

Dr. Edmund Bailey O'Callaghan, His Early Years in Medicine, Montreal, 1823-1828

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HIS MEMORY IN THE UNITED STATES

The name of Edmund Bailey O'Callaghan is known to only a small circle of professional historians. Most of the American historians have written about O'Callaghan's American life from 1837 to 1880, while most of the Canadian historians have recorded O'Callaghan's Canadian activities in public life between 1833 and 1837. Since his American and Canadian experiences were markedly different, this divided concentration has not afforded much synthesis to the life of Dr. O'Callaghan, who began his North American life as a diligent physician in Montreal in 1823. It is this article's purpose to call attention to O'Callaghan's American and Canadian contributions and to document for the first time his earliest years in Montreal from 1823 to 1828.

In historical works of the United States, O'Callaghan is recognized as a pioneer historian of New York State.¹ Between 1845 and 1880, Dr. O'Callaghan composed major works on the history of New York State, among them: *The History of New*

¹ For example, consult: J.J. WALSH, "Edmund Bailey O'Callaghan of New York. Physician. Historian and Antiquarian—A.D. 1797-1880." *American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia – Records XVI* (1905) 5-33; A. Everett PETERSON, "Edmund Bailey O'Callaghan – Editor of New York Historical Records." *New York State Historical Association Proceedings XXXIII* (1935) 64-74; Guy, Frances Shaw, "Edmund Bailey O'Callaghan His Position in American Historiography" (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, unpublished doctoral dissertation, 1934).

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Netherlands and *A Documentary History of the State of New York*.² He is best known as the historian who first drew the attention of the New York Historical Society to the historical value of the *Jesuit Relations* as a source for the early history of America.³ Written by the Jesuit missionaries in America to their superiors describing the condition of their missions in the New World, these letters of first hand information had been overlooked by antiquarians. In 1847, O'Callaghan published a booklet pointing out the value, contents and whereabouts of each volume. Entitled: *Jesuit Relations of Discoveries and Other Occurrences in Canada and the Northern and Western States of the Union, 1632-1672*, O'Callaghan's exposition led to the eventual complete collection of the *Relations* through Father Martin of St. Mary's College, Montreal.⁴ Reuben Thwaites finally published the *Relations and Allied Documents* in 73 volumes between 1896 and 1901.⁵ Today no historian can begin investigating the early history of this colonial period without consulting these precious documents.

HIS MEMORY IN CANADA

In Canadian historical circles, O'Callaghan has been recognized as the major Irish politician of Lower Canada between 1833 and 1837.⁶ He worked closely with the French *Patriotes* leader Louis--

² A. Everett PETERSON, "O'Callaghan, Edmund Bailey," *Dictionary of American Biography* (New York: Scribner's, 1962), VII, 613.

³ Léon POULIOT, S.J., *Etude sur les Relations des Jésuites de la Nouvelle France (1632-1672)* (Paris: Desclée et Brouwer & Cie, 1940), pp. 28-30; "M. O'Callaghan et les 'Relations' des Jésuites," *Le Bulletin des Recherches historiques* XXXI (Aug. 1925) 254-256; Walsh, pp. 23-24.

⁴ Guy, p. 66.

⁵ Guy, p. 70.

⁶ Consult, for example, the following works: Aegidius FAUTEUX, *Patriotes de 1837-1838* (Montréal: Les Éditions des dix, 1950); Robert RUMILLY, *Histoire de Montréal* (Montréal, Fides n.d.), chs. 9-12; and François-Xavier GARNEAU, *Histoire du Canada depuis sa découverte jusqu'à nos jours* (Montréal: Beauchemin & Valois, 1882), t. III, ch. 2.

Joseph Papineau for the introduction of a representative system of government for the *Canadiens* of Lower Canada. While their work was abruptly interrupted by the violent rebellion of the *Patriotes* in 1837 and their subsequent exile, the platforms they defended ultimately triumphed in future constitutional reforms in Canada.

