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# Loyalty to the Regime: Prominent Men, Militia and French-Canadian Identity through the 1812 War

*Jean-René Thuot*

## Abstract

In the North American British colonies, the 1812 war led to a great mobilization of militia corps to protect the Empire's possessions. For colonial authorities, such context represented an opportunity to measure local militia officers' loyalty to the Crown, particularly those who resided in the French traditional countryside. What can we understand of the French-Canadian involvement in the War of 1812 as officers? What is the impact of their relation to the Crown on their capacity to hold on to positions in their respective communities? By bringing to life a few case studies, this paper wishes to examine the formation of the French-Canadian identity through the involvement of local elites in the militia. This study is based on an analysis of the correspondence of the principal officers of the battalions with the central authorities and prosopographical research of those same officers in the rural regions of Lower Canada. The analysis of the strategies, values and interests of the militia officers, will serve to enlighten the parameters of the collaboration between the local elite and the colonial elite.

## Introduction

In the Canadian collective consciousness, there are many contrasting perceptions of the War of 1812. For some English Canadians, this war was instrumental in shaping the current Canadian identity, because

it embodies a time of cooperation... the coming together of different groups living in the territory to fight for a shared objective. By different groups, we are referring to the *English*, *French* and *Aboriginals*, based on the typology used by the current Canadian government. Therefore, the war appears to be a time of marking out this territory both in its literal and figurative sense when facing the American enemy. In the English-Canadian consciousness, 1812 offers epic battles, heroes and turning points. The Bicentennial of the War of 1812 celebrations, propelled by the *1812 Commemoration Funds* created by the Canadian federal government, echoed back to this appropriation.<sup>1</sup> By contrast, this episode did not leave the same imprint on French Canadians. In fact, it represents more a moment of assertion for these 'former' *Canadiens* than an attachment to some British ideal incarnated by the Empire. When considered from the perspective of identity, the 1812 episode in a way appears insoluble, limited among other things to the realm of contemporary nationalistic conflicts. But the same question keeps coming up: how to define the patriotism of French Canadians through the tumultuous transition since the British Conquest in 1760? Without claiming to have a complete answer to this delicate question, we propose in this paper a new way of looking at the whys and wherefores of the process of creating the French-Canadian identity, as seen through the lens of the militia officers in the War of 1812.

## Historiographical References and Field of Enquiry

These thoughts largely echo those of Canadian historians Colin M. Coates and Donald Fyson in recent years. Coates, in his book *Metamorphoses of Landscape and Community in Early Quebec*, published in 2000, reveals the seeds of French-Canadian nationalism at the turn of the 19th century in the St. Lawrence Valley.<sup>2</sup> Coates' reasoning regarding the Canadian identity can be summarised as follows: inasmuch as various cultural significances contribute to the modelling of individual identities, the relationship with the British Crown has played an active role in defining Canadians of French origin. By defining themselves in terms of differences, of the "Other", they also stigmatise their own defining characteristics. Interiorising these characteristics naturally leads them to exhibit their differences, to display what is commonly recognised as a 'nationalistic feeling'.

More recently, Donald Fyson has also endeavoured to assess the French-Canadian journey during the post-Conquest period based on the

relations with the British authorities.<sup>3</sup> Focusing especially on an examination of the use of the local court system and recruiting for ancillary positions in the courts (i.e., bailiffs) at the end of the 18th century, Fyson observed the gradual acculturation of French-speaking Canadians into the new culture of power. In conclusion, he acknowledged a 'ground-level' perspective, because it showed the pragmatism and permeability of local populations facing a new political and economic environment.

As a result of this work, our own research probed the mechanisms of social reproduction at work in the French-Canadian countryside between 1825 and 1865. At the end of this process, we were able to draw the outline of a local elite whose cohesiveness was closely linked with local institutions, especially those set up by the British; the militia officers hold a strategic position in the portrait drawn.<sup>4</sup> According to the interpretation proposed, this elite was able to maintain its distinct organic character with its own form of cultural logic, beyond the Act of Union, thereby thwarting the assimilationist policies that were spread until the time of the Durham Report. These results reflect those of Canadian colleagues on two levels: they help pinpoint the methods of reproduction of the French difference in the Canadian world—as Coates suggested for the previous period—while at the same time shining some light on the cooperation and mixing of the local communities and British authorities—thus echoing certain aspects of Fyson's work.

Where then does the War of 1812 fit into this portrait? Could it not be part of the long acculturation process of Canadians of French origin, i.e., as another milestone highlighting their differences within the legal and institutional parameters set out by the British authorities? In Quebec historiography, the military factor continues to bear fruit. However, the institution of the militia, as the prime point of contact between colonial authorities and local populations, has not attracted the attention of historians.

