

# Doncaster Ballyhoo

FOR LAURENTIAN WATERFRONT AND RECREATIONAL PROPERTY

Number 25

Winter 2001

Congratulations to the *Fondation médicale des Laurentides*. They have succeeded in last year's primary objective of raising the funds for a scanner. Once it is installed in June, you will be able to have much more complex examinations in Ste-Agathe that would otherwise have been referred to St-Jerome or to a hospital in Montreal. Special thanks go to Reverend Mary Irwin-Gibson of Holy Trinity Church and Art Bruneau, as well as Drs. Alec Miller and Alan Thompson of Lac Brûlé, for the great success in organising the English language communities. Michel Rochon of Rotisserie St-Hubert, president of the Foundation, was instrumental in helping the campaign exceed its objectives.

*Now that they are twinned, the towns of Saranac Lake and Ste-Agathe-des-Monts are developing joint projects and exchanges. If you are interested in being involved in the Twinning Committee, let us know here. Saranac Lake is very enthusiastic about our project to save the Mount Sinai Hospital building. They also have interesting heritage buildings from the tuberculosis era, some of which have been successfully converted, and others that are awaiting a new vocation. In fact, they also have an ice castle and similar winter events. Our web site contains more information about the two towns and all they have in common. You can visit it at [www.doncaster.ca](http://www.doncaster.ca).*

We are experiencing the best skiing we have seen in years. January was a perfect ski month. It is the kind of winter that reminds people of what makes the Laurentians so beautiful. We have some links on the web site that will show you lists of winter activities all across the Laurentians. If you are not 'on-line', most of this information is at the information office in the old railroad station where Carmen Cloutier and her team will be happy to help.

*The law that is forcing the municipalities on Montreal Island to merge has also triggered a forced merger of Ivry and Ste-Agathe-Nord with Ste-Agathe-des-Monts. If you have an opinion or a concern about this trend, you should be in touch with your municipal council. The telephone numbers for the three towns are Ivry: (819) 326-0554, Ste-Agathe-Nord: (819) 326-3187, and Ste-Agathe-des-Monts: (819) 326-4595.*

The Laurentian Canadian Club continues to draw a large crowd and has had some very interesting speakers, including Serge Dubois, director-general of the *Office du Tourisme Région Mont Tremblant*, and Neil and Catharine McKenty, authors of *Skiing Legends and the Laurentian Lodge Club*. If you are interested in attending any of these meetings or in joining up, contact Mrs. Bobby Ronalds at (450) 227-2719 or [bobbylink@securenet.net](mailto:bobbylink@securenet.net). The meetings are held at the Trinity Church Hall on rue Préfontaine in Ste-Agathe-des-Monts on Tuesday afternoons about once a month from September to May.

*Alliance Québec is seeking a Community Organiser to work with its Upper Laurentians Chapter, someone who demonstrates the ability to work well with volunteers and has knowledge of the Laurentian English speaking communities. Experience with community-based organisations is a definite asset. Availability for evening and occasional weekend work is required. Bilingualism is an asset. This position is part-time (2 to 3 days per week). Resumés should be forwarded to Director of Community Development, Alliance Québec, 1980 Sherbrooke Street West, suite 830 Montreal, QC. H3H 1E8. For more information contact Mary Ann Thomson, tel. (514) 932-3292, ext. 321; fax (514) 932-3917, or email [aqinfo@aq.qc.ca](mailto:aqinfo@aq.qc.ca).*

**(819) 326-4963**  
**[www.doncaster.ca](http://www.doncaster.ca)**



# John Molson

## Entrepreneur and Visionary

In 1909 two cousins, Fred and Herbert Molson, each acquired properties near Ste-Agathe. This was the period during which the Ste-Agathe area, with its large and small lakes and its marginal farms, became the country seat for Montreal's Square Milers. Fox hunting was still popular; skiing was only just beginning, the chest hospitals were being built and horses were a necessary element in local transportation. It was also in Ste-Agathe, forty-six years later, that Senator Donat Raymond offered the Montreal Canadiens to Hartland Molson and Molson's Brewery.

But the story starts five generations earlier, when nineteen-year-old John Molson crossed the Atlantic Ocean and arrived in Montreal.

