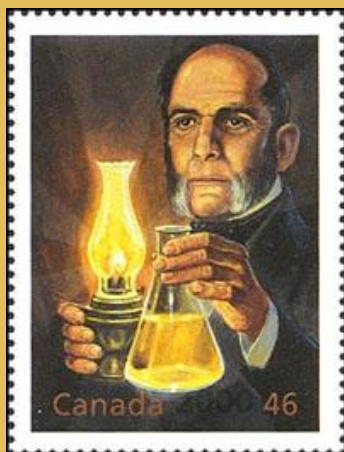


## Abraham Gesner (1797-1864)

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.



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

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.

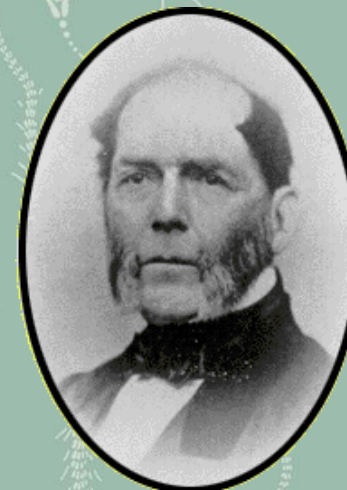
In 1848, Gesner moved to Sackville, and later moved to Halifax, where he made the acquaintance of Thomas Cochrane, 10<sup>th</sup> Earl of Dundonald. Dundonald had been interested in the improvement of illumination. With Dundonald's encouragement and probable participation, Gesner resumed his experiments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

## ABRAHAM GESNER AND GEORGE LAWSON

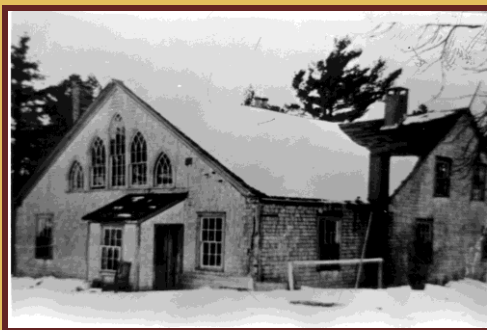
GREAT MINDS OF SACKVILLE



Inventor Abraham Gesner, pictured above, resided in Sackville around 1848.

## FULTZ HOUSE MUSEUM





(C. 1940)

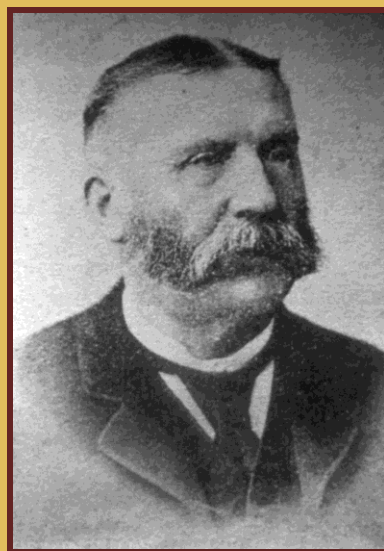
"Lucyfield," pictured above, was built in the first half of the nineteenth century and became the country home of Dr. Lawson in the late 1860's. Lawson named the property for his first wife, Lucy Stapley, who died in 1871. "Lucyfield" was demolished in the 1950's.

## George Lawson 1827 – 1896

Dr. Lawson was born in Newport, Fifeshire, Scotland. It was in his country of origin, while studying at Edinburgh University that his interests turned from law to the field of natural science. Lawson began a successful career at Edinburgh College where he became curator of the herbarium and prepared a catalogue for the library of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. In 1857, he obtained an honorary Ph.D from Giessen University.

It was 1858 when Lawson immigrated from Scotland to become the Professor of Chemistry and Natural History at Queen's University. There he constructed one of the first known Canadian botanical gardens and became a founding member and president of the Royal Society of Canada.

Dr. Lawson became Professor of Chemistry and Mineralogy at Dalhousie University in 1863 where he was also responsible for Botany and Zoology. Lawson played an influential role in the areas of agriculture and horticulture in Nova Scotia. He was the secretary of the Provincial Board of Agriculture for 31 years and played a large role in the founding of the provincial Agriculture College in Truro and the College of Horticulture in Kentville. His work was widely published in approximately 100 articles on a variety of natural science subjects. His most famous writing is a book he published titled *The Royal Waterlily of South America and the Waterlilies of Britain*.



Dr. George Lawson

## LAWSON'S LEGACY

Lawson chose to make Sackville his home for approximately 30 years from 1866 to 1895. While living in Sackville he developed botanical gardens where he experimented with rare species of plant life. His home laboratory included gothic-style windows in which enabled him to help carry out his experiments.

Lawson married twice. After his death in 1896 at age 69, he left his herbarium to Mount Allison University in New Brunswick and his library to his daughters Sara M. and Jessie W. from his first marriage. In turn, they donated the library to Dalhousie University. In 1941, Sara died and left a sum of money for the creation of a botany scholarship at Dalhousie University in honour of her father.

In 1969 the Canadian Botanical Association instituted a medal to be awarded annually. It was named the George Lawson Medal.

The property that Lawson lived on was later owned by the Hankey and Oland families. Many of the shrubs and trees that he planted on the land still remain today.