

Robert William Geary

Did You Know... that one of Ontario's earliest collectors was also an authority on the War of 1812? Robert W. Geary was born in Owen Sound, Ontario July 4, 1859 the only son of William Joseph and Emily Geary formerly of Cork, Ireland. Sometime in the early 1870's William and Emily took Robert and moved to Pinkerton, Ontario about 45 miles away in Bruce County. Here William set up shop as a cabinet maker.

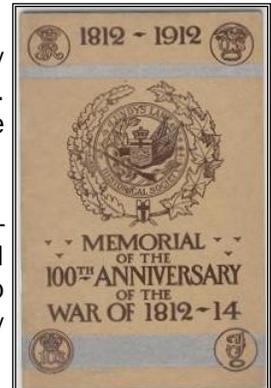
On May 29, 1883 R.W. Geary married Jessie Pascoe of Niagara Falls, Ont. The marriage took place at All Saints Anglican Church in Niagara Falls Village. The bride and groom returned to Pinkerton where Geary would operate a dry goods store in a building newly built by his father William. His wife Jessie ran a millinery shop on the premises and was later joined by her mother-in-law in this endeavour. The population of Pinkerton was about 150. A short time later Geary formed Geary & Co. with 2 partners Thomas Pinkerton (saw and carding mills) and J.B Campbell (harness maker). This union lasted until 1890 when Geary decided to go it alone and Campbell and Pinkerton open up in a yellow brick building directly across the road. The impression is that the split was not amiable or else was necessary and Bradstreet's directory made a point of reporting in their Dominion of Canada directory for Geary & Co. R.W. Geary only. I say that it may have been necessary because in the following year of 1891 Geary became the Postmaster and has a post office set up in back of his store. It is possible that the arrangement made by Geary to become postmaster could not include his partners for some reason. The year 1891 also saw the birth of his daughter Grace.



In 1898 Geary & Co. along with Jessie and Grace move to Niagara Falls and opened a dry goods store (also offering clothing and men's furnishings) at the intersection of Main Street and Lundy's Lane. Robert Geary would try his hand at retail sales for just a few more years before giving it up forever in 1907 to become a Real Estate agent. Geary operated out of his home first at 33 Barker St. and later at 92 Main St. He continued in this vocation for the next 20 years until about 1927. Jessie and Robert Geary celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on May 29, 1933 just one month before Robert passed away on June 30, 1933. Robert William Geary was 74 years old when he died.

Shortly after Geary arrived in Niagara Falls he became involved with the Lundy's Lane Historical Society becoming the President in 1909 and remaining in this position for 24 years until his death in 1933. Geary became known in general as an specialist in the War of 1812 and an authority specifically on the Battle of Lundy's Lane. To say it was his passion clearly would be an understatement.

Geary wrote a 15 page pamphlet in 1912 as a 'Memorial of the 100th Anniversary of the War of 1812-14' which was published by the Lundy's Lane Historical Society. In 1914 Geary arranged and participated in a re-enactment of the Battle of Lundy's Lane. I am quite certain it was his idea as well to have medals made to commemorate this occasion and today we are reminded of this by the beautifully executed pieces in both bronze and sterling silver.



Along with his seemingly vast knowledge of the War of 1812 Geary was also something of an authority on Military buttons. In the 1905 Ontario Historical Society annual report Geary is quoted in connection to 'the potency of military buttons of British garrisons in Upper Canada as *synecdoche's to loyalist efforts' *"All that visibly remains of these once gallant battalions are these old battered and corroded pieces of stamped metal - relics insignificant in themselves, yet immensely suggestive of the great struggles in the political formation of this continent"*.

At the time of his death Geary was the Honorary Vice-President of the Ontario Historical Society. Robert Geary was a frequent contributor to literary and historical publications in England, the United States and Canada.

(picture right) The stage is set for the re enactment of the Battle of Lundy's Lane 100 years later at the intersection of Main St. and Lundy's Lane July 25, 1914.