John Molson, born in Lincolnshire, England in 1763, was the eldest of five children who were orphaned when John was eight years old. Looked after by his strict maternal grandfather, the young Molson left for Montreal in 1782, only nineteen years after the famous battle on the Plains of Abraham. During his first years in Montreal he was involved in a brewery owned by Thomas Loyd, who helped the young Molson get established. During the years leading up to the depression known as "*Les Années de la faim*" in 1786, John Molson was surrounded by a small coterie of new friends struggling to eke out a living in this colonial French-speaking town. To the south, the American states had recently broken away from the Empire sending Loyalists into the colony, while across the ocean France was reeling under the stress that would lead to the storming of the Bastille. Upon reaching the age of legal majority, Molson took his father's estate in hand and used it to borrow the capital needed to improve the brewery. This involved a voyage across the Atlantic and a long stay in England. While there, he acquired a book called *Theoretical Hints on an Improved Practise of Brewing* by John Richardson. Risking all, he brought English barley seed back to Montreal and distributed it to farmers, aggressively applying the techniques that he had learned from the book.

By the turn of the century, Molson's brewery had grown more than tenfold. Molson decided to use the profits to develop areas of what was then the new technology. He was convinced that Montreal should have steam-driven boats like Fulton had built on the Hudson and within a few years of Fulton's first steamship, he launched the *Accommodation* on the St. Lawrence River. Undaunted by the scale of the undertaking, he engaged the *Forges Saint-Maurice*, an ironworks originally established under the French regime, to build him a steam engine. Unlike Fulton's ship, which had its steam engine built in England, the *Accommodation* was built entirely in North America.

Subsequently Molson went on to use steam technology in the development of a new distillery and in 1832 he backed the *Champlain and St. Lawrence Railroad*, which became Canada's first public railway. It ran between Dorchester (now St-Jean-sur-Richelieu) and La Prairie, effectively joining the Hudson River and the St. Lawrence. The first locomotive, the Dorchester, made its inaugural run in 1836, the year Molson died. That year the Molson steamship line comprised 22 vessels.

John Molson was also president of the Bank of Montreal as well as vice-president and a major catalyst in the creation of the Montreal General Hospital. He was a member of the Assembly for Lower Canada and eventually became a member of its legislative council. He founded the Royal Theatre at the current location of Bonsecours Market, and built Montreal's first luxury hotels.

History places him in the *Chateau Clique*, the English establishment that opposed the 1837 uprisings led by Louis-Joseph Papineau and A.N. Morin. An examination of the times paints a romantic picture of each side. Molson, the champion of industrialisation, objected to the seigneurial system and had a vision of Montreal as one of the two or three greatest industrial-commercial centres in North America. This was the reality and the expectation of the *Chateau Clique*; the British administration was fair and magnanimous and industrial growth should be the order of the day. Montreal was the most important colonial city in the largest empire in the world. Papineau's vision, by contrast, was to attain more power for the seigneuries by giving greater authority to the Assembly, while Morin's was to bring democracy to French Canada.

The year after John Molson's death, 1837, saw major collapses of both British and American banks. His three sons were at the helm of the Molson business interests. British and American economic stability was challenged; North American ports were flooded with immigrants. Cholera epidemics were running rampant in Montreal and New York, and both Lower and Upper Canada were besieged by uprisings by the *Parti des Patriotes* here and the Reform Party in Upper Canada. In this atmosphere of martial law, trials for treason, sickness and economic instability, William Molson, the third son of John, issued a currency engraved with the words **Molson's Bank** in an attempt to stabilize the market of Lower Canada. The success of the currency stands as a testimonial to the confidence that the Molson name inspired during these difficult years. The torch, lighted by the father during the 'years of hunger' had been passed on to the sons and they had risen to the challenge.

*Continued...*



# What's it Worth?

OR

## Well, Well, Well

With all the attention that Walkerton and Shannon have brought to drinking water, it is worth evaluating where our water comes from. Most country homes get their water from a local source such as a surface well, a deep well, a spring or the lake. While some of the homes in the Ste-Agathe area are supplied by municipal aqueduct, there is evidently no shortage of chlorine in these systems. Private systems, however, are generally not monitored and can vary enormously with the quality of installation, the drainage of the terrain and the care they are given. For instance, when we sell a house we encourage the inspector to test the water quality. If it comes from a deep, or artesian, well it is usually fine. If it comes from the lake, the owners are generally aware of its quality and can produce water tests taken during the summer months. The deeper the intake valve is in the lake the more likely that the water will remain potable all year long, but the highest risk period is mid- to late-August when the water is warmest and the lake activities have reached their maximum. While surface wells are as good as deep wells in theory, there is more variance in the quality of installation of surface wells and they are more subject to cracks in the tiles or the cap. Most of the time these cracks or a poor installation of the tiles can be easily corrected, but usually when a well has cracks, it becomes contaminated. Private wells should be monitored carefully and, if they show a tendency to get contaminated, should be cleaned once every year or two.

Have your water checked by getting a sample bottle from Bio-Services in Ste-Agathe or at one of the pharmacies, and following the instructions that come with it. It is a simple precaution and the lab will contact you with the results. Cleaning and/or minor repairs will correct most problems. If there is a fecal coliform count, it could be more serious and may mean that a septic system is contaminating your ground water.