As a legacy of the French regime, the officer corps was legitimised by the new 'masters' of the valley after 1760. Consequently, as of the end of the 18th century, it was the King of Britain, through these colonial agents, who dealt out officers' commissions to represent him in this territory. In this way, this officer corps certainly embodied 'continuity while being different': it enabled French Canadians to recognise and 'name' themselves, while they were supporting and legitimising the relevance of the link with British authorities. Recent scientific documents have focused on the criteria for officers' commission positions or even on the reorganisation of the militia during the first third of the 19th century. Regarding the War of 1812 itself, the rejection of conscription

in Lachine monopolised all energies.<sup>5</sup> However, this attention given to the Lachine riot has not only helped fuel the thesis of the all-out rejection of conscription by French-Canadians but suggests a fully-fledged rejection of participating in war. These perspectives now appear to be unsatisfactory since they do not analyse the ‘adherence factors’ of a certain portion of Canadians.<sup>6</sup> In reality, seeing the military scene as a potential identity factor, as a place of mediation and codification of the practices of power in the Canadian countryside, has until now received very little attention.<sup>7</sup> The War of 1812 represents a turning point for explaining the terms and conditions of cooperation from the local Canadian elite—through the officer corps—in the war effort and in the long-term consequences of their involvement. We give an account of this interaction by observing relations between senior militia officers from the French battalions and the colonial authorities during the mobilisation of 1812 and the following years. To obtain both a synchronic and diachronic view of 1812, the letters received by the Adjutant-General between 1810 and 1830 have been consulted.

## The War of 1812 and Correspondence from Superior Officers

The War of 1812 involved very few military activities in Lower Canada per se, with the greatest exploit being the Battle of Châteauguay in 1813. However, the Canadian militia were mobilised to fight outside the territory. The leaders of the British colonies had straight-forward concerns—to protect the territory with all available resources. Given the limited regular troops, the sedentary militia quickly became one of the cornerstones of victory. The local communities in the St. Lawrence Valley, which were home to a significant proportion of the troops needed to hold the line against the Americans, were a necessary part of the solution for colonial authorities. The role of the militia officers therefore grew in this context.

Nevertheless, the use of officers’ correspondence to date has actually produced very few works, most of which belongs to Roch Legault.<sup>8</sup> The collection of the Adjutant-General’s Office of Lower Canada (RG9-I-A) of the National Library and Archives of Canada is one of the richest in this respect. Therefore, our investigation uses a corpus of more than 200 letters from this collection regarding the sedentary militia battalions found in Montreal and the Lower St. Lawrence. In the first case, the sectors of the communities north of Montreal (Terrebonne, L’Assomption, Lavaltrie, etc.), of the Eastern part of the Island of Montreal

(Longue-Pointe, Pointe-aux-Trembles, etc.), and of the South Shore (Varenes, Verchères, etc.) are targeted. For the Lower St. Lawrence, the areas of Rimouski, Rivière-du-Loup, Kamouraska and La Pocatière were chosen.

The greatest part of the correspondence examined was addressed to the Adjutant-General of the Lower Canada militia, François Vassal de Monviel. All military staff reported to this public servant who served as liaison between the colony's military authorities and different militia corps in the territory. In times of peace, the regular duties of the Adjutant-General amounted to ensuring the dissemination and execution of the general orders of the colony's Governor-General—who was also the Commander-in-Chief—and ensuring that the roles and nominative counts of staff were up to date. Major mobilisations, however - involving the battalions of sedentary militia during the war against the Americans - added extra pressure on this key military administration position. In this context, most of the Adjutant's concerns involved overseeing that the most competent officers were in place while ensuring the mobilisation of the maximum number of available military staff. The letters received by Vassal de Monviel thus primarily centred on the smooth running of operations: the mobilisation as such, recruiting of militiamen, definition of roles, supplying troops, deserters, and equipment (especially arms). For the most part, these items were also found in the dealings with military staff of the regions of Montreal and the Lower St. Lawrence. All sectors had to contend with their share of deserters, logistical problems and limited equipment. The fact nevertheless remained that recruiting was at its most problematic in the Lower St. Lawrence, especially around Rimouski where the most resistance was reported.<sup>9</sup>

However, the dealings on the status of officers leading the battalions and companies were what took up a very large part of the Adjutant-General's time. Each series of nominations involved much correspondence, the number of letters dealing with these issues shows us the great care that was given to these processes. The issue of replacements (due to death, relocation, etc.) also took up a fair amount of time, not to mention retirements. Once again, all correspondence had to go through this back-and-forth process, regardless of the home region of the battalion concerned. The emphasis placed on the processes concerning the officers themselves tells us of the sensitive nature of this position in the context of the war.

