

"The Bulletin" February, 1999

President's Message

This issue was being prepared in the days leading up to Valentine's Day. Even though it will come into your hands well after the day itself, I hope you will enjoy the read of Valentine-related topics. It will be your last issue, however, if you have not renewed your 1999 membership. Please mail your renewal or see Treasurer Harvey Farrow at the next meeting.

I'm now in the process of collecting the e-mail address of all members. If you are now on the Internet, please drop a note to the President and let him know.

Our medal committee, under the capable leadership of Rick Craig, has just about finalized the theme and design of the ONA 2000 logo and medal. The team is presenting results at the February meeting.

The contract for the ONA 2000 convention hotel has been signed. Read the details in the meeting news from the January meeting. Our next task is to design a floor layout for the bourse and displays.

Need to reach the President? Phone calls are welcome at **416-745-3067** (leave a voice mail message if you can't get through in person) and e-mail may be sent to petchp@ican.net.

The 39th Anniversary Meeting

The next meeting of the North York Coin Club will be held on **Tuesday, February 23, 1999**, at the Edithvale Community Centre, 7 Edithvale Drive.



This is our 39th Anniversary meeting and, in addition to our "traditional" cake during the refreshment break, we are featuring the preview showing of a video of Mr. Ted Leitch speaking on his specialty, Canadian Tokens. This video was recorded at the CNA/NESA classroom course in May, 1998. Ted is well known to many of our members. He has been an active member of the London Numismatic Society since 1966, specializing his collecting interests around Canadian tokens and paper money.

Coming Events

Torex, February 27, 10am-5pm and 28, 10am-3pm at the Primrose Hotel, Pearson Ballroom, 111 Carlton St. Admission \$5. Contact Ingrid K. Smith (416) 260-9070.

Cambridge Coin Club 8th Annual Show, March 20, 9am-4pm at the Cambridge Newfoundland Club, 1500 Dunbar Road. Free admission. Contact Jim Pemberton (519) 621-1140 or Vincent Nevidon (519) 622-6625

Hamilton Coin Club Show, April 10, 9am-4pm at the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 58, 1180 Barton St. East, across the street from Centre Mall (on the upper level). Admission \$1.

ONA 37th Annual Convention, April 17, 10am-6pm and 18 10am-4pm at the

College Inn, 716 Stone Road, Guelph. Admission \$2. Includes meetings of the Canadian Tire Coupon Collectors Club, Canadian Association of Token Collectors and the Canadian Association of Wooden Money Collectors.

CNA/NESA Classroom Course, May 15, 9am-5pm at Humber College, 205 Humber College Blvd., Etobicoke in the Community Room. Features Canadian Decimals, Tokens, Minting and Mint Errors, Topicals, Grading and Preservation. Contact the President/Editor for more information.

*Next Meeting:
February 23*

Meeting News from the January 26 Meeting

The 437th meeting of the North York Coin Club was held on Tuesday January 26, 1999, with 25 members and four guests, at the Edithvale Community Centre, 7 Edithvale Drive, Willowdale, Ontario.

A moment of silence was observed in remembrance of the Club's 1st vice-president, Mr. Al Bliman, who passed away since our December meeting.

Our Secretary, Lucille Colson, was absent because of a broken wrist, the result of a fall on Christmas Eve. Bob Porter volunteered to take the minutes in her absence and Paul Johnson agreed to record the featured speaker. The On-Time Attendance draw was won by Mrs. Terry O'Brien, but she was not in attendance. The prize at the February meeting will be \$6.00. An application for membership in the Club was received from Robert J. (Bob) Wilson of Mississauga, who will be #503 if accepted.

This being the Club's Annual Meeting, Treasurer Harvey Farrow handed out copies of an excellent Financial Report for the year 1998. The report was read by all in attendance and moved accepted by Ron Zelk and seconded by Norm Belsten. The motion was carried.

President Paul Petch reported that preparations for the ONA 2000 Convention to be hosted by the North York Coin Club are going well. It will be held on April 14-16, 2000 at the Triumph Howard Johnson Plaza-Hotel North York. The bourse and display floor layout will be excellent and a special room rate of 92.00 per night, single or double, has been established. The theme and medal design are still being worked but the Medal Committee have several good ideas from which to choose.

Ron Zelk introduced our speaker for the evening, Club member Mr. Norm Belsten, President of the CAWMC. He spoke on the different woods he has col-

lected and distributed them to the members for viewing. A free sample of an Edmonton wood was also given out to all members. Thanks to Paul Johnson for recording "Norm's Notebook" which appears to the right. Paul Petch thanked the speaker and presented a Certificate of Appreciation.

Marvin Kay followed this with a short talk on Medical & Dental Woods he has collected.

The lucky draw for the evening prizes brought in \$27.00. Thanks to Rick Craig, Brian See and Paul Johnson for their donations. Winners were Dion Van Laethem, Bob Velensky(2), Lyan See, Basil Latham, Avram Zak(2), Russell Brown(2), Leon Saraga, Paul Petch(3), Harvey Farrow(2), Vince Chiappino, Jim Heifetz, Bob Wilson and Paul Johnson.

Bob Porter had a good time selling 5 items on the auction block that brought in a profit of \$ 7.75 for the club.

Thanks to Roger Fox for the coffee, soft drinks and biscuits at the break.

This very full meeting adjourned at 10:10 p.m.

Question of the Month

There's such a tiny space for our question this month... better make it a short one: For February, do a little preparation and bring along the actual coin or medal or a picture of what you consider to be the most perfect design. Everyone can get the right answer this month!

For January we asked how many different mint marks have appeared on Canadian coins—and do you know where the use of mint marks originated? See the articles on pages 3 and 4.

Norm Belsten's Wooden Money Notebook

★ Wooden tokens come in all different shapes and sizes (an example of a large wood is the Maritime Schooner dime which is 6" in diameter)

★ The Kamloops "Key to the City" wood, which is actually shaped like a key, is a difficult collectible to obtain

★ "Flats" are woods made to commemorate a variety of events, but rather than representing coins, they represent notes (they are made of either balsa or cherry wood — many are issued as Christmas Greetings woods by individuals)

★ Round woods, representing coins, are usually made of maple

★ One of the earliest woods in the USA was issued for the 1893 Chicago World's Fair

★ There are only a few manufacturers of woods in Canada (Norm is one; Lou Vesh is another — his woods are mostly hand painted and very attractive)

★ There are 8 official North York Coin Club woods, 864 Christmas woods, 425 C.N.A. woods, 197 O.N.A. woods, 155 Spruce dollars (these are large woods issued by the Prince George, B.C. Chamber of Commerce) and 12 of 23 CNA Presidents have issued woods

★ Norm is working on an updated Catalog of Canadian Wooden Money

★ Many woods are issued by businesses as a promotional item

★ There are more than 6300 different Canadian woods

★ There are now three methods of wood manufacture in Canada: ink print, silk screen and hot foil stamping

★ The first wood in Canada was in 1880 for the Montreal Exposition. It was made of black walnut and is now very scarce.

★ Broomstick woods had incused lettering and were produced in the 1950's

★ The cost for an individual to have 100 woods produced is about \$60

★ The Canadian Association of Wooden Money Collectors (CAWMC) is the national club for collectors with more than 100 current members

★ This can be a very inexpensive, but fun hobby

The Use of Mint Marks by Michael E. Marotta

A Popular View

If you look closely at coins, you will find that some of them have small letters indicating the mint at which they were struck. Mint marks go back to ancient times. They were used to prevent forgery as well as to honor the mintmaster.

Mint marks date to about the year 400 B.C. At the time, Greek towns elected their moneyers or mintmasters to annual terms of office. These men sometimes were the actual die cutters, but usually they were officials who oversaw the cutting of dies and striking of coins.

The mintmaster might engrave his whole name on a die, or just the first letters of his name. Sometimes he made a "monogram." The purpose

was twofold. It allowed praise for the man who did the work and identified the person responsible in case the coinage later proved to be of short weight or impure alloy.

When the Roman Empire stretched across three continents, it operated more than 20 different mints with over 50 different mint marks for a period of 300 years. We have identified the mint marks of London in England; Constantinople in Turkey, and Alexandria in Egypt.

Today most nations have only one mint. Larger countries often assign letters of the alphabet to identify mint cities, starting with the nation's capital. On French coins, for example, the letter "A" stands

for Paris. An "A" on a German coin, on the other hand, usually means "Berlin."

Some nations contract out the production of their coinage. On some British and Canadian coins, for example, the letter "H" stands for the "Heaton" company.

In the United States, the main mint at Philadelphia typically did not use the "P" mint mark until recent decades. Today, most American coins have either a "P" for "Philadelphia" or "D" for "Denver." Usually you will see an "S" for "San Francisco" or "W" for "West Point" only on special coins and proof sets.

This text is from the ANA's Money Talks, Transcript No. 1648, January 27, 1999

Mint Marks by C. C. Chamberlain

A Numismatic View

Various symbols, letters, or numbers were placed on many of the early Roman Republican coins, to denote the particular workshop in which they were struck, and in the later years of the Empire, from the time of Gallienus (260-68), when mints were established all over Europe and the East, it was necessary for the place of mintage to be clearly indicated. Under the monetary reform of Diocletian (A.D. 296) almost all the coins of the Roman Empire were marked with the place of mintage; in the case of important mints the actual *oficina*, or workshop, was shown by a number or a letter. This "mint-mark", placed in the exergue of the reverse, often had the letter P (petunia) in front, or SM (*sacra moneta*). The mint town is indicated by the initial letters; to this is added, when necessary, a letter showing the number of the workshop, i.e., P (prima), S (secunda), T (tertia), Q (quarta). Other workshops were indicated by the first few letters of the alphabet. The following are some common but puzzling mint-marks:

AVG: Augusta (?) London (in use c.

A.D. 383).

C: Camulodunum (Colchester) or, perhaps, Clausentum (Bitterne) near Southampton

CONST: Constantina (Arles) (cf. CONS = Constantinople).

HT: Heracleia Thraciae.

K: Carthage.

KV: Cyzicus.

L, LD, LG: Lugdunum (Lyons).

MD, MED: Mediolanum (Milan).

On early mediaeval coins the inscription always begins, in the pious fashion of the Middle Ages, with a cross. This, however, gives us no indication of the place of mintage, nor of the particular mint where it was struck, so that, strictly speaking, it is not a mint mark at all, but an *initial mark*. Custom, however, has given it this name. From 1465 this initial mark became an heraldic symbol such as a crown, a sun, an annulet, a rose, a fleur-de-lis, and from the time of the Tudors served to differentiate one issue of coins from another. It became, in fact, a cryptic method of dating a coin. An heraldic mint-mark

Mint Marks appearing on Canadian coins?

Yes! Every collector should be aware of the mint-marks appearing on the coins of Canada. There is the "H" of the Heaton Mint in Birmingham, England, the "C" of the Ottawa Branch of the Royal Mint appearing on sovereigns and the "W" of the Winnipeg Branch of the Royal Canadian Mint. The "W" appeared on the coins of some of the 1998 uncirculated sets, which up until that year, had always been produced exclusively in Ottawa. See page 4 for some pictures of these Canadian mint-marks.

which serves to date a coin is known as a *privy mark*. On later coins we find initial letters beneath the bust serving as mint-marks, as in William III's great recoinage of 1695, where the additional provincial mints of Bristol, Chester, Exