



**Abraham Gesner  
(1797-1864)**

Abraham Gesner was born in Cornwallis Township, Nova Scotia. It has been said that he was born with a love of geology in his bones. As a child, he could often be found collecting rocks and fossils along the shore of the Bay of Fundy. He basically taught himself the science of geology.

Mr. Gesner eventually studied medicine in London, England. In locating his medical practice he chose a site that would allow his interest in geology to continue. He set up his medical practice near Parrsboro, N.S., where he knew fossils could be found. On his way to and from house calls, Gesner built up an extensive collection.

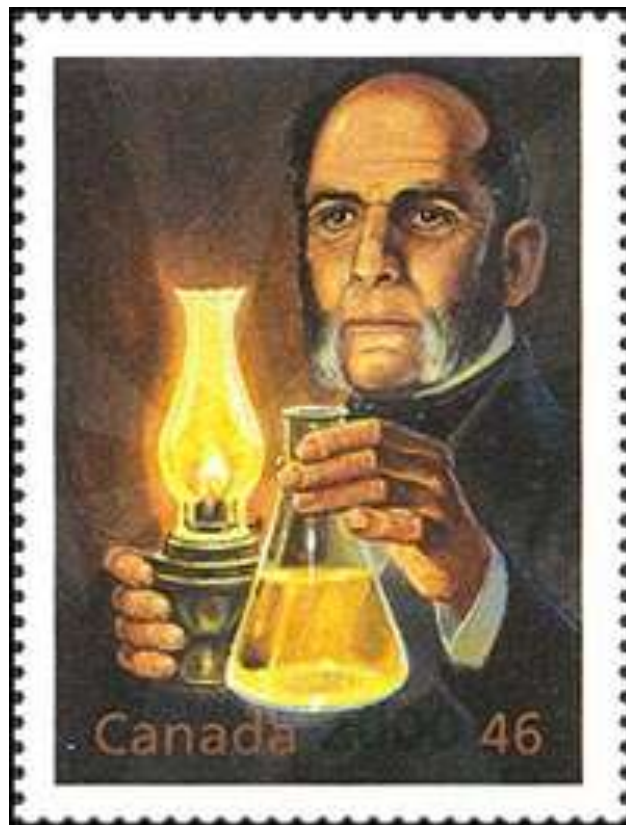
Gesner became the first government geologist in a British colony when appointed Provincial Geologist of New Brunswick in 1838. A year later, he discovered albertite (a coal like solid hydrocarbon substance).

In April of 1842, he opened Gesner's Museum of Natural History. Charging admission to view his private collection, he hoped to combat serious debt. Those to whom he owed money eventually took over his collection in lieu of payment. The Natural History Society of New Brunswick acquired his collection in 1890, which would later be added to the Natural History Museum in Saint John as part of its core collection.

In 1848, Gesner moved to Sackville, and later moved to Halifax, where he made the acquaintance of Thomas Cochrane, 10<sup>th</sup> Earl of Dundonald. Dundonald had been interested in the improvement of illumination. With Dundonald's encouragement and probable participation, Gesner resumed his experiments with hydrocarbon lamp fuel.

Lack of interest in Halifax must have finally convinced Gesner that the future of kerosene was elsewhere. In 1853 Gesner immigrated to the United States where he developed and patented a process for manufacturing kerosene, for which he is still famous.

Dalhousie University invited Gesner to return and teach chemistry in 1864. Sadly he died in Halifax shortly thereafter.



**A stamp was commissioned of Abraham Gesner. Date of issue was March of 2000.**