The style of these letters also helped instill a distinctive character in the relations between military staff and the Adjutant-General. Formalities were a given; along with the regular respectful phrasing, the wording “*In*

*Service of the King*” was often seen to underscore the importance of the issue. From missive to missive, we can observe the development of a discussion among the battalion commandants. Through them, we can hear the voices of other military officers, but also of the most vocal and insistent of the junior officers. These letters are also, and perhaps most of all, a reflection of the rhetoric of the elected powers, a rhetoric of those who justified their place in the power networks that were simultaneously being created.

## **The Adjutant-General’s Office: A Negotiating Area, ‘In Service of the King’**

The context of war established a large-scale dialogue between the colonial authorities and the local authorities of different communities. In this complex web of reports, needs, values and interests are conveyed by individuals and groups who were involved in negotiations in which their own social status was often at issue. In these reports to the central authorities, the local elite fashioned their own image, which was soon taken over by their own reproduction process at the community and regional level.

At the start, it is important to point out that, in the French-Canadian countryside targeted for this investigation, the military staff were overwhelmingly French-speaking. In all of the battalions concerned, the senior officers agreed to work with the authorities in setting up military strategies. Hence, the exceptional character of the context opened up new spaces for dialogue. These new spaces were first made possible by changing the parameters for dealings based on the context of the war. Dealings with authorities were more frequent and longer, as were the opportunities to benefit from direct relations with certain highly placed go-betweens. Next, the expansion of this space for exchange is also linked to the nature of the relationships established, namely to the resulting relationships of trust. The cooperation established with neighbouring military staff and members of the government at different levels during operations necessarily affected the business relations and friendships of the commanding officers. In short, this new space for dialogue and even negotiation results from the fact that support of local elites was necessary for the British authorities to successfully lead defense operations in the territory.

In this respect, from the outset of the conflict, the military officers were not fooled: support for government initiatives was largely expressed with a great many superlatives. Among the most demonstrative officers

was Joseph-Hubert Lacroix, Colonel of the Île Jésus Division and a seigneur, who declared at the beginning of the hostilities:

‘I believe that I would be disrespectful to the Greatest of the Kings, to his government that I have been serving for the past 37 years in different capacities, and My Country if I did not reiterate during these difficult times my respectful offers of service to the worthy representative of his Majesty’ [Translation].<sup>10</sup>

Throughout the course of the war, missives from the military staff revealed a tacit adherence to certain values. First of all, the value of loyalty, closely linked to honour: military staff did not hesitate to parade their credentials, as Lacroix did, but also to acknowledge their feelings of recognition of the favours received. Lieutenant-colonel Michel Turgeon, commenting on the trust received from the Adjutant-General: ‘I was extremely honoured by the different commissions of trust that I have received from my government’ [Translation].<sup>11</sup> This respect for the governing authorities was coupled with consent to values of order, to a hierarchical view of the functioning of organisations and, ultimately, of societies. This view referred to the very essence of elite circles according to which individuals or groups had privileged access to power. The principle of choice in the public sphere was closely linked to these lines of thought. Consequently, it was not surprising to see the many missives to the Adjutant-General containing the ideas of duty and public service in which the selfless dedication of the Honest Man is at the forefront. Major Augustin Trudel from Rimouski wrote the following to Vassal de Monviel regarding the responsibilities with which he had been entrusted: ‘Thank you for the honour you have given me. You have ascribed talents to me that I do not have. However, since it would give you pleasure, it will be an honour for me to carry out your desires’ [Translation].<sup>12</sup>

In return for this adherence to certain values or principles embodied by the colonial authorities, the local elite sought to make the best use of a symbolic negotiation space via three mechanisms related to the officer corps: (1) recruiting or promotion within the institution; (2) the power of the institution itself; and (3) the symbolic use of power outside the institution.

### The Hunt for ‘Places’

The sedentary militia officers wanted to reinforce their status within the institution as well as their power. With war comes glory: the officer corps institution took on more importance. This new importance was first evident through a series of appointments in which patronage networks

became highly involved. The hunt for paid 'places' was a fierce one. The equation was as follows: in times of war, authorities had to focus first on effectiveness and count on the support of their trusted men. This led the Adjutant-General, against his usual habits, to bend the rules of seniority when it came to appointments. Different reasons were given by the commanding officers of the battalions to justify these specific recommendations or requests. In the Lavaltrie division in 1812, Lieutenant-Colonel Faribault acted in favour of his nephew Barthelémy Joliette for the position of adjutant on the grounds of 'practical' reasons; Barthelémy had been fulfilling these duties informally for months at that point.<sup>13</sup>

The commanding officers also insisted on skills and aptitudes to justify the demotion of an officer in favour of another. In 1814, Lieutenant-Colonel Faribault made another attempt, intervening again in favour of his nephew to secure him the commission of major, which he proposed be taken away from another officer considered to be incompetent.<sup>14</sup> Commandant Pascal Taché from Kamouraska also had to deal with a member of his own family in his manoeuvres:

'... with all the good will possible, this young man is absolutely incapable of fulfilling his duty in this capacity [as adjutant] .... I therefore am taking the liberty to recommend ... Charles Taché, son ... I hope, Sir, that you can see that I am not trying to favour my nephew to the detriment of Mr. Hausseman' [Translation].<sup>15</sup>

Technical stratagems were used to favour the desired men. Owing to the redrawing of the limits of the battalions in the Lower St. Lawrence, this same strategy allowed the appointment of the associated merchants Pierre Casgrain and Amable Dionne. Assigned to the positions of major and captain respectively, their appointment did not follow the usual process for moving up in the officer ranks.

Lastly, others went so far as to argue cultural reasons to justify their due. Michel Turgeon, disappointed about not having been given the promotion he wanted in the region of Terrebonne, complained about the situation as follows:

'I am too English and have served enough not to believe that it can only be by mistake ... if I am only promoted to the Third Battalion' [Translation].<sup>16</sup>

In the end, the singular character of the authorised exemptions in the context of the War of 1812 regarding recruiting lay not so much in their

exceptionality, but rather in the large number and geographic expanse of the cases over a short period of time. Moreover, in addition to these appointments, we must also look at the issue of retirements or rather the 'retirement market'. When granted by the authorities, this retirement came with a modest pension, based on the rank held at the time of termination of service. In the context of war, the requests made to Vassal de Monviel increased in this respect; of course, part of the resurgence in this type of request can be attributed to the requirements for active service, but also to the window of cooperation that opened for them. Jean-Philippe Leprohon, Commander of the Pointe-aux-Trembles Division, took advantage of the context to reiterate his request to the Adjutant-General:

'Having received the application several times of Captain Jean Bte Chevaudier, also known as Lépine, from the Rivière des Prairies Parish to grant him his retirement, given his advanced age and infirmities, having served as an officer and captain for nearly 30 years, I believe that it is my duty to ask on his behalf for an honorable retirement, and hope you will grant it to him [Translation].<sup>17</sup>

With the war having barely ended, Lieutenant-Colonel Jean-Baptiste Hervieux made a request for retirement on behalf of his colleague Barthélémy Rocher, appointed in 1807 and barely 50 years of age; this bold request would be rejected.<sup>18</sup>

In the end, all these steps also had an impact on the officers who were at the summit of the strategy: by providing positions to members of their networks or contributing to the advancement of their peers, they in turn secured their own place. In the years following the war, officers from the military staff did not hesitate to call in favours for 'services rendered during the last invasion'. To illustrate the increasing audacity of some, Jean-Marie Mondelet proposed that his David brothers be named captain, lieutenant and ensign without any prior experience:

'... they know how to read and write and all three are landowners ... in the area where this new company is to take place and they are the best-looking men in the division; they are respected and the only ones qualified to be promoted' [Translation].<sup>19</sup>

### The Power of the Institution

With their reinforced or improved position, militia officers, given the context of the British-American war, had room to maneuver within

the institution's own power structure. Using the institution's power is at issue here: definitely its regulatory power, but also its discretionary power. The militia officer corps had its practices, codes, symbols, attributes, and its power. In the context of war, controls were tightened on the officers and militia, the series of exercises were intensified, decorum was enhanced, militia lists were more frequently drawn up, troop movement were more frequent, etc. Leadership, skills and abilities were sublimated in this context ... However, faced with abuses or new requirements, what protection was offered to the people? In Saint-Roch-de-l'Achigan, a complaint was lodged before a Justice of the Peace against captain-adjutant Jacques Archambault, who had abused his power when he conscripted sick and disabled men to transport merchandise to the front.<sup>20</sup> There were also the regular attacks of Jean-Philippe Leprohon regarding his officers' and militia's poor behaviour.<sup>21</sup> We can also see the enthusiasm of several commanding officers in hunting down deserters or those refusing to serve. Sharing information between officers from the military staff thus enabled the colonial authorities to be alerted to the presence of a camp of deserters in the sector of Madaswaska.<sup>22</sup> And then there was the excessive action of Paul-Roch de Saint-Ours, who devised a forceful action plan regarding two men stationed in the Parish of Saint-Jacques. He asked the adjutant-general