The problems being experienced in Walkerton and Shannon are not likely to happen here since we have neither industry nor agriculture; in fact we have some of the purist and most plentiful ground water in the world. Even most of our lakes, if left undisturbed, are likely to be perfectly potable.

*Prepared in consultation with Bio-Services (1995) Inc., 180 Morin Blvd., Ste-Agathe-des-Monts, (819) 326-8690*

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### John Molson (continued)

Molson's Bank, in effect created to deal with this crisis, introduced Canada's first currency designated as a 'dollar' but received its charter only in 1855. In 1925 when it merged with the Bank of Montreal, it had 125 branches. The Champlain and St. Lawrence Railroad eventually became a part of the Grand Trunk railway and from there became a part of Canadian National Railways. Molson's Brewery, one of Canada's first companies, is the oldest brewery in North America.

The Molson family continues to grow and flourish in Canada. There are 18 different entries with the heading Molson in the Canadian Encyclopaedia and forty descendants of John and Sarah Molson served in the First World War. It has spread its roots deeply and broadly in

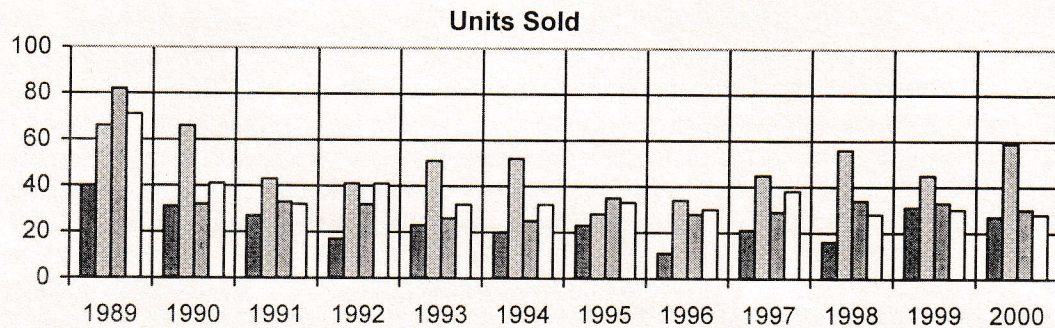
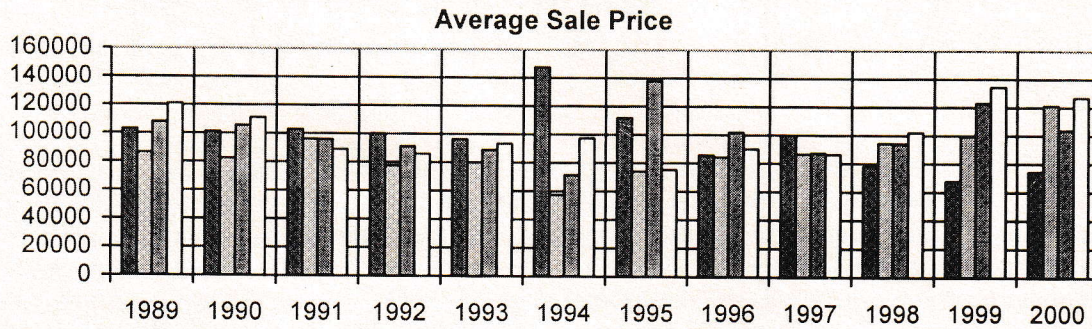
the Ste-Agathe area where members continue to contribute to the growth and well being of our community.

#### References:

- The Railway of Canada Archives
- John Molson: Strength through Diversity -J.M.S. Careless
- Canadian Genealogy Index
- The Molson Saga 1763-1983 -S.E. Woods, Jr.
- Maud Dufort, Cam Veng Ly and Frédéric Jodoin "L'historien et les ressources documentaires dans les archives et les musées", presented at the Winter Session, 2000 at UQAM
- Bibliothèque nationale du Québec
- Les forges du St-Maurice, Roch Samson
- McCord Museum



# MARKET TRENDS



The year 2000 does not appear much different from the previous year. Both the total value and the number of units sold are about the same. The difference, especially in the recreational market, is that the 'inventory' of houses for sale is dropping. If this trend continues, the average price will begin to rise in consequence.

If you would like back issues of the Doncaster Ballyhoo, give us a call or drop by. We will happily add the names of your friends or neighbours to our list if they would like to receive their own copy. Please let us know if you change your address. Having an accurate mailing list helps us keep our costs (and waste) down.

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 (Not intended to solicit properties currently listed for sale)