

## *Canada between Vichy and Free France, 1940-1945* by Olivier Courteaux

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by drawing on family stories and research gathered by various descendants and an exhaustive search in archives and libraries throughout North America for tidbits of information – from land records, petitions, loyalist claims, local histories and a host of other sources – the Browns have recreated the life and times of what until now, is one of the forgotten men of the Revolution. This is more than the story of one individual, however. *Vermont Patriot and Loyalist* carefully places the Marsh family into their own worlds. The authors very skilfully weave Marsh's concerns and subsequent actions, including encouraging his neighbours to come together to create the new colony of Vermont, into the larger story of the Revolution. In a short, but effective discussion in the preface, the authors also clearly set out how their understanding of William's story speaks to the most recent literature about Loyalists and the American Revolution.

My one quibble is that at times, *Col William Marsh* includes too much in the way of lengthy excerpts from extant family documents (the codicil to William

Marsh's father's will, for example) or from the small extant Marsh correspondence, or official British documents. Although this is undoubtedly of interest to members of the family, the general reader is often immersed in details and can easily lose the thread of the story.

*Col. William Marsh: Vermont Patriot & Loyalist* is nonetheless a welcome addition to the growing number of recent studies on how British colonists in North America viewed the Revolution and why some chose to remain or, as in William Marsh's case, became Loyalists, and others did not. It also highlights how personal aspirations and beliefs were at the heart of what we often assume were really debates about high politics and noble ideologies. It is not that William Marsh did not appreciate the issues at stake in the years between 1775 and 1783; he certainly did. But the need to ensure the security of his family and of his new home, in Vermont, took precedence.

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## *Canada between Vichy and Free France, 1940-1945*

By Olivier Courteaux

Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013. 280 pages.  
\$60.00 hardcover. ISBN 978-1-44264-464-9. \$27.95  
paperback. ISBN 978-1-44261-278-5. \$27.95 eBook.  
ISBN 978-1-44266-127-1. ([www.utpress.utoronto.com](http://www.utpress.utoronto.com))

Olivier Courteaux' *Canada between Vichy and Free France, 1940-1945*, is an international history that brings into dialogue Canadian, French, British and

US sources. It takes readers from the fall of France in June 1940 through to the San Francisco Conference of 1945. It offers some welcome insights into Canada's role in France's global schism and into an early exercise in Canadian multilateralism.

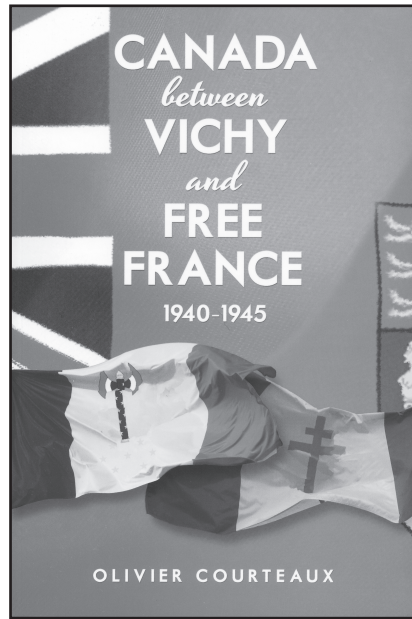
Courteaux convincingly demonstrates that domestic politics and a dose of pragmatism coloured William Lyon Mackenzie King's approach to the question of France. So too did his desire for closer relations with Roosevelt, who from the outset adopted a hostile approach to de Gaulle's Free French. This, and the delicate question of public opinion in Francophone

Canada, put Mackenzie King's diplomatic skills to the test.

Especially interesting is the question of Canada having remained a back door, or even a "window" on France for Britain. Courteaux makes extensive use of the papers of Pierre Dupuy, Canada's envoy to Vichy. He also shows how quickly Dupuy's mission soured. Indeed, the British soon called Dupuy's judgment into question, after the Canadian envoy erroneously suggested that many of Vichy's leaders were secretly opposed to the Nazis. One interesting subplot involves the notion that Dupuy's mission took on a life of its own, with him magnifying his role when he was sent to France only as a bid to test the waters. He emerges as something of a rogue diplomat who helped build the myth of Vichy's putative "double game."

Also noteworthy are Courteaux's observations on the 1941-1942 Saint Pierre and Miquelon Affair: he shows that the Free French takeover of the isles was accomplished with the blessing of the UK. This would subsequently place Canada in a very delicate position, but it also constituted an assertion of sovereignty vis-à-vis London.