'... to please order an armed detachment of approximately 12 men to crack down on the disobedience and violence of a few militiamen ... Given the licentious and rebellious statements they have made against the government and officers of the General Staff Major, their arrest would produce the best effect and would destroy the poor example they are setting' [Translation].<sup>23</sup>

He continues with his request in another letter, confirming that, given the house targeted by the intervention is made of wood, 'it would be easy to break in and flush them out; they would then be immediately brought to the Montréal prisons'.<sup>24</sup>

Joseph-Hubert Lacroix, from Île Jésus, provides us with another telling example of this use of discretionary power by militia officers, in which he rebukes those who do not appreciate the pacing of military exercises:

'I will order the captains who are the most at fault and those the most deserving of punishment - although I am of the opinion that

all should be - to satisfy the minds of those who are doing their duty and who every morning show up for the exercises and ask “*Colonel, why are we here, and our neighbours are at home*”. I tell them that they will be pleased one day and the others will be very sad’. [Translation]<sup>25</sup>

This same concern for making examples out of others guided the actions taken against the Robichaud Family in Rivière-du-Loup. Anselme, the father, and his son, Joseph, captain and ensign respectively, were relieved of their duties for disgraceful conduct.<sup>26</sup>

This exceptional climate led these same military officers to suggest certain changes to common practices. They dared make requests directly to Vassal de Monviel, which was what several commanders silently hoped to do, namely to have the possibility of appointing their own officers and to avoid the incessant back-and-forth with the Adjutant’s Office.<sup>27</sup>

The window of negotiation that was offered by the War of 1812 also emboldened certain officers to assert their own interests even more. There was, for example, Michel Turgeon who insisted in several letters on the injustice of an appointment, or Jean-Philippe Leprohon, who made repeated requests for a better paid public servant position.<sup>28</sup> Certain officers were thus to benefit from a platform to score political points, or display their abilities as managers or leaders. Commander Lacroix, who was displeased with the actions of his superior Deschambault, threatened less commitment on the part of his troops should his arguments be dismissed:

‘I believe my honour has been harmed by the conduct of Lieut. Colonel Deschambault. I can say that the conduct he has had toward the officers and militiamen under his orders ... can only discourage those who could be ordered to serve under his orders and reduce the enthusiasm and obedience of these good subjects of his Majesty’ [Translation].<sup>29</sup>

### Symbolic Power, Outside the Walls

The negotiation space opened by the events of 1812 enabled the officer corps to benefit and have others benefit from the prestige of their commission. In the short- and medium-terms, officers cultivated the mystique associated with military feats and paved the way for their relatives and their allies to move up within the influential power networks. In one

way or another, this impact of the extended prestige coming out of one's commission implies close ties with the symbols of power.

The case of Captain Joseph Clément de Terrebonne is instructive in this regard. In 1816, he had a conflict with the churchwarden in charge, who refused to recognise the precedence of the rank to which he had the right during parish church services. This affair became litigious and soon Lieutenant-Colonel Roderick McKenzie commanded the churchwarden to 'restore the rights of the captain' inside the sacred walls.<sup>30</sup> The fact that McKenzie, a Protestant, was intervening within the Catholic walls to defend the prerogatives of a French Canadian is both extraordinary and full of meaning. This ability to legitimise military feats in the civil or religious sphere also came through quickly in the years after the war, especially during tributes to the deceased, when patriotism was in the spotlight following the events of 1812.<sup>31</sup>

Moreover, the space conquered by certain individuals and families within the officer corps during the War of 1812 reappeared in their respective networks for several years. Having the commission of officer allowed them among other things to have access to other local institutions, such as the Parish Council and the school boards; commissions with a regional scope, such as those of justices of the peace and small claims commissioners, were also colonised by these same networks. For some, such as the Tachés from Kamouraska or the Mathieus of Lachenaie, the events of 1812 simply confirmed their rise up the ranks and enhanced their prestige. For others, however, such as the Dionnes of Rivière Ouelle or the Archambaults of Saint-Roch, this period served as a catalyst. A question remains: did the 'good capable men' hired in the aftermath of 1812 represent loyal and faithful subjects in the long run? Nothing could be less certain. Several officers were confirmed to be illiterate, agitators or incompetent between 1812 and 1814; nevertheless, with the return to peaceful conditions, one had to deal with the previous appointments. The case of Jacques Archambault, a captain-adjutant from the L'Assomption region, is quite telling here.<sup>32</sup> The protection of Lieutenant-Colonel de Saint-Ours had obtained him the commission of adjutant in 1812.<sup>33</sup> However, even though he was soon after challenged for his lax management of the military staff as of 1815 - his protector having passed away the year before - he still retained this position, having earned sufficient political capital.<sup>34</sup> During the 1820s, he waged a relentless campaign to obtain the rank of major, before finally being relieved of his duties during the Dalhousie Crisis.<sup>35</sup> This same period nevertheless benefited his family in terms of favourable appointments,

and allowed it to control most of the local institutions, as noted by Lieutenant-Colonel Rocher:

‘[Archambault and his allies], along with other notable people from our parish, have been long trying to gain any kind of local authority [sic], and have often abused this authority, despite my efforts’<sup>36</sup> [Translation].

## Conclusion

The War of 1812–1814 against the Americans forced colonial authorities to vest a new symbolic force in the sedentary militia in order to maintain its authority over this important British colony, a gateway to the continent. Local elites in the Canadian countryside, built up from the previous campaign against the Americans and supported by well-established power networks, were better established and came to adopt a conciliatory and self-interested attitude in this context.

Insomuch as they shared a certain number of values with the central authorities, these elites became opportunistic: the tools provided to them to manage the local populations would soon be used to improve their social status. Ironically, this exploitation of social structures worked to acculturate these very elites to British institutions, and they came to embody colonial power slightly more in the end. In the context of the War of 1812, the officer corps of the sedentary militia also appeared as a conveyor for the representations of power, which existed for several years in the Canadian countryside following the actual battles.<sup>37</sup> In this way, the conflict effectively represents a key milestone in building Canadian identities in that this war led the local French elites to gain a more insightful understanding of the power structures and networks of the colonial authorities, while at the same time providing them with privileged access in the medium term. One of the most significant effects of this war can thus be understood through the institution of the militia officer corps, i.e., one of the main crucibles of identity for the rural Canadians at the time. The consolidation of the grip of certain individuals, families or groups on these central military positions reinforced the mechanisms for reproducing these rural elites, especially by reinforcing their power networks, which at the same time contributed to keeping alive these elite circles that had power over the destinies of local communities. In this framework, the loyalty of French Canadians to the British regime

was tied to ad hoc opportunism. Service to the King meant strengthening one's own authority in one's own local communities.

In return, the War of 1812 offered the government an extended network of contacts in different parts of the colony, and a network of officers with considerable sympathy for the submissions of the authorities and the respective symbols these authorities incarnated. In light of what unfolded during the war, the colonial government was also able to identify the most reliable agents for the ensuing years.

## Notes

- 1 Initiative launched by the Conservative Government in 2011 to promote the commemorations in 2012 to mark the Year of the Bicentennial.
- 2 Colin M. Coates, *The Metamorphoses of Landscape and Community in Early Quebec* (Montreal/Kingston, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000).
- 3 Donald Fyson, 'The Canadiens and British Institutions of Local Governance in Quebec from the Conquest to the Rebellions', in Nancy Christie (ed.), *Transatlantic Subjects – Ideas, Institutions, and Social Experience in Post-Revolutionary British North America*, (Montréal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2008), 45–82.
- 4 Jean-René Thuot, *D'une assise locale à un réseau régional: élites et institutions dans la région de Lanaudière (1825-1865)*, Ph.D.thesis (Université de Montréal, 2008). Christian Dessureault and Roch Legault also showed the exclusive character of the officer's commission in local Canadian societies. See Dessureault and Legault, 'Évolution organisationnelle et sociale de la milice sédentaire canadienne: le cas du bataillon de Saint-Hyacinthe, 1808, 1830', *Journal of Canadian Historical Association/Revue de la société historique du Canada*, 7 (1997): 87–112.
- 5 In particular, see Christian Dessureault and Roch Legault, 'Les voies d'accès au commandement de la milice de la région de Montréal au Bas-Canada (1790-1839)', in Roch Legault (ed.), *Le leadership militaire canadien-français - Continuité, efficacité et loyauté* (Kingston, Canadian Defence Academic Press, 2007), 91–129; C. Dessureault and R. Legault, 'Évolution organisationnelle et sociale'; C. Dessureault, 'L'émeute de Lachine en 1812: la coordination d'une contestation populaire', *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française*, 62, 2 (2008): 215–251.
- 6 Sean Mills, 'French Canadians and the Beginning of the War of 1812: Revisiting the Lachine Riot', *Histoire sociale/Social History*, 38 (May 2005): 37–57; Luc Lépine, *La participation des Canadiens français à la guerre de 1812*, Master's thesis (Université de Montréal, 1986).
- 7 The article by C. Dessureault previously cited is an exception in this regard. See Dessureault, 'L'émeute de Lachine en 1812'.
- 8 See previous notes.
- 9 National Library and Archives of Canada (LAC), Fund of the Adjutant-General for the Lower Canada Militia (RG9-I-A-I), 9, 3618, 6 March 1813: Major Augustin Trudel, from Rimouski, to François Vassal de Monviel, Adj.-Gen.; LAC, RG9 I-A-I, 9, 3605, 5 March 1813: Colonel Pascal Taché to François Vassal de Monviel, Adj.-Gen.
- 10 LAC, RG9 I-A-I, 9, 3605, 2 April 1812: Colonel Joseph-Hubert Lacroix to François Vassal de Monviel, Adj.-Gen.
- 11 LAC, RG9 I-A-I, 5 (7th Sedentary Embodied file), 1307, 28 June 1812: Colonel Michel Turgeon to François Vassal de Monviel, Adj.-Gen.
- 12 LAC, RG9 I-A-I, 16 (Rivière Ouelle file), 36, 18 May 1815: Major Augustin Trudel to François Vassal de Monviel, Adj.-Gen.
- 13 LAC, RG9 I-A-I, 3 (Lavaltrie file), 8, 2 June 1812: Lieutenant-Colonel Joseph-Edouard Faribault to François Vassal de Monviel, Adj.-Gen. For Faribault's actions, see also LAC, RG9 I-A-I, 39 (Lavaltrie file), 3 June 1813: Lieutenant-Colonel

