

Alfred Sandham 1838–1910

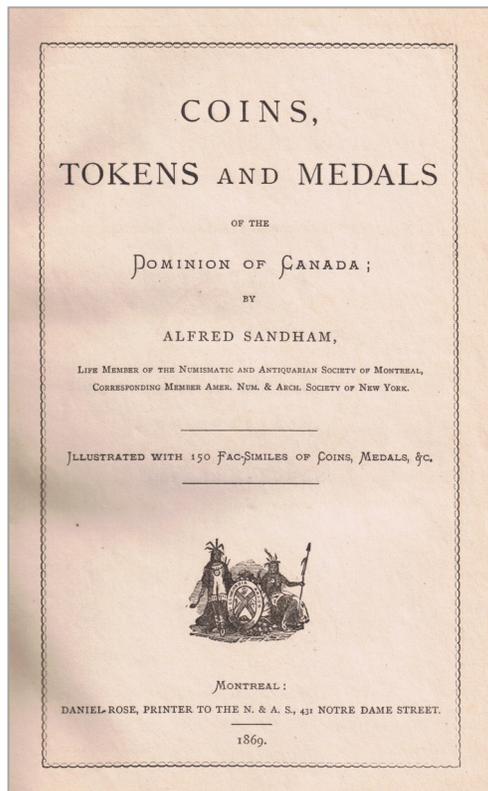
Did You Knowthat the pioneer work *Coins, Tokens and Medals of the Dominion of Canada* was created by a man who was not only a numismatist but a renowned illustrator and author as well?

Alfred Sandham was born in Montreal on November 19, 1838. Sandham grew up in the neighbourhood known as Griffintown, a community largely made up of Irish immigrants. His schooling was minimal (elementary) and feeling uninspired Sandham, while still in his teens, left for New York seeking employment. After two years he returned to Montreal and worked as an operator for the Montreal Telegraph Company. In 1864 Sandham became secretary of the YMCA of Montreal. He worked diligently for this organization for eleven years. In 1878 he went to Toronto to take up secretaryship of the YMCA in that city.

All through the years Sandham built a wonderful collection of coins and medals as well as stamps and rare minerals. Numismatists of Sandham's era often had collecting interests other than numismatics with stamps and minerals the most popular. In 1869 Sandham published *Coins, Tokens and Medals of Canada* a catalogue which described two hundred and fifteen coins and forty two medals and is illustrated by eight full pages of plates drawn by Sandham himself. Although *Coins, Tokens and Medals of the Dominion of Canada* was not the first attempt to catalogue the coins of Canada it was a book on which future efforts were based and so can claim to be a ground breaking publication. In 1872 Sandham published a supplement to his work describing eighteen additional coins and thirty eight medals also mentioning some thirty seven die varieties. With the supplement Sandham described a total of three hundred and fifty Canadian coins and medals. Also, during 1872 Sandham became the first editor of the *Canadian Antiquarian and Numismatic Journal* and held this position until 1875. Sandham went on to publish several historical and numismatic books; *Medals Commemorative of the Visit of the Prince of Wales to Canada, McGill College and its Medals, Montreal and its Fortifications, Historic Medals of Canada and The Trade Tokens of Montreal*.



Alfred Sandham, illustrator, author, editor, collector and numismatist died on Christmas night, December 25, 1910.

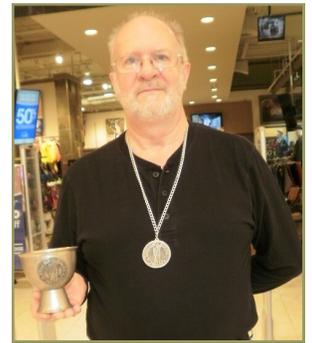
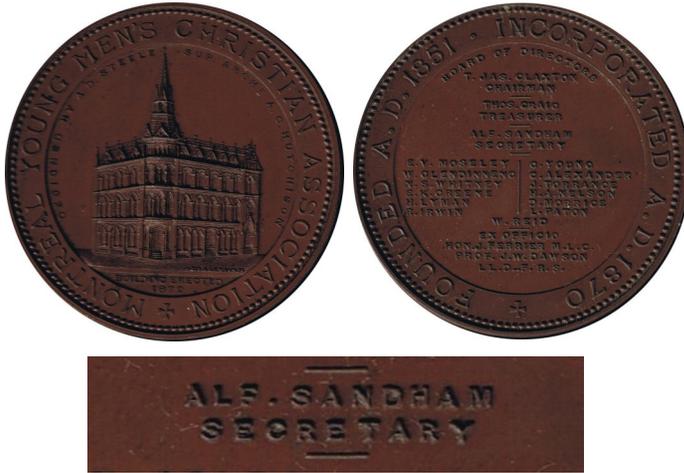


Alfred Sandham's *Coins, Tokens and Medals of the Dominion of Canada* was published in 1869. Of the 200 copies issued most did not sell and in Sandham's words could not even be given away. Later, Sandham order the publisher to destroy the unbound copies that were left. Today, an original copy is quite scarce.



The Jacques Cartier medal was rejected by Sandham and he defaced the dies. R.W. McLachlan later found the dies and struck 10 medals in white metal and 1 in bronze. The bronze was made from a reworking of the die to remove the 'bosses' or defacing. The bronze medal resides in the collection of the Chateau Ramezay of Montreal.

The following medal was made for the YMCA commemorating the founding in 1851 in Montreal and incorporation in 1870. The reverse lists the board of directors and includes Alf Sandham's name as secretary. The medal is known in bronze and white metal.



Scott E. Douglas
FRCNA, FCNRS, FONA, Knight of St. Eligius

Moonscape of Mullock Humps

Although there are lots of opal mining towns in Australia there are four which have become household names - Coober Pedy, Andamooka, White Cliffs and Lightning Ridge. They are wild and unruly places surrounded by a moonscape of mullock humps where people fight against horrendous climate conditions in their search for precious gemstones. They are, as one observer noted, 'monuments to the tenacious optimism of all mankind'. Opal mines are shown in orange dots on the map. Currently, Australia produces around 95% of the world's opals for use in the jewellery industry. These opals are considered the finest in the world and differ in appearance from the small amounts mined in Honduras, Mexico, former Czechoslovakia, and Brazil. Exports are nearly \$200 million per year. Australia's opal fields lie in 3 states: Queensland, New South Wales, and South Australia, along the site of the ancient 'Great Inland Sea' or 'Great Artesian Basin'. **White or Milky opal** is found in South Australia, **Black opal** is found in Lightning Ridge (NSW) and **Boulder opal** is found in Queensland. The best time to visit the opal fields is April to September. Summer should be avoided due to the high temperatures and possibly heavy rains washing out the roads. Below is the pin **Garry George** gave **Judy Blackman** at the October 1st, 2014, SWCS meeting.



Examples of White Opal



Examples of Black Opal



Examples of Boulder Opal