Dr. O'Callaghan has been recorded as both a liberal journalist and as an active member of the Legislative Assembly which pressed for democratic reforms of Canadian governing bodies, notably the upper house of the Legislature, the Legislative Council.⁷ He is remembered as successor to Dr. Daniel Tracey in his capacity as editor of the bi-weekly *Irish Vindicator*,⁸ the major reform journal of Lower Canada. O'Callaghan's opening editorial of May 14, 1833 hit the key of his four-year labours as editor for rule of the majority:

It shall be our constant aim to watch, protect and support the constitutional liberties of the people – to advocate the the general introduction of the representative or elective system of government throughout the country, satisfied that the rights, the interests and institutions of the inhabitants cannot be deposited in safer hands than in those of the people themselves.⁹

O'Callaghan pressed for reform of the upper house of the Legislature from an oligarchy to an elected body reflecting the population distribution of Lower Canada.¹⁰

⁷ Jacques MONET, "O'Callaghan, Edmund Bailey," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, éd. Frances G. Halpenny (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966-) VI.

⁸ Emmett J. MULLALLY, "Dr. Daniel Tracey, A Pioneer Worker for Responsible Government in Canada," *Canadian Catholic Historical Association Sessions* (1934-1935) 33-45.

⁹ Guy, p. 16.

¹⁰ Gérard FILTEAU, *Histoire des Patriotes* (Montréal: L' Aurore, 1975), pp. 31-41.

O'Callaghan's term as Member of the Legislative Assembly for the county of Yamaska has been summarily treated in Canadian histories. Elected to the Assembly in the summer of 1834, O'Callaghan entered on a platform of support for the Ninety-Two Resolutions,¹¹ a series of democratic proposals for change submitted to the Imperial British Parliament which had been passed by the majority of Reformers in the Assembly previous to O'Callaghan's election. In these Resolutions, the need for change in the method of choosing the Upper House of the Legislature was given priority over all other demands.

Dr. O'Callaghan became Papineau's right-hand man in the Assembly. Papineau treated O'Callaghan with the deference deserving of a deputy who was in contact with Daniel O'Connell, the leader for Catholic emancipation in Ireland. Papineau hoped that O'Connell and his thirty to forty supporters were one group on whose votes he could count for support in any Canadian debate in the British House of Commons. As the fight for an elective Council increased, the ranks closed around Papineau as their leader and a semi-party name of *Les Patriotes* began to be used. O'Callaghan became one of their recognized spokesmen.

The close analogies of the *Patriotes* movement with the contemporary movement in Ireland for Catholic emancipation led by O'Connell were often noted at the time, even by O'Connell himself in his Parliamentary speeches. O'Callaghan identified with the *Canadiens* of Lower Canada as another victimized Catholic minority under British misrule. All the ills of Ireland: lack of representative government, stifled commerce, languishing agriculture, low land values, were engraved upon the profound emotion which O'Callaghan gave to his political work in defense of the *Canadiens*.

¹¹ W.P.M. KENNEDY, ed., *Documents of the Canadian Constitution 1759-1915* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1918), Document CXIV, "The Ninety-Two Resolutions of 1834," pp. 366-388. For a nineteenth century account see: Robert CHRISTIE, *A History of the late Province of Lower Canada* (Québec: T. Cary & Co., 1850), vol. III, p. 515 et seq.

When it was prematurely learned in 1836 that the Gosford Commission, sent to Canada to inquire into its discontents in the previous year, was not going to recommend an elective Legislative Council for Lower Canada to the British Imperial Parliament, wide indignation broke out among the *Patriotes*. Mass demonstrations began in Montreal and although Papineau and O'Callaghan counselled constitutional means of protest, matters went beyond their control. Two to three thousand *Canadiens* armed themselves in open rebellion against the Canadian authorities who called for the arrest of some of their leaders on charges of treason.¹²

When the main battles came on November 23rd at St. Charles and St. Denis, Dr. O'Callaghan took the field with the others at St. Denis.¹³ Unprepared and outnumbered, the *Patriotes* were defeated by the authorities' superior arms and militia.