- Joseph-Edouard Faribault to François Vassal de Monviel, Adj.-Gen., intervention in favour of François Allard.
- 14 LAC, RG9 I-A-I, 13 (Lavaltrie file), 5 February 1814: Lieutenant-Colonel Joseph-Edouard Faribault to François Vassal de Monviel, Adj.-Gen. asking to withdraw the commission of major from Étienne Parthenais to give it to Bathelémy Joliette. Faribault however had recommended Parthenais the year before; see LAC, RG9 I-A-I, 39 (Lavaltrie file), 15 April 1813: Lieutenant-Colonel Joseph-Edouard Faribault to François Vassal de Monviel, Adj.-Gen.
- 15 LAC, RG9 I-A-I, 16 (Rivière Ouelle file), 27 April 1815: Lieutenant-Colonel Pascal Taché to François Vassal de Monviel, Adj.-Gen.
- 16 LAC, RG9 I-A-I, 5 (7th Seditary Embodied), 6, 28 June 1812: Lieutenant-Colonel Michel Turgeon to François Vassal de Monviel, Adj.-Gen.
- 17 LAC, RG9 I-A-I, 8 (Longue Pointe file), 28 January 1813: Lieutenant-Colonel Jean-Marie Leprohon to François Vassal de Monviel, Adj.-Gen.
- 18 LAC, RG9 I-A-I, 20 (2nd Battalion Montreal file), 19 August 1817: Lieutenant-Colonel Jean-Baptiste Hervieux to François Vassal de Monviel, Adj.-Gen. Barthelémy. Rocher was finally approved for retirement in 1833.
- 19 LAC, RG9 I-A-I, 21 26 (Pointe-Claire file), 21 January 1822: Lieutenant-Colonel Jean-Marie Mondelet to François Vassal de Monviel, Adj.-Gen.
- 20 See Archives de la Chancellerie de l'Évêché de Joliette, file of correspondence of the priests of Saint-Roch-de-L'Achigan, deposition dated 2 January 1817: Philippe Alboeuf and Joseph Léveillé versus Jacques Archambault, Captain and Militia Adjutant.
- 21 LAC, RG9 I-A-I, 8 (Longue Pointe file), 26 November 1813: Lieutenant-Colonel Jean-Philippe Leprohon to François Vassal de Monviel, Adj.-Gen.
- 22 LAC, RG9 I-A-I, 14 (2nd Embodied file), 25 July 1814: Lieutenant Kimber to François Vassal de Monviel, Adj.-Gen. Lieutenant-Colonel Pascal Taché disseminated the information.
- 23 LAC, RG9 I-A-I, 13 (L'Assomption file), 17 March 1814: Lieutenant-Colonel P.-R. de Saint-Ours to François Vassal de Monviel, Adj.-Gen.
- 24 LAC, RG9 I-A-I, 13 (L'Assomption file), 21 March 1814: Lieutenant-Colonel P.-R. de Saint-Ours to François Vassal de Monviel, Adj.-Gen.
- 25 LAC, RG9 I-A-I, 13 (L'Isle—Jésus file), 31 January 1814: Colonel Joseph-Hubert Lacroix to François Vassal de Monviel, Adj.-Gen.
- 26 LAC, RG9 I-A-I, 16 (Rivière Ouelle file), 36, 27 February 1815: Lieutenant-Colonel Alexandre Fraser to François Vassal de Monviel, Adj.-Gen.
- 27 LAC, RG9 I-A-I, 3 (L'Isle—Jésus file), 2 June 1812: Colonel Joseph-Hubert Lacroix to François Vassal de Monviel, Adj.-Gen.
- 28 LAC, RG9 I-A-I, 6 (Blainville file), 2 February 1813: Lieutenant-colonel Michel Turgeon to François Vassal de Monviel, Adj.-Gen. The same Turgeon returns to this in 1827. See LAC, RG9 I-A-I, 32 (Blainville file), 9 March 1827: Lieutenant-Colonel Michel Turgeon to François Vassal de Monviel, Adj.-Gen. For Leprohon: see LAC, RG9 I-A-I, 8 (Longue Pointe file), 9 February 1813: Lieutenant-Colonel Jean-Philippe Leprohon to François Vassal de Monviel, Adj.-Gen.; then LAC, RG9 I-A-I, 8 (Longue Pointe file), 10 July 1813: Lieutenant-Colonel Jean-Philippe Leprohon to François Vassal de Monviel, Adj.-Gen.
- 29 LAC, RG9 I-A-I, 8 (L'Isle—Jésus file), 8 January 1813: Colonel Joseph-Hubert Lacroix to François Vassal de Monviel, Adj.-Gen.
- 30 LAC, RG9 I-A-I, 18 (Terrebonne file), 29 June 1816: Lieutenant-Colonel Roderick McKenzie to François Vassal de Monviel, Adj.-Gen.
- 31 Without specifically mentioning the War of 1812, our recent investigation showed the place that patriotism held in the commemorative equation amongst the elite. Jean-René Thuot, 'La construction des représentations de l'homme de pouvoir dans la société rurale québécoise, 1820-1890 : réflexions autour des notices nécrologiques', in *Les figures du pouvoir à travers le temps – Formes, pratiques et intérêts des groupes élitaires au Québec, XVIIe-XXe siècles* (Québec, Presses de l'Université Laval, 2012), 95–107. Collection 'Les cahiers du CIEQ' (Centre interuniversitaire d'études québécoises).
- 32 J.-R. Thuot, 'Élites locales et institutions à l'époque des Rébellions : Jacques Archambault et l'épisode du presbytère de Saint-Roch-de-l'Achigan', *Histoire sociale / Social History*, 38 (November 2005) : 339–65.

- 33 LAC, RG9 I-A-I, 3 (L'Assomption file), 9 July 1812: Lieutenant-Colonel Paul-Roch de Saint-Ours to François Vassal de Monviel, Adj.-Gen., to recommend Jacques Archambault for the position of adjutant. The same commander pointed out the abilities of Archambault in another letter: LAC, RG9 I-A-I, 8 (L'Assomption file), 8 February 1813: Lieutenant-Colonel Paul-Roch de Saint-Ours to François Vassal de Monviel, Adj.-Gen.
- 34 LAC, RG9 I-A-I, 16 (L'Assomption file), 22 January 1815: Assistant Lieutenant-Adjutant Xavier Lacombe to François Vassal de Monviel, Adj.-Gen.
- 35 LAC, RG9 I-A-I, 24 (Lavaltrie file), 19 May 1821: Letter from military administration to Jacques Archambault. LAC, RG9 I-A-I, 33 (Leinster file), 30 December 1827: Lieutenant-Colonel Barthelémy Rocher to A. D. Cochran, military secretary.
- 36 LAC, RG9 I-A-I, 33 (Leinster file), *ibid.* 30 December 1827.
- 37 Christian Dessureault, in a study on the crisis under Dalhousie, reported on the key importance this institution acquired in the public space. See Dessureault, 'La crise sous Dalhousie : conception de la milice et conscience élitaires des réformistes bas-canadiens', *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française*, 61, 2 (Fall 1997):167–199.

## Note on Contributor

**Jean-René Thuot** is a History professor at *Université du Québec à Rimouski* (UQAR, Quebec, Canada). His research interests focus on social reproduction mechanisms in the Canadian colonial rural context through the analysis of recruitment in local institutions. The formation of the French-Canadian elite is one of his main concerns. On those themes, he recently published *Les figures du pouvoir à travers le temps – Formes, pratiques et intérêts des groupes élitaires au Québec, XVIIe-XXe siècles* (Presses de l'Université Laval, 2012). He is currently working on the relation to the built environment of that same elite, contributing to the field of landscape history.