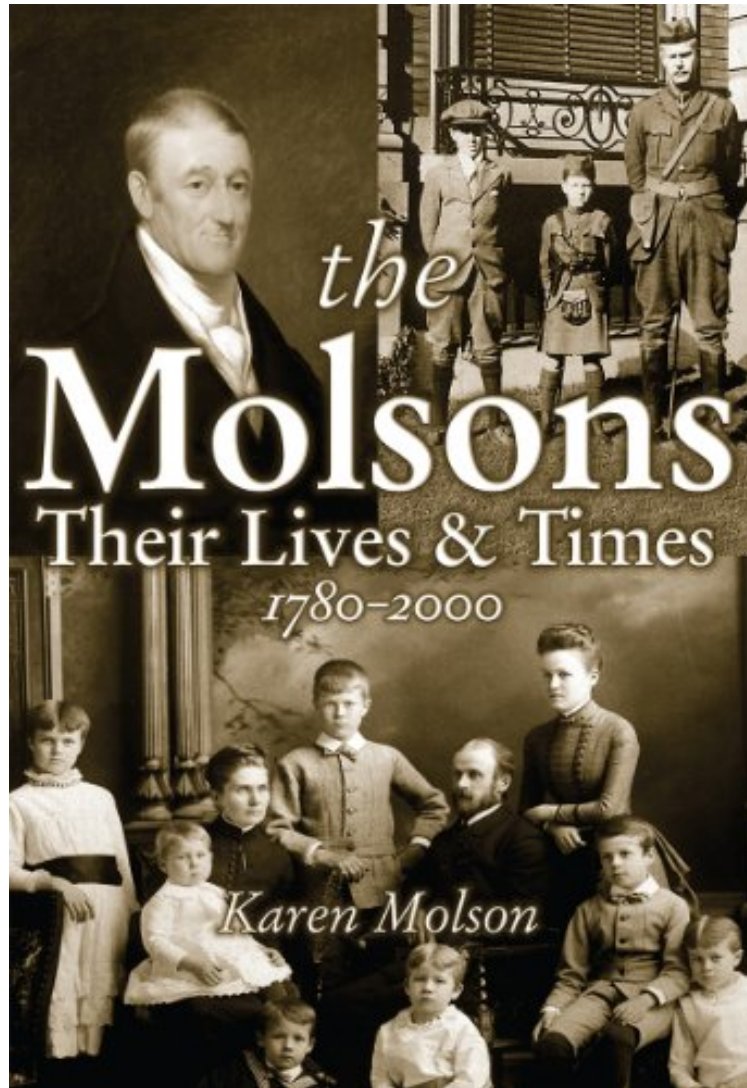


(Mobile book) The Molsons: Their Lives and Times: 1780-2000

The Molsons: Their Lives and Times: 1780-2000

Karen Molson

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Karen Molson : The Molsons: Their Lives and Times: 1780-2000 before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *The Molsons: Their Lives and Times: 1780-2000*:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Superb biography - the characters are real By A Customer A must for biography lovers. The story of the Molsons - their businesses, their family - comes alive thanks to the author's style, which draws us into the private world of the Molsons. There is drama and charm in a book that chronicles the history of Canada along with one of the country's foremost families. Excellently researched; extremely readable. Loved the photos too. A very satisfying book.

This is the true story of a remarkable family as told by a direct descendant of John Molson. Through generations, we

follow their saga. We see the Molsons cope with change and opportunity in business, and we watch them deal with personal triumphs, private tragedies, and the everyday aspects of life. The first Molson arrived in Montreal in 1782 from England, with little money but a single-minded ambition. Working hard, with a belief in the future of his adopted land, John Molson established a small brewery in Montreal and put his heart and soul into the business. Over the next 200 years the Molsons expanded the brewery again and again. The founder's drive and ability was passed on to his sons, grandsons, and future generations. The family established a bank and a steamship line, recognizing that as the young country grew, opportunities would grow with it. They became a major force in politics, sports (the Montreal Canadiens hockey team), and philanthropy. And they witnessed history, both through privileged eyes and as everyday participants. They were involved in the young nation's achievements, and in its rebellions, wars, and epidemics. Much more than a business history, *The Molsons: Their Lives and Times* is rich in details. It chronicles the many changes over two turbulent centuries of Canadian history, bringing familiar and unfamiliar events to life with warmth, drama, and emotion. Featuring dozens of never-before published photos and drawing on diaries, letters, and contemporary materials, the author illuminates this powerful, extraordinary family from a unique perspective and tells its story with surprising candor.

