

Welcome to a new column about important yet affordable Canadian numismatic literature. Thanks to *Bison Tales* Editor Judy Blackman for inviting me as your friendly neighbourhood antiquarian, used and out-of-print numismatic and philatelic literature dealer (the only one, as far as I know, left in Canada that specializes in these areas) to provide a word or two of about such important titles currently in my stock. While the idea for this column was Judy's, the title "Engel's Angle on Numismatic Literature" came from me, although not entirely. As the Vice-President and General Manager of his family company known (at that time) as Atomic Transfer Ltd., my father, Roland R. Engel, wrote for a column in the *Atomic Flash* company newsletter (published from 1962 to 1967) called, you guessed it, "Engel's Angle".

Naturally the question arose about where to begin with such a rich, varied and long history in Canadian numismatic literature that is, as Judy suspected, quite well-represented by my stock. Why not at the beginning, of organized numismatics in Canada, that is? The first organized numismatic group was the one formed in 1862, five years prior to Canadian Confederation, called the Antiquarian and Numismatic Society of Montréal (now known as the Montréal Numismatic Society) that met at the Chateau de Ramezay. This is Canada's oldest public building, built in 1705 by Claude de Ramezay, appointed as the 11th Governor of Montréal in 1703 and briefly occupied, in 1775 by American revolutionary forces, including Ben Franklin and Benedict Arnold and purchased as a site for a museum by the Society in 1895. It continues to serve as a museum and tourist destination to this day, housing many artifacts documenting the history of Montréal in particular, including one of Canada's most extensive numismatic collections. I paid my first visit during the RCNA Convention in 2017. Thanks to the Society led by Ludger Gravel, the American Numismatic Association held its first-ever convention in Canada (only one of two) at Chateau de Ramezay in 1909. Although not the site of the 1923 ANA Convention in Montréal (thanks again to Gravel and his Canadian ANA committee), it was one of the most popular destinations, especially given its rich numismatic history.



Image courtesy of McCord Museum, Montréal

Alfred Sandham (1838-1910) a native Montréal, has the distinction of publishing Canada's first ever coin book in 1869, *Coins, Tokens and Medals of the Dominion of Canada*, under the auspices of the Numismatic and Antiquarian Society of Montréal (NASM) of which Sandham became one of its most active members in 1865 and helped to incorporate the Society in 1870 (exactly 99 years before the Manitoba Coin Club was incorporated in 1969).

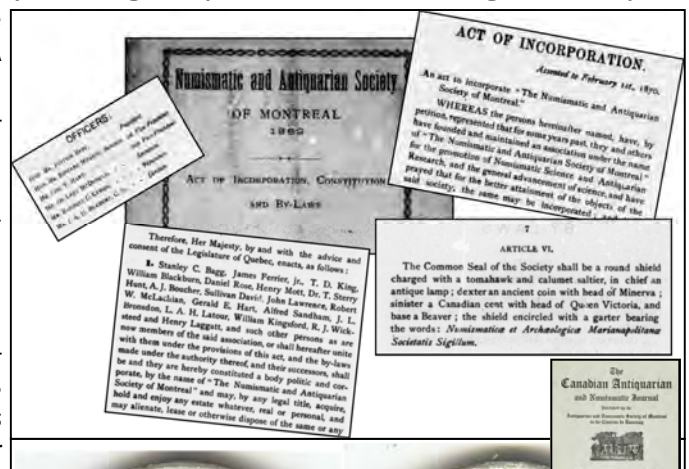




Image courtesy of Lower Canada Auction, Montréal Nuphilex Show 2007: Medal—Leroux # 1610, Breton # 171, Numismatica and Archeological Society Montréal Canada Instituted 1862 Incorporated 1870. NASMC White metal 42mm Rarity 4.

Sandham was instrumental in getting the Society to strike its first medal commemorating this occasion and its 1862 founding, 42 mm in size in both white metal (seen on the previous page) and bronze (seen below) and listed as Breton 171 and Leroux 1610. However, Sandham was unhappy with the engraving, as per the London Numismatic Society excerpt below:


COURTESY OF LONDON NUMISMATIC SOCIETY BULLETIN — JULY 2012, PAGE 57



A catalogue cover of the Chateau de Ramezay Museum and Portrait Gallery. Notice the seal of the Numismatic and Archaeological Society.