O'Callaghan was one of the *Patriote* leaders singled out by the government for ransom. He went into exile with Papineau across the Vermont border. From there, he made his way to Albany.¹⁴ For two years, Papineau and O'Callaghan occupied themselves with assisting fellow *Patriotes* in exile.¹⁵ In 1839, two bills of indictment were founded by the Grand Jury of Montreal against three of the *Patriotes* leaders: Papineau, O'Callaghan and Thomas Storrow Brown, a well-known liberal Montrealer. Finally in 1843, all three

¹² O'Callaghan maintained that the *Patriotes* were provoked into violence by the authorities and that he did not partake of any concerted plan for the violence which broke out in 1837-1838, Gameau, p. 339.

¹³ For the account of O'Callaghan's and Papineau's decisions on November 15, 1837 to contest government arrest warrants in a nonviolent manner see the extracts from the Journal of Amury Girod, quoted in the Durham Papers: Arthur G. DOUGHTY, *Report of the Public Archives for the Year 1923* (Ottawa: F.A. Acland, 1924), pp. 370-372.

¹⁴ Guy, p. 25 ; FAUTEUX, p. 336.

¹⁵ On this period see the references to O'Callaghan in the letters of Louis-Joseph Papineau to his wife from the period starting in Albany February 7, 1838 up to the letter from Paris on July 23, 1839: *Rapport de l'Archiviste de la Province de Québec pour 1953-54 et 1954-55* (Québec Secrétariat de la Province, Redempti Paradis, 1956), pp. 401-443.

were granted amnesty and freed from State offenses arising from the 1837 rebellion.

By that time, O'Callaghan had no desire to return. He had successfully established himself in medical practice in Albany and was turning his attention to the important literary documents concerning New York State's beginnings and establishment within a democratic government. He had made important connections, among them, Reuben Walworth, Chancellor of New York State and Bishop McCloskey of Albany. He grew increasingly occupied with historical understanding.

On July 17, 1852, Dr. O'Callaghan wrote from Albany to one of French-Canada's pioneer historians, François-Xavier Garneau, and reflected on his role in the 1837 Rebellion. Garneau included this Albany letter in his later work, *Histoire du Canada depuis sa découverte jusqu'à nos jours*:

We, my friend, were the victims, not the conspirators ; and were I on my death bed, I could declare before Heaven that I had no more idea of a movement or resistance when I left Montreal and went to the Richelieu River with Mr. Papineau, than I have now of being Bishop of Quebec.¹⁶

O'Callaghan's two separate lives merit serious historical documentation and interpretation for they have a complex unity which is especially pertinent to present day Quebec. They also have their unified beginnings in O'Callaghan's early Montreal life as an apothecary and physician, the livelihood which perhaps most fully expresses O'Callaghan's humanitarian instincts, penchant for basic foundations and long-lived thirst for the human conditions of justice, the quests of which underlay his journalism, his politics and

¹⁶ GARNEAU, p. 339; see also O'Callaghan's defense of the uprising as resistance to "the execution of warrants for the apprehension of their leaders upon false charges of treason" and his request for exiles' amnesty after the Rebellion, in his words to Steward Derbyshire quoted in: Story, Norah, ed., "Document - Steward Derbyshire's Report to Lord Durham on Lower Canada, 1838," *The Canadian Historical Review* XVIII (March-June 1937) 48-62.

his history-writing. His almost dour persistence in the little unpleasant things of life which, when pursued with vision, can lead to greatness, characterized his medical training and marked his life. Perhaps it was this trait which the electors of Yamaska chose to remember him by when they nicknamed him: “qu’a la gale,” someone with the itch.¹⁷

EARLY YEARS AND EDUCATION

Edmund Bailey O’Callaghan was born in Mallow, County Cork, Ireland on February 28, 1797.¹⁸ He was the youngest of six children, all brought up with liberal education in the home of a merchant father. His mother’s maiden name was Bailey and she died in 1838.