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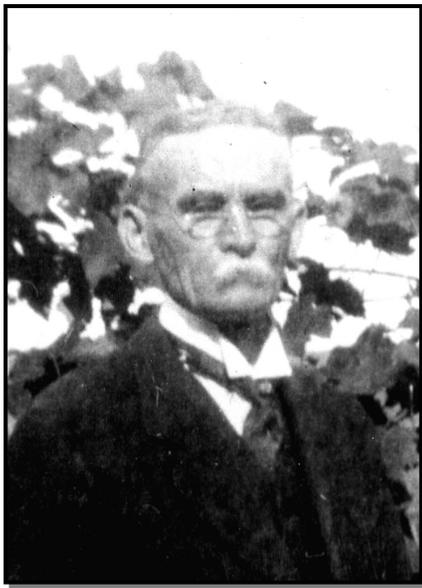
* synecdoche; a figure of speech by which a part is put for the whole (as *fifty sail* for *fifty ships*), the whole for a part (as *society* for *high society*), the species for the genus (as *cutthroat* for *assassin*), the genus for the species (as *a creature* for a *man*), or the name of the material for the thing made (as *boards* for *stage*). Merriam-Webster



The Lundy's Lane Historical Society medals commemorating the 100th Anniversary of The Battle of Lundy's Lane.

Obverse: Lundy's Lane Historical Society / 1914 / Niagara Falls, Canada.

Reverse: To Commemorate / the / 100th Anniversary / of the / Battle of Lundy's Lane / Between the / British and United States / Forces / July 25th 1814



Robert William Geary
1859 - 1933



A personal token made for Geary in 1894.

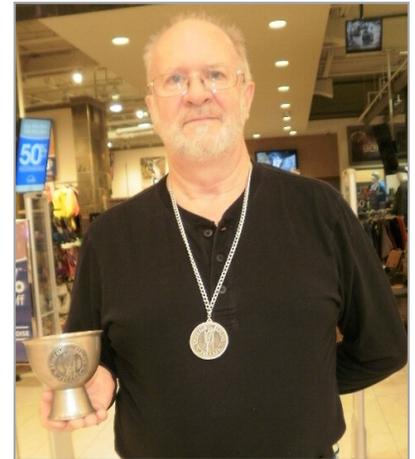
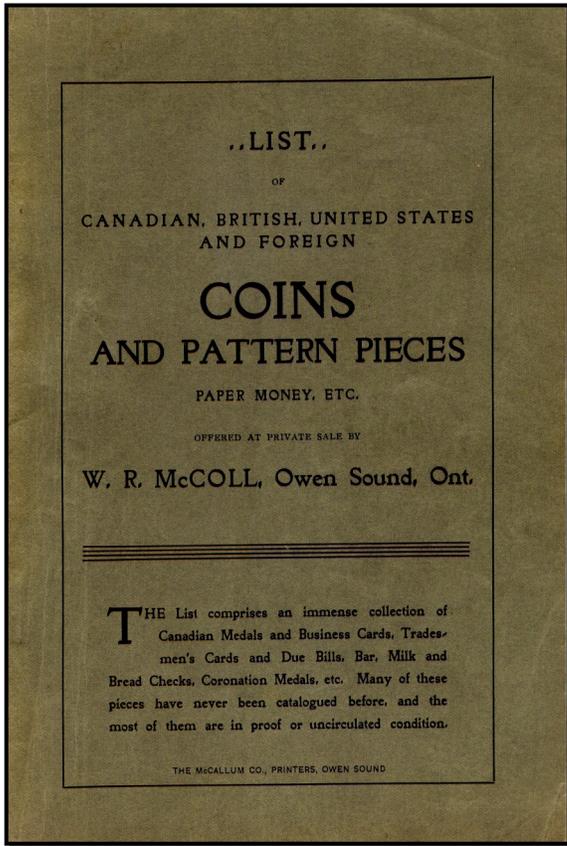


In 1903 when W.R. McColl put out his list he made reference to R.W. Geary and his numismatic token on page 32 under the heading 'Numismatists or Coin Collectors'. McColl assigned the tokens number 811 for the brass and 812 for the aluminum. At 50c each McColl valued them at double most of the other like offerings possibly suggesting that there were not as many available. Given the familiar style of the obverse McColl may even have had a hand in the creation of these pieces.



