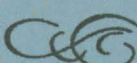
 LUCIUS STERNE OILLE 

(October 3, 1830 - August 15, 1903)

Born Pelham Twp.; youngest son of George Oille (U.E.L.)  
Educated at the Grantham Academy  
Won Silver Medal in Mathematics during his first year  
at the University of Toronto  
B.A. 1855, M.A. 1856

PHYSICIAN

Graduated 1859 as a Gold Medalist in Medicine from  
University of Toronto  
Installed the first X-Ray machine in St. Catharines

MAYOR OF ST. CATHARINES

Second Mayor for City of St. Catharines, 1876  
First elected 1868 as a Councillor for St. Andrew's Ward  
Deputy Reeve, St. Catharines; Warden, County of Lincoln

WATERWORKS COMMISSIONER

Appointed Committee Chairman to plan a water supply system  
for St. Catharines, 1875  
Served as Chairman or Member of the Waterworks Commission  
for 17 consecutive years

CITY BENEFACTOR

Donated public drinking fountain to St. Catharines  
Member of Collegiate Institute Board for 28 years  
Founder & Charter Member (since 1872) of  
St. Catharines Board of Trade (now the Chamber of Commerce)  
Builder of Grand Central Hotel (now the Montebello Inn)

RAILWAY PROMOTER

St. Catharines Railway Company  
Promoted the first street railroad (a horsedrawn line)  
in St. Catharines, and served as President  
System electrified in 1887, North America's first  
St. Catharines & Niagara Central Railway Company, 1887  
Served as President of this steam railroad



# THE HISTORIC OILLE FOUNTAIN

&

## THE POTTING CEREMONY

### A Gift from Lucius Oille

One of the City's oldest landmarks stands proudly at the corner of King and James Streets, conveniently located near the busy Market and the public it was meant to serve. The Oille Fountain was the first public fountain in St. Catharines and had been erected by one of its outstanding citizens, Lucius S. Oille. Dr. Oille was one of the proponents of the City's waterworks system and it is largely accepted that his efforts were responsible for the establishment of the waterworks in St. Catharines, 1875-76. The fountain was donated in 1878 to mark the achievement of the system.

### A Finely Executed Work of Architecture

The fine limestone edifice was the work of the noted architect Sidney Rose Badgley. Educated and practicing for a time in St. Catharines, Badgley was widely acclaimed throughout North America for his architectural work on church and public buildings. Locally, he designed Welland Avenue Methodist (United) Church, the old Carnegie Public Library, and Massey Hall in Toronto.

### A Questionable Future

Unfortunately the fountain deteriorated with time and the problem of its repair was extensively studied by the City and the Waterworks Commission. The fountain was dry from at least 1930 and suffered a further indignity when a substitute fountain was placed in front of the handsome sentinel. There was even talk of replacing it with a duplicate for a "minimum of trouble".



### A Monument Preserved

Fortunately for the fountain of Dr. Oille, his niece Mrs. Elizabeth Campbell, lobbied for years to see the historic fountain restored. However, it wasn't until 1971 that the edifice underwent a facelift when the Classical lines of its carved stone design were preserved with the addition of a protective coating. It received further protection in 1978 when, on the recommendation of the Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee, the Council for the City of St. Catharines officially designated the fountain under the provision of the Ontario Heritage Act as being an edifice of historical and architectural significance.

### An Edifice for Man and Beast Alike

Two projecting stone fountain bowls occupy opposite sides of the fountain. The water for both bowls was fed from carved lions' heads with patrons drinking from tin cups suspended from chains. Thinking as well of earth's four-legged creatures, Dr. Oille had a semi-circular drinking basin for pets incorporated in the base of the fountain.

### A Ceremony Revived In the Memory of Lucius Oille

Tradition has it that Dr. Oille requested that a geranium be planted every Spring in the special urn atop the fountain. The ceremony had been carried on until the late 1940's when it seems to have lapsed. In 1975 the St. Catharines Historical Museum decided to revive the historic tradition under the guidance of Frank Hawley, a Member of the Museum Board who had assisted Mrs. Campbell years ago in perpetuating "The Potting". This year marks the Sixth ceremony and will once again see the Campbell's involved in the persons of Malcolm Campbell, the great-great nephew of Dr. Oille, and his Daughter Susan. As well, Sheriff Blake Marlow, whose Court House location overlooks the fountain, will be "potter" for the first time.



*Letter to City Council*

*from*

MAYOR LUCIUS OILLE

*on the occasion of the presentation of the fountain*

To commemorate the successful completion of the St. Catharines waterworks, and likewise make public provision for a common want of humanity, hitherto unsupplied, yet urgently required in one of the most frequented and important portions of the city, I have erected a fountain for drinking purposes at the junction of King Street and James Street.

It is convenient of access from those important thoroughfares, the public buildings and the general market and, I trust will prove a substantial public benefit.

I now make a free gift of this public fountain to the city of St. Catharines, on behalf of the inhabitants for whose public use it is erected. I request the city council to become the custodian, to protect it from destruction or injury with care, to secure to it free and unmolested access and maintain from it a constant flow of water during those seasons of the year when required by the wants of the public.

"THE POTTING CEREMONY"

Re-enacted May 30, 1981 by the  
ST. CATHARINES HISTORICAL MUSEUM