Edmund’s eldest brother, Theodore, was commissioned in the British army and was a well-known duelist.¹⁹ His other two brothers, Eugene and David were priests, noted for their learning. His two sisters, Mary-Anne and Bess both married.

O’Callaghan received a Bachelor of Arts degree from an Irish college, something reserved for a small minority in those days of early nineteenth-century university life. As a young man, he was fortunate enough to go to Paris where he studied medicine for two years. It was at a time in the early 1820’s when the heady atmosphere of republican hopes was alive in Parisian intellectual circles.

¹⁷ William SCHROEDER, “O’Callaghan, Edmund Bailey,” *American Medical Biographies* (New York: 1920), pp. 858-859; Walsh, p. 18.

¹⁸ For a detailed debate on this birth-date see: Petersen, pp. 65-67.

¹⁹ J.G. MILLINGEN, *History of Duelling; including Narratives of Remarkable Encounters from the earliest period to the present time* 2 vols (London: 1841), II, 224-234.

In 1823, on the new wave of immigration to Canada after the Napoleonic wars in Europe, O'Callaghan emigrated to Montreal in Lower Canada.²⁰

EARLY YEARS IN MONTREAL – 1823-1828

O'Callaghan's immediate aim on his arrival in Montreal was to be licensed as a physician and to practise his profession. Qualified doctors were few, and very few of them were of Canadian origin.²¹ But charlatans “in the art of physic and surgery” were many.²² Regulations and controls, then crystallizing, caused bitter disputes.²³

Prior to 1815, the only hospital in Montreal for general cases was the venerable Hotel Dieu founded in 1642, located at St. Paul and St. Sulpice streets with thirty beds. There also was the Grey Nuns Hospital on Youville Square, which had taken over the Hôpital Général from the Frères Charron, where the mentally afflicted were received.²⁴

On January 6, 1819, a petition was presented by John Molson to the Legislative Assembly “praying for the erecting and endowing of a Public Hospital in Montreal.” It was opposed, however, particularly by Michael O'Sullivan, on the grounds that the Hotel Dieu should be enlarged.²⁵ The bill was not passed at that time. The Montreal General Hospital operated informally however. It took

²⁰ William Forbes ADAMS, *Ireland and the Irish Emigration to the New World from 1815 to the Famine* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), p. 385.

²¹ Helen Taft MANNING, *The Revolt of French Canada* (Toronto: MacMillan, 1962) p. xiv.

²² Maud E. ABBOT, *History of Medicine in the Province of Quebec* (Montreal: McGill University, 1931), p. 47.

²³ ABBOT, p. 59.

²⁴ ABBOT, p. 56.

²⁵ There was a duel fought over this matter between Michael O'Sullivan and Dr. William Caldwell on April 11, 1819. See E.M. BENSLEY, and B.R. TUNIS, “The Caldwell-O'Sullivan Duel,” *The Canadian Medical Association Journal*, June 21, 1969.

over from “The House of Recovery,” and opened on May 1, 1819, in a house with 24 beds, on Craig Street, two doors east of Bleury.²⁶

On November 30, 1820, a new site purchased for 1300 pounds from a gardener named James Marshall in the St. Lawrence suburb, once part of the original grant to Lambert Closse and the outer defences of Montreal.²⁷ Here on this “elevated and airy” ground in open country a new building was erected for 72 patients. The cornerstone was laid with formal Masonic ceremonies on June 6, 1821.