McColl # 811 Brass

This article is written by



Scott E. Douglas
FRCNA, FCNRS, FONA, GKOE

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NUMISMATISTS OR COIN COLLECTORS
NOT CATALOGUED

Lot No.		Price
806b	Copper, uncirculated, S. M. Thomson, Brantford	\$0 25
807	Alum., uncirculated, J. T. Roberge, Sorel, Quebec	40
808	Brass, uncirculated, M. A. Sanders, Sarnia	25
809	German Silver, uncirculated, M. A. Sanders, Sarnia	25
810	Brass, uncirculated, Ewen S. McLeod, Wheatley River, P.E.I.	20
811	Brass, uncirculated, R. W. Geary, Niagara Falls	50
812	Alum., uncirculated, R. W. Geary, Niagara Falls	50
813	Alum., uncirculated, W. A. Shaw, Toronto	25
814	Brass, uncirculated, W. A. Shaw, Toronto	25
822	Alum., uncirculated, J. B. Dagan, Sarnia	25
823	German Silver, uncirculated, I. R. Dagan, Sarnia	25
824	Brass, uncirculated, E. W. Barton, Toronto, 20 struck	35
825	Copper, uncirculated, E. W. Barton, Toronto, 5 struck	50
826	German Silver, uncirculated, E. W. Barton, Toronto, 75 struck	25
827	Alum., uncirculated, George Holmes, Owen Sound	25
828	Brass, uncirculated, George Holmes, Owen Sound	25
829	Alum., uncirculated, W. R. McColl, Owen Sound, correct	25
830	Alum., uncirculated, W. R. McColl, Owen Sound, numismatists, error	35
831	Copper, uncirculated, W. R. McColl, Owen Sound, correct	25
832	Copper, unc., W. R. McColl, Owen Sound, numismatists, error	35
833	Brass, unc., W. R. McColl, Owen Sound, different die, correct	25
834	Brass, uncirculated, S. S. Heal, Toronto, "Cheval", 5 struck	1 25
835	Brass, uncirculated, S. S. Heal, Toronto, A.N.A., 243, 50 struck	50
836	German Silver, unc., S. S. Heal, Toronto, A.N.A., 243, 50 struck	50
837	Copper, uncirculated, S. S. Heal, Toronto, A.L., 5661, 75 struck	60
838	Ger. Silver, uncirculated, S. S. Heal, Toronto, A.L., 5661, 20 struck	75
839	German Silver, unc., S.S. Heal, Toronto, good for 5c in error, 25 struck	75
840	Brass, uncirculated, S. S. Heal, Toronto, rev. leaf	50
841	German Silver, uncirculated, S. S. Heal, Toronto, rev. leaf	50
842	Brass, uncirculated, S. S. Heal, Toronto, "Coins" error, 10 struck	1 00
843	Copper, uncirculated, S. S. Heal, Toronto, "Coins" error, 80 struck	50
844	German Silver, unc., S. S. Heal, Toronto, "Coins" error, 10 struck	1 00
845	Copper, uncirculated, S. S. Heal, Toronto, "Coins" correct, 80 struck	50
846	Brass, uncirculated, S. S. Heal, Toronto, "Coins" correct, 10 struck	1 00
847	German Silver, unc., S. S. Heal, Toronto, "Coins" correct, 10 struck	1 00
CRANSTON ISSUES, OF GALT, ONT.		
NOT CATALOGUED		
848	Alum., uncirculated, clasped hands, new ideas in advertising	\$0 20
849	Copper, uncirculated, clasped hands, new ideas in advertising	20
850	Brass, uncirculated, clasped hands, new ideas in advertising	20
851	German Silver, uncirculated, clasped hands, new ideas in advertising	20

McColl # 812 Aluminum

810	Brass, uncirculated, Ewen S. McLeod, Wheatley River, P.E.I.	20
811	Brass, uncirculated, R. W. Geary, Niagara Falls	50
812	Alum., uncirculated, R. W. Geary, Niagara Falls	50
813	Alum., uncirculated, W. A. Shaw, Toronto	25
814	Brass, uncirculated, W. A. Shaw, Toronto	25