

Tullie Cornthwaite Wollaston

1863 – 1931

- **Spent his early years at Lake Hamilton sheep station near Port Lincoln. He grew up with a great love of all nature – including coloured stones**
- **Educated at St Peter's College, Adelaide then first employed as a draughtsman in a surveyor's office**
- **1888 Reports of opal finds in Queensland convinced him to quit his job in Adelaide to track down and to buy these stones**
- **This he achieved against all odds and every conceivable hardship**
- **Marketing this opal was the next challenge. In London traders doubted it was real, being used to paler Hungarian opal. But one company took a gamble sending cut stones to USA where they found popularity**
- **Back in Adelaide another Queensland opal find was reported to Wollaston which he again managed to track down and buy.**

- **In 1889 opal was found by kangaroo shooters at White Cliffs in NSW. Again, Wollaston was the first buyer on the field and within a year, opal stones were selling as fast as they were marketed. This field produced a huge amount of opal in the next 10 years**
- **1903 Wollaston was sent a parcel from newly discovered Lightning Ridge and first coined the term “black opal”. Again overseas traders were reluctant to buy because this opal was different. Wollaston was to spend 2 years working to popularise it.**
- **1915 opal found by the Hutchison party at the Stuart Range was sent to Wollaston for appraisal. He provided funds for the New Colorado Prospecting Syndicate to investigate the area and bought their parcels**
- **Later in 1915, Wollaston bought the O’Neill brothers’ first opal from the Stuart Ranges. He was impressed by the size and chunkiness of the stone**
- **Wollaston made 20 overseas trips in his career as an opal dealer, 13 to England & Europe, 6 to the USA and 1 to Japan calling at Hong Kong. He**

was trusted by miners and gem merchants alike for his business acumen and integrity

- **Tullie Wollaston, Australia's first opal buyer, can rightly be called the "Father of the Australian Opal Industry" for he single-mindedly sought out the first opal deposits then devoted most of his life to popularising the gem stone**