The building had three stories, measuring 76 feet by 40 feet, and was surmounted by a cupola “as an ornament” and “to give light to the operating room.”²⁸ Its cost, more than expected, was 5,856 pounds. On May 3, 1822, the hospital received its first patient, Richard King, suffering from hepatitis.²⁹

In Montreal, a medical student was usually required to serve an apprenticeship of 18 months with a local surgeon or physician and to attend a hospital for at least six months before passing an examination by one of the District Medical Boards established under the Licensing Act of 1788. Otherwise, he could travel abroad to a British or Continental University or go to a Medical School in the United States, applying for his license to practise upon his return.³⁰

On October 20, 1822, four men of remarkable ability and perseverance, Doctors John Stephenson, Andrew Fernando Holmes, William Robertson and William Caldwell took effective steps at a meeting of the medical officers of the Montreal General Hospital to establish the first medical school in Canada. They took as their model their own medical school of Edinburgh and the Royal

²⁶ H.E. MACDERMOT, *A History of the Montreal General Hospital* (Montreal General Hospital, 1950), pp. 4-6.

²⁷ MACDERMOT, p. 7.

²⁸ The lot had 120 foot frontage on Dorchester Street and extended between de Bullion and St. Dominique Streets for 180 feet to Lagauchetiere Street.

²⁹ Its charter was finally granted in January, 1823 ; MacDermot, p. 11 and 56.

³⁰ ABBOT, p. 49; MACDERMOT, p. 21.

Infirmery there.³¹ They were joined by Dr. Henry P. Loedel until his early retirement and death in 1825.

Lord Dalhousie, the Governor General, approved of their plan. On February 22, 1823, he terminated the old Montreal Licensing Board of Medical Examiners, reconstituted it “so that it shall in future consist of persons holding diplomas or testimonials from Medical Institutions in Great Britain,” and appointed the five Medical Officers of the Montreal General Hospital, Doctors Stephenson, Holmes, Robertson, Caldwell and Loedel, as the sole Medical Examiners for the District of Montreal. Dalhousie’s requirement of a British qualification was resented by those who had Continental or American credentials, and was strongly attacked as unfair by reforming newspapers. Dalhousie and the Medical Board of the Hospital were accused of chauvinism, but this exclusive requirement remained.³²

The Medical School was called the Montreal Medical Institution. Most of the lectures were given in a small building at 20 St. James Street facing Place d’Armes. Dr. Stephenson was the first to begin on October 1, 1822, lecturing in the new Hospital building on anatomy and physiology and later on surgery. Dr. Holmes gave courses in Chemistry and Pharmacy at Alexander Skakel’s School at 27 Little St. James Street, and, in the summer, in Botany. Dr. Caldwell lectured in the “Practice of Physic,” Dr. Robertson in Midwifery and diseases of women and children, and Dr. Loedel in “Materia Medica.”³³

Delays and difficulties followed. The Institution had no academic standing in law. Although no degrees could be conferred, the

³¹ ABBOT, pp. 58-61.

³² ABBOT, p. 59.

³³ MACDERMOT, p. 19; ABBOT, p. 58; Robert CAMPBELL, *History of the Scotch Presbyterian Church, St. Gabriel Street, Montreal* (Montreal: Drysdale, 1887), p. 235.

courses continued and were recognized by the Medical Board of Examiners. This was the real beginning of McGill University.³⁴

To pursue his career, Edmund Bailey O'Callaghan answered this advertisement in the "public prints" of Montreal:

Wanted for the Montreal General Hospital to fill the offices of Apothecary and Steward of the Institution. Application to be made previous to the 15th day of April next, by letter addressed to Henry McKenzie, Secretary to the Committee of Management, accompanied by testimonials of character. Security to the amount of 100 pounds will be required for the faithful performance of the duties of his office. Montreal General Hospital, February 18, 1826, John Bethune, Chairman.³⁵

Two others applied: Henry Donoughue of Montreal, and W.J. Ramage, a Quebec surgeon. They were then referred to the Medical Board through its Secretary, Dr. John Stephenson, for examination, on Saturday, April 22. But Ramage did not appear. On April 26, a certificate was issued signed by Dr. W. Caldwell, Dr. W. Robertson and Dr. A.F. Holmes, finding that the "person qualified for the duties of the office" was Edmund Bailey O'Callaghan.

