



Dr. 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."

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.

Lawson chose to make Sackville his home for approximately 30 years from 1866 to 1895. While living in Sackville on what he called “Lucyfield” in honour of his first wife, he developed botanical gardens where he experimented with rare species of plant life. The property that Lawson lived on was later owned by the Hankey and Oland families.



(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.