Readable and worth an undisturbed evening in a comfortable chair by the fire with a glass of good port. Or Export. (Graeme Decarie Montreal Gazette 2001-12-08)The book gives an entertaining view into the lifestyles of a rich and famous family over two centuries. Definitely more interesting than a story about ordinary horse thieves. (Mary Soderstrom Montreal of Books 2002-03-01)About the Author Karen Molson is a seventh-generation Molson in Canada. She is a former independent bookseller and a published short story and consumer affairs writer. She lives and works on her farm in Ontario's Lanark Highlands. Excerpt. copy; Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.Excerpted: Preface and Introduction Preface All that is good and great about the family should not be underground.John HR Molson, 1897 The idea to write this book first inspired me thirty years ago, when as a little girl I listened to my grandfather tell me about his grandparents and realized what remarkable people our ancestors were. As a teenager I asked many questions of relatives, took notes and recorded my grandfather's memories on audiotape. In the years that followed I was delighted to find that hundreds of years of family history had been saved and preserved in numerous archives, both public and private. A biographer's purpose, whether reaching into an archival box for a file or squinting into the darkness of an ancient cellar, is to discover the truth. And while passing judgment is not necessary, the responsibility of drawing conclusions is a serious one. It is not until one has assembled all the flotsam and jetsam (those things which, considered singly, seem meaningless) that the subjects' lives begin to assume shape, form and direction. As a writer and a family member, I felt I was in a unique position to write a literary history. I could explore the family's collective consciousness from within, as well as plumb for facts from without. I was certain I didn't want to write a business history or a panegyric. But what, exactly? The men and women who'd lived and died had left marks and mysteries behind. How they fascinated me! To do them justice, I would try to cast their true characters into a narrative of real events; to create a colourful and noisy pilgrimage through a panorama of time, a Canadian crusade from the past to the present. Archival material spanning the Molson family's seven generations in Canada is abundant, even overwhelming. Tens of thousands of items such as letters, diaries, deeds, artifacts and photos harbour veritable treasures and yield secrets from the past. Libraries and public archives harbour vast resources, including books, newspapers, periodicals, business records, census records, copies of land transactions, and maps. From the beginning I aimed to cast a huge net of curious inquiry, to be assured that nothing would be left uninspected. I was much gratified to be able to work with some tireless, enthusiastic researchers. I travelled to as many sites as possible in which the events in this book took place. While moving through the spaces my ancestors used to inhabit, I was ever-conscious of the existence of the past around me. I gazed at the enduring landscapes, and contemplated the St. Lawrence, a river of water enclosing a river of time. After a while it seemed an utterly natural process to present glimpses of my ancestors' lives in the present tense. I found that through the tangible, I could effortlessly reach the intangible. More than two hundred great-grandchildren can trace their ancestry back to the Lincolnshire orphan who emigrated to Montreal in 1782. John Molson Senior was eighteen when he came to Canada, fair-haired and easy-mannered. He considered every decision carefully. His attention to detail was remarkable; his vision, shrewd and keen. He kept his coins in an old grain chest. He recorded every penny earned, lent, given away or spent. He saved copies of every letter he wrote, to keep with each one he received. He did not have to exhort his sons to do the same; they -- and their children, in turn -- either learned or inherited his fastidious habits. I am grateful they did. nbsp; Introduction When the sun begins to set behind Mount Royal at the end of the day, the past and the present converge in the old city. The shadows, longer and wider now, drift from the street once known as St. Mary's to the river edge. They connect the intangible with the tangible, the things that stay the same with those that change. I plumb the past in order to find John Molson, my great-grandfather's great-grandfather, who in the seventy-three years he lived (1763-1836) was always seeking the future. We meet each other here at the brewery. The huge buildings on Notre Dame Street dwarf the people, bound to myriad destinations. There was a time when a little log brewery was all that was here, when the road passed many empty fields before reaching the old walled city, when long strip farms and seigneuries lay one after

another to the east. To get here, we have taken the highway from Ontario and negotiated a series of lane-changes downtown before taking a lucky turn and finding ourselves on Notre Dame Street. Molson's Brewery dominates blocks on the right and left. We pull into a parking lot where the sign says "Visitors" and are greeted by an attendant. The river is not visible from here, although it is only a hundred yards away. We are introduced to our escort, who guides us past a set of iron gates and then through a side door that clicks behind us. Underground, a light switch is located, and we walk past rows of shelves lined with machine parts: cylinders, taps, spigots, valves and jointed pipe pieces -- an array of obsolete equipment that seems to stretch to infinity. Dug in the eighteenth century for cool storage of beer and ale, the old cellar crouches under the stone, steel and cement structure that encompasses this modern brewery. We stop in front of a door and our escort searches for the right key, shaking the others loose from it on the ring. The thrum of some far-off machinery is faintly heard, muffled by walls and ceilings. I look up. The outline of the original log brewhouse above us is just discernible. The door opens. Something makes me catch my breath. It is impossible not to feel impressed by those who measured the twenty- by forty-foot space with yardsticks, who shovelled this cavity from the earth, who lifted these flat stones from wooden-wheeled barrows and slapped on the mortar with trowels, who groined the ceiling so it could withstand the weight of the great fermenting vats, who applied the first coats of whitewash, who stood in the very space we stand in now. I scrape a handful of earth together and squeeze it. This redolent handful -- this sandy, musty, damp earth that absorbed the splashes and spills of beer over the years -- harbours its secrets. Just on the other side of the thin gauze of history are the rows of hogsheads braced on stillions lining either side of the room, brimming with ale and the promise of riches. I look up and experience this room that, for its first hundred years, was wreathed in shadows, the air always pungent with the scent of malt and sweet wort.