On May 9, following a meeting of the Governors, the new Committee of Management, Reverend John Bethune, Honourable Charles W. Grant, John Molson, Thomas Phillips and Henry McKenzie, decided to inform O'Callaghan that "he should enter upon the duties of his office forthwith." O'Callaghan was notified by this letter of May 10, 1826:

³⁴ The Montreal Medical Institution was engrafted upon McGill University when it was opened on June 24, 1829 and the first degree it granted was on May 24, 1833 in medicine to William Logie. See: Cyrus MACMILLAN, *McGill and Its Story - 1821-1921* (London: John Lane, 1921, p. 93.

³⁵ Montreal General Hospital, Minute Books of the Committee of Management, May 11, 1825 to April 19, 1833, Montreal, McGill University Archives, Accession number 1501/1 a, February 18, 1826. (Hereafter cited as MGH)

Sir— I have the pleasure to inform you that your letter and testimonials were duly submitted to the Medical Board and Governors of the Montreal General Hospital, and that your application for the situations of Apothecary and Steward was successful. I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,
M. McKenzie, Secretary,
Committee of
Management.³⁶

He was engaged at a salary of 75 pounds per year with meals and living quarters provided.³⁷

O'Callaghan lived in a dilapidated house nearby. At a meeting of June 22, 1827, for example, the Committee of Management, having noted that "the Apothecary's dwelling being in a very leaky condition, resolved that the necessary repairs be made through the agency and usual good offices of Mr. Try." But the leaking roof was endured for the summer. By the end of September, however, John Try reported back to the Committee that new boards had to be used to shingle the roof. This was done, and Try was reimbursed 12 pounds 10 shillings for the job.³⁸

O'Callaghan as the Apothecary had his meals with the matron and the house surgeon; Dr. Stephenson, who had a speech defect from a cleft palate, often ate with them. Tea, bread and butter were served for breakfast and supper, and for dinner there was soup and meat, with several gallons of beer consumed per week. No sugar was provided, unless occasionally it was brown sugar.³⁹

³⁶ MGH, 1 a, May 10, 1826.

³⁷ The value of sterling was regulated at 4.76 dollars to the pound. 75 pounds was worth \$357.00. The matron was paid 50 pounds per year and the nurses and some servants received in total, 145 pounds: 15 shillings: 6 pence. See the annual report for that year: MGH, 1 a, May 1, 1827.

³⁸ MGH, 1 a, June 22-September 29, 1827.

³⁹ MACDERMOT, p. 99.

On the July 28, 1826, an entry appears in the minutes of the Committee of Management that Father Patrick Phelan had requested that a small balance owing by a paying patient, Daniel McGarvey, recommended by him, should be remitted. But the Committee did not comply with the request. It asked Mr. O'Callaghan "to intimate the decision" to Father Phelan, and to collect the amount.⁴⁰

As Apothecary and Steward, O'Callaghan had a wide range of duties. He was given charge of whatever wards the attending medical officer assigned to him, and he made up all the requisite medicines. 120 pounds was spent for medicines in one year. He supervised and exercised discipline over the students, who were charged 2 pounds 6 shillings 8 pence to obtain a periodic ticket of admission.

Patients were expected to pay 5 to 7 shillings per week and these amounts were collected before discharge by O'Callaghan. Control was strict. If a patient, who was classed as a pauper, did not pay promptly, then the Apothecary notified the Governor who had recommended him. On May 25, 1827, there is a record that "two paupers, named McCormick and Angus Clarke, had deposited sums of money in the hands of the Apothecary,"⁴¹ and the Committee of Management ordered the Apothecary "to retain 5 shillings from each of them, or quit the hospital." On August 17, 1827, there is an entry that "Mary Farrell, a woman from St. Annes was admitted to the Hospital as a pauper provided the medical officer in attendance shall say there is a prospect of her speedy recovery."⁴²

Living conditions in the hospital were primitive. Heating and ventilation were poor; lighting was by lanterns and candles; and there were outside latrines. "Smoaking" tobacco and "Segars" was prohibited as a "dangerous vice," but "twelve spittoons" were an early purchase.⁴³

⁴⁰ MGH, 1 a and 1 b.

