

By Bill Stevens – Originally published in the December 2006 Newsletter

On November 9, 1906 the first annual meeting of the Ontario Horticultural Association (O.H.A.) was held in Toronto. Sixteen delegates attended and elected the first officers of the Association. William Bartlett Burgoyne of St. Catharines was elected the first president, to serve the remainder of 1906 and 1907 and C. A. Hesson of St. Catharines was elected as a director.

Horticultural Societies existed prior to 1906 and many met in conventions in 1904 and 1905 in order to form the O.H.A. The Association's most notable accomplishment was the culmination of the Province of Ontario passing an Act in the Legislature on March 16, 1937 adopting the Trillium Grandiflorum (white) as the floral emblem of the Province of Ontario. The emblem in varied forms is still used today.

Annual membership fees were set at \$2.00 starting in 1907 for each Horticultural Society in Ontario, and delegates from member societies only were allowed to vote.

W. B. Burgoyne was born on August 2, 1855 to Henry and Martha Burgoyne. He married Mary Lavinia Darker in June 1880. They had three children: Henry, Clair and Estelle. William was the founder of the Evening Star in 1887, which lasted four years. He then purchased the St. Catharines Standard in 1892. He was an Anglican in faith, served as a City Alderman for several years and as Mayor in 1903. William was president of the St. Catharines Horticultural Society for four years and when he died on December 31, 1921 he left provision in his will for the acquisition

of what to-day is Burgoyne Woods. He donated the first civic rose garden in Canada when he was newspaper editor.

The St. Catharines Horticultural Society is still very active in St. Catharines to-day and is a member of District 9 of the Ontario Horticultural Association.