

= Christian Ramsay =

Christian Ramsay , Countess of Dalhousie informally Lady Dalhousie , née Broun ; 28 February 1786 ? 22 January 1839 was a Scottish botanist and natural historian . She married the 9th Earl of Dalhousie and travelled with him when he was appointed Governor General of Canada and India . While travelling , she collected and catalogued many species of plants , presented scientific papers to societies and donated multiple collections to different botanical groups .

Lady Dalhousie was made an honorary member of the Botanical Society of Edinburgh and was its only female honorary member until her death . A genus of tropical plant , *Dalhousiea* , was named after her .

= = Family = =

Lady Dalhousie was born Christian Broun on 28 February 1786 at Coalstoun , the ancestral home of the Broun family near Haddington , East Lothian . She was the only child of Charles and Christian Broun . The Broun family had a history in the legal profession ; her father was an advocate and his father a judge , George Broun , Lord Coalstoun . On 14 May 1805 , she married the 9th Earl of Dalhousie and was styled Countess of Dalhousie .

Lady Dalhousie and her husband had three sons . Their eldest , George , was born 3 August 1806 , a captain in the 26th (Cameronian) Regiment of Foot , he died on 25 October 1832 . Their second son , Charles , died at nine years old . Their youngest , James , born 22 April 1812 , inherited his father 's title in 1838 and was created Marquess of Dalhousie in 1849 .

= = Scientific work = =

Lady Dalhousie was a keen botanist ; she catalogued plants on herbarium sheets , fully identified and complete with collection dates , notes on habitats and some with watercolour pictures she had painted . In 1824 , Lord Dalhousie co @-@ founded the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec . Lady Dalhousie 's catalogue of Canadian plants was included in the first issue of the society 's Transactions in 1829 . Lady Dalhousie presented a paper to them and donated her collection of Nova Scotian specimens as part of a herbarium in 1824 .

Lady Dalhousie donated her entire East Indian Herbarium to the Botanical Society of Edinburgh . The society noted its quality and made Lady Dalhousie an honorary member in 1837 ; at the time of her death she was the only female honorary member . Records of correspondence with Kew botanist , Sir William Hooker , include large collections of plants from Simla and Penang in 1831 . Her collections were included when Joseph Dalton Hooker compiled his *Flora Indica* .

= = Travels = =

When her husband was appointed Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia , she travelled with him and their three sons to Canada on the frigate HMS *Forth* . The family lived in Halifax , Nova Scotia for four years from 1816 to 1820 . Whilst there , Lady Dalhousie spent her time in the promotion of science . She toured the countryside with her husband , recommended improvements to farming and collected botanical items . She sent seeds to Dalhousie Castle for the gardens .

In 1820 , the family moved to Quebec , when her husband was appointed Governor General of British North America . Lady Dalhousie took on the traditional role of a governor 's wife , that of " Patron of literature and the arts " . She spent much time in high society and was known for her wit and satirical caricatures of society members . Once established , Lady Dalhousie and her friends started focusing on natural history and in particular cataloguing local botany .

In 1824 , the family returned to Dalhousie Castle and began plans for an extensive garden . Their gardener , Joseph Archibald , wrote of her that " few ... attained such proficiency as her ladyship in the science " . Plans for the garden were cut short as the family suffered severe financial losses when their agent went bankrupt . Although the garden was not completed , many of the North

American plants had been planted and flowered for the first time in Great Britain . The family moved to a modest farm house in Sorel in 1826 and remained there until Lord Dalhousie was appointed Governor General and Commander @-@ in @-@ Chief of India in 1829 .

On the journey to India , the family stopped at Madeira , St. Helena and the Cape of Good Hope . At each place , Lady Dalhousie took time to collect plants and made a detailed catalogue of them . In 1831 she visited the foothills of Simla , along with Penang , near the Malay Peninsula .

= = Death and legacy = =

Lady Dalhousie died suddenly on 22 January 1839 in the home of Dean Ramsay aged 52 . One report mentions that she was so dedicated to her studies that she died with a list of plants in her hand . The collection that she and her husband had made was sold in 1985 ; parts went to the Nova Scotia Museum , the National Gallery of Canada , the Library and Archives Canada and the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick .

For her work in the classification of Indian botany , Robert Graham named a genus of Fabaceae , a flowering plant native to India , after her ? Dalhousiea . One of the plants she sent to Graham was a new discovery , so he named the plant *Asplenium dalhousiae* after her . Sir William Hooker dedicated a volume of Curtis 's Botanical Magazine to her . Julia Catherine Beckwith , who is credited as Canada 's first writer of fiction , dedicated her first novel to her . Lady Dalhousie was the first owner of one of the " Philadelphia " copies of Jane Austen 's Emma .