A 27mm medallion copy of the seal of the *Numismaticae et Archeologicae Marianopolitane Societatis Sicillum*. The reverse is blank.



According to R. W. McLachlan when Glasgow born Montreal medallist J.D. Scott engraved this medal for Alfred Sandham for his Historical Series No. 1 he made the serious mistake in the name of the Society copying the Latin word from the society seal *ARCHEOLOGICAE* as Archacological. Sandham's series of medals went no further than this effort with McLachlan suggesting the error may have been one of the factors in putting Sandham off.

I would like to thank Mr. Andre Delise a Directeur general et conservateur of the Chateau de Ramezay museum for his help in answering some questions pertaining to certain dates.

According to a letter by Sandham found in a copy of his book in 1992 by collector and researcher Barry Uman, only 300 copies of this book were printed, but only 250 were bound and only 100 sold (at 75¢ each) with the remainder gifted. The unbound sheet were destroyed by the printer (Mr. Rose) after three years. This low printing gives an idea about the relatively small size of the organized numismatic community concentrated in Montréal at the time (ca. 1870). Although original copies of this book still exist and only very occasionally turn up on the secondary market (I had the good fortune of picking one such copy up for a song from a Brooklyn, NY antiquarian book dealer earlier this year), they would normally command a much higher price several times that of the 1962 reprint, which are much more readily available.


Sandham, Alfred. *COINS, TOKENS AND MEDALS OF THE DOMINION OF CANADA*. Winnipeg: Canadian Numismatic Publishing Institute, 1962 reprint. 72, (2) pages; frontispiece; text figures; 8 plates. Fine \$40.

According to Kolbe and Fanning of Gahanna, Ohio, one of the leading numismatic booksellers in the U.S. from where this entry and copy originated (a source of a significant amount of my new stock), "Fine" as a book condition is defined as "nice clean copy, slight signs of use". The images of this book (seen on the previous page) are of the one I recently acquired from Kolbe and Fanning and would be the one you would receive should you decide to purchase it from me.


Sandham was also the first editor, from 1872 to 1876 of *The Canadian Antiquarian and Numismatic Journal*, that was published off and on in various series until 1933. Somer James (1921-2005) of the Canadian Numismatic Publishing Institute reprinted Sandham's book a hundred years after the first coin club in Canada was formed in 1862. He also reprinted seminal numismatic works by P.N. Breton and Joseph Leroux. In addition, as the proprietor of Regency Coin and Stamp Co. of Winnipeg, he collaborated with expert photographer Harold Cleveland Taylor (1887-1965), founding Vice-President of the Manitoba Coin Club and great-grandfather of our First Vice-President, Ken Dobson, to produce the first 8 editions of *A Guide Book of Canadian Coins, Currency and Tokens* (1959-1966). Watch this column for more about *The Canadian Antiquarian and Numismatic Journal*, the original works and reprints of P.N. Breton and Joseph Leroux and the James/Taylor *Guide Book*, among many other Canadian numismatic treats, all currently available from my library to add to your own numismatic library.

References:

- Douglas, Scott E., "The Chateau de Ramezay and the Antiquarian and Numismatic Society of Montréal". *The Canadian Numismatic Journal*. Vol. 56 no. 2, Mar. 2011, p. 72-75.
- Uman, Barry. "Alfred Sandham (1838-1910)". *The Canadian Numismatic Journal*. Vol. 44 no. 10, Dec. 1999, p. 471-474 and reprinted with colour illustrations in Oct.-Nov. 2017, Vol. 62 no. 7 of CNJ, p. 299-303. [reprinted with excerpt of Alan Roy's *The CN Journal* article in June 2008 *The E-Sylum*]



Congratulations Howard R. Engel on the article in the Volume 58, Issue #12, *Canadian Coin News*, titled "Engel celebrates first anniversary at helm of Richard Stockley Books"; and Happy 1st Anniversary!

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