⁴¹ MGH, 1 a and 1 b.

⁴² MGH, 1 a and 1 b.

⁴³ MACDERMOT, pp. 39-42.

As for food, beef and bread were the two staples. In O'Callaghan's days, lowest tenders for beef came from the butcher Josh Boggs, and for bread, from the baker M. Leishman. Mutton chops and broiled chicken appear in the diet. The hospital kept two cows and some pigs. If milk was bought, four cents a quart was paid in the summer and five cents in the winter. Often served was ginger tea, and occasionally, a delicacy called "flummery," a custard laced with brandy.⁴⁴

Most noticeable were the quantities of alcohol that were regularly administered. Whiskey was bought by the ten gallon lot. A pipe of port wine would be dealt out a few gallons at a time to the Steward. Before the hogsheads of brandy and port wine were ordered, they were properly sampled by the Committee of Management. Items recur in the treatment books such as "four pints of porter," "twelve ounces of wine," "six ounces of brandy." Then, there are two entries: "twenty-two ounces of whiskey," "sixteen ounces of whiskey;" but the frequency of the treatment is not mentioned. Also entered was this order: "Suspend whiskey." Beer and spirits were common. Every patient was given some form of stimulant. Later on, two visiting governors asked for the curtailment of intoxicating stimulants because patients were acquiring bad habits.⁴⁵

The proportion of destitute Irish emigrants who were treated as patients was very high. For example, during the three months of May, June and July, 1827, out of 354 in-door patients, 274 were emigrants and 234 of these were cases of fever; some six out of eight were Irish, and three out of five were Catholics.⁴⁶ The rate of pulmonary consumption was high,⁴⁷ and the cost of funerals for paupers was paid by the church.

⁴⁴ MACDERMOT, p. 44.

⁴⁵ MACDERMOT, p. 44.

⁴⁶ MGH, 1 a, Quarterly Report dated August 6, 1827.

⁴⁷ MACDERMOT, p. 9.

Of the total number of 1,263 patients treated in the Hospital for the year ending May 1, 1828, 787 were emigrants of less than one year in Canada; 965, that is more than three fourths of the total number were natives of Ireland; and 856 were Catholics, more than double the number of the 407 Protestants.⁴⁸

Canada was suffering from a depression, and the Montreal General Hospital was feeling the effects. In May 1827, when O'Callaghan had completed his first year of his two year contract, conversations were, started by the Board of Governors proposing that O'Callaghan's services might be relinquished. O'Callaghan stated that he was not willing to make any arrangement until after the result was known of his examination by the Medical Board to obtain his license to practise medicine. The following month, the Committee of Management reopened the question, and O'Callaghan replied by letter of June 14, 1827:

I have weighed the matter well and beg leave to state that it would be of serious inconvenience to me at this moment to give up my situation, unprepared as I am to practice *legally* my profession. No person, Sir, is more desirous than I to disburthen the Hospital of that expense, of which, it seems, I am the cause. My witness so to do has been, in as much as I am concerned, fully demonstrated when I presented myself before the Board of Examiners for License. I did all in my power, then, to obtain the object of my wishes. The result of that application is before you. I hope at some future period to be more successful, but in the existing state of my circumstances I must deem the relinquishment of my situation, a determination on my part at least, premature and unwise and therefore must beg leave to decline it.⁴⁹

The state of the Hospital's funds required drastic action. A special meeting was called for 1 p.m. on Tuesday, September 18, 1827, and the Apothecary was asked to send special notices inviting the President, Secretary and Treasurer to attend. It was then decided to

⁴⁸ MGH, I a, Annual Report, May 6, 1828.

