Canadian Rebellions might never have taken place.

Both of these books represent a further contribution to the growing biographical history of the Lower Canadian Rebellions. While Mackay admittedly has chosen not to investigate the reasons why so many notaries became involved in the rebellions, his collection of biographies, in particular his embedded references, make his work an excellent reference source as well as a guide to find further primary and secondary sources. Likewise, the work of Rheault and Aubin provides ample references to other works and collections pertaining to doctors. Of course, they have taken their study a step further than Mackay by thoroughly examining the role played by doctors in the rebellions.

In spite of their contributions, the books rely almost exclusively on secondary sources, leaving little doubt that this has resulted in some minor omissions and a heavy reliance on the opinions of others. For example, the biographical entry for notary Chevalier de Lorimier states “de Lorimier recrutait surtout ses clients parmi les membres des professions libérales, les petits marchands, les artisans ainsi que les cultivateurs canadiens de la ville et de l’Île Montréal” (Mackay, p. 108). While this is not incorrect, the author fails to mention that de Lorimier also notarized several hundred voyageur contracts for the American Fur Company from 1830 to 1836, and it seems perplexing to consider where this company would fit among the liberal professionals, small merchants, artisans, and farmers of Montréal that the author describes as de Lorimier’s “clients.” This certainly does not discredit the above statement, but it does illustrate that Mackay has edited his biographies for content, and any readers should be fully aware of this fact.

While Rheault and Aubin have similarly placed too much reliance on secondary sources, their work’s only great weakness consists of its first chapter and conclusion, which appear to be completely unrelated to the book’s intended purpose. In a very well-written introduction that clearly demonstrates the need for such a book, the authors state, “Ce travail ne prétend pas réécrire l’histoire des soulèvements de 1837 et 1838. Il veut seulement mettre en relief le rôle qu’ont joué les médecins en tant que groupe relativement homogène […]” (Rheault and Aubin, p. 9). Strangely enough, in the first chapter, entitled « Insurrection, rébellion ou révolte? », the authors very briefly discuss the historiography concerning this question. Considering that only two pages earlier they had expressed no desire to rewrite history, the authors introduce a question that seeks to do exactly that. While they conclude that the uprisings in 1837–1838 were in fact a rebellion, as stated above, chapter 35 serves as a far better summation of their work than their conclusion, which appears to answer a question they did not fully develop.

Despite these minor criticisms, both books have amassed a wonderful collection of biographical material pertaining to liberal professionals of Lower Canada in 1837–1838. Mackay has produced a useful reference tool for those interested in the individual notaries who voiced either their support or condemnation of the
Parti Patriote. Rheault and Aubin have also created an excellent reference source, though they also clearly demonstrate the essential, if not central, role played by doctors in the Lower Canadian Rebellions. Now that doctors and notaries have been given due attention, one can only wonder when Avocats et patriotes, 1837–1838 will be published.

Mark Chambers
University of Ottawa


Dans ces ouvrages, Mélanie Morin-Pelletier et Cynthia Toman abordent toutes deux le sujet des infirmières militaires canadiennes, respectivement à l’époque de la Première et de la Seconde Guerre mondiale. Les auteures cherchent à mettre en valeur la contribution de ces femmes à l’effort de guerre canadien, la première en leur redonnant la parole par l’entremise d’une étude poussée du journal intime de ces femmes, la seconde, en démontrant comment les infirmières militaires se sont créé un espace féminin dans un monde dominé par les hommes, par le biais de l’analyse de leur travail et à la lumière du prisme du genre, des classes sociales, mais plus particulièrement le prisme du développement des technologies médicales.

Morin-Pelletier s’est penchée sur les traces laissées par treize infirmières militaires canadiennes, dont trois journaux intimes, trois mémoires publiés et sept manuscrits repérés dans divers centres d’archives du Canada. Toman, quant à elle, s’est appuyée sur un ensemble de 25 entrevues qu’elle a conduites avec des infirmières militaires de la Seconde Guerre mondiale ainsi que sur une trentaine d’entrevues tirées de collections conservées dans divers dépôts d’archives canadiens. De plus, elle a complété ses sources primaires par la création d’une base de données à contenu démographique, créée par l’extraction d’information de 1 145 dossiers personnels d’infirmières, ce qui représente un échantillon de 26 p. 100 de l’ensemble des infirmières militaires de la Seconde Guerre mondiale.

Les deux ouvrages ont de nombreux thèmes en commun : qui sont ces infirmières, leur formation professionnelle, les soins qu’elles doivent administrer au front, l’impact de la guerre sur leur pratique professionnelle, les relations interpersonnelles et les représentations que les infirmières ont des soldats, de l’ennemi, de la guerre et d’elles-mêmes. Les deux auteures ont le souci du détail et leur travail respectif repose sur de solides recherches. Les deux ouvrages sont bien structurés et documentés.

Toutefois, les ouvrages présentent des niveaux différents de complexité. Ceci s’explique entre autres par la différence entre les deux corpus de sources primaires mentionnés ci-haut mais aussi par l’origine des deux ouvrages. Briser les...