There are, however, many problems with this book. Some are minor, some more serious and some result from ignoring aspects of the topic that would have expanded the author's discussion farther into areas of history beyond the strictly diplomatic. One issue is that the reader never really gets much sense of texture for



either the French or Canadian contexts, beyond the chambers of a handful of diplomats. I know from having perused them that Pierre Dupuy's papers contain rambling predictions of a monarchical restoration in France. They also feature some intriguing and tendentious insights into everyday life, into prevailing attitudes in France, and into the persecution of Jews, none of which Courteaux seems to have noted. In fact, unless I missed

it, this book never once broaches the question of Vichy's anti-Semitism.

Courteaux also emits some questionable assessments of the Vichy regime and its ideology. On p. 118, he deems it "conservative," which is charitable to say the least. On page 48, he places largely discredited post-revisionist historian François-Georges Dreyfus on the same footing as the eminent Vichy expert Robert Paxton. Further along, Courteaux writes that: "Paxton was convinced of Vichy's duplicity, contending that all along it had only flirted with the idea of collaboration to lead Germany on" (66). In fact, it is precisely the reverse: Paxton shows that Vichy, and not the Germans, sought collaboration in the first place. This is only the tip of the iceberg. For instance, Robert Frank is erroneously termed an "American historian" (which would not matter, except that Courteaux seems to perceive an Atlantic historiographical divide over Vichy). Jean Moulin is curiously titled a "spokesman for a number of key resistance organizations" (164) when

he was in fact de Gaulle's representative whose mission was to fuse together myriad groups. Courteaux appears to have missed the extensive use Marc Ferro makes of Dupuy's papers in his biography of Pétain, and Ferro's observation that wartime Québec resembled Vichy without the Germans. On page 75, Courteaux notes that in 1941 "Darlan was ready to negotiate with the enemy" -- when Germany had ceased being "the enemy" since the armistice of June 1940. The work of Christine Levisse-Touzé and Jacques Cantier might have altered Courteaux' view of General Maxime Weygand and the situation in North Africa. Lastly, Courteaux did not consult William Christian's *Divided Island*, which would have provided insight for his section on Saint-Pierre and Miquelon.

There is scant discussion of Québec and Canada as societies. Jeffrey Keshen's splendid *Saints, Sinners and Soldiers* is not cited. In fact, the bibliography contains many glaring holes. Whether or not one agrees with her methodology and conclusions, Esther Delisle's research has left a

mark and should be discussed. Most strikingly, given that Robert Rumilly's name does appear in the bibliography, his role in championing a notorious Vichy criminal after the war should have come up.

When the home front in Canada is discussed, as a non-expert I find myself unconvinced. Courteaux suggests that the crisis in France "became an excellent excuse for anti-war and anti-British sentiments" in Québec. This is a bit of a chicken or egg question, but did the anti-war sentiment not trump the question of France? Courteaux takes the *Globe and Mail* to task for calling Vichy fascist and for supporting General Charles de Gaulle. Were such opinions "virulently simplistic arguments" as Courteaux contends (88), or were they more or less prescient? Finally, Quebecers who volunteered to fight for Canada in France are largely absent here; the work of Yves Tremblay might have helped on this score.

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## *In Duty Bound*

*Men, Women, and the State in  
Upper Canada 1793-1841*

By J.K. Johnson

Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2013. 320 pages. \$100.00 hardcover.  
ISBN 978-0-77354-277-8. \$32.95 paperback.  
ISBN 978-0-77354-278-5. ([www.mqup.ca](http://www.mqup.ca))

It is tempting to see Keith Johnson's *In Duty Bound Men, Women, and the State in Upper Canada 1783-1841* as the culmination of a life's work on Upper Canada, so broad is it in its scope, but to do so would

suggest his other work on the colony was only a prelude to this work, an assessment which would not give adequate credit to his earlier publications. Nevertheless, this is a book that, no doubt, draws on material that Johnson has collected over the years, as well as many documents and publications amassed specifically for this study. As the author explains in his introduction, he is trying to "expand even further the boundaries of what can be known about the lives and experiences of the Upper Canadian population", "by exploring the relationship between the people of Upper Canada and the Upper Canadian state..." (p. 4), building on past studies of portions of the population and on studies of limited aspects of