⁴⁹ Letter quoted in MGH, I a, Meeting of June 15, 1827.

reduce the establishment as from the 1st of November next to three wards, requiring “only two nurses, one housemaid, one laundrymaid, one cook and one man servant.”⁵⁰

On November 7, 1827, O’Callaghan, having obtained his certificate that he had “attended two full courses of lectures at the Montreal Medical Institution” and had followed its practice, received his License to practise medicine. It was issued by the Provincial Secretary’s office under order of the Governor General.⁵¹

This permitted John Try to report on December 7, 1827, that, “Doctor O’Callaghan the Apothecary was desirous of meeting the wishes of the Committee of Management in giving up his engagements, a measure they requested owing to the want of means to pay him his salary, he leaving it to themselves to make such proposals as they may think the state of the funds will permit.”⁵² It was then “resolved that the Committee convey to Dr. O’Callaghan their sense of the very handsome manner in which he had come forward by this proposal to contribute his share of relief to the Institution in its present pecuniary difficulties.”⁵³

Arrangements were then made for Dr. Caldwell and Dr. Robinson to assume with their students the duties of the Apothecary from January 1 to May 1, 1828, and to pay Dr. O’Callaghan twenty pounds on giving up his indenture on January 1.

The Report of Quarterly meeting of the Board of Governors held on February 5, 1828, stated that although expenditures had been reduced by one quarter, the state of the funds remained very depressed. The Report went on to say that “there is one item in this reduction on which they have to remark, viz.: – the salary of the Apothecary – Mr. O’Callaghan, who has hitherto discharged the duties of that office with much credit to himself and benefit to the Institution, having been admitted to Practice as a Surgeon,

⁵⁰ MGH, 1 a and 1 b.

⁵¹ *Quebec Gazette*, Monday, November 12, 1827.

⁵² MGH, 1 a.

⁵³ MGH, 1 a.

Physician, etc., has kindly consented to relinquish three months of his engagement, thereby diminishing the expenses of the Hospital for the current year in the sum of 21 pounds.⁵⁴

It appears that Dr. O'Callaghan continued to discharge some of the duties without pay. An entry in the minutes of the meeting of January 25, 1828, shows that "Dr. O'Callaghan paid into the hands of the Committee five pounds four shillings three pence, the amount collected by him in the current quarter from pay patients."⁵⁵

Dr. O'Callaghan had no hope, however, of being elected to the medical staff of the Montreal General Hospital. All appointments of house surgeons or members of the visiting staff depended directly, according to the Charter and by-laws, on the votes of the Governors. Prospective candidates had to solicit their votes by personal canvassing, a method which, however bad and undignified, was consistently followed.⁵⁶ O'Callaghan did not consider that he had any standing in such circles. In 1828, he decided to leave Montreal, and to start his medical practice in Quebec City.

CONCLUSION

O'Callaghan was to return to Montreal. In 1833, he came back to the city as editor of the *Irish Vindicator*. In 1834, he was elected the member for Yamaska to the Lower Canada Legislative Assembly. After his exile in 1837, he went on to become one of New York State's pioneer historians. Edmund Bailey O'Callaghan was a man of many services to both the making and the writing of nineteenth century North American history.

⁵⁴ MGH, 1 a and 1 b.

⁵⁵ MGH, 1 b., January 25, 1828.

⁵⁶ See criticism of the original methods of electing medical staff in MACDERMOT, pp. 125-126.

In 1866, D'Arcy McGee, then Minister of Agriculture and Emigration in Canada recalled O'Callaghan the physician in this manner:

His immense services to colonial history will be gratefully remembered, when his Canadian politics as journalist and member for Yamaska, are totally forgotten.⁵⁷

Dr. Edmund Bailey O'Callaghan merits a full-length historical study so that neither his colonial history-writing, his political contributions nor his medical services are forgotten.

⁵⁷ Thomas D'ARCY McGEE, *The Irish Position in British and in Republican North America* (Montreal: M. Longmoore and Co., 1866) second edition, "A Letter to the Editors of the Irish Press irrespective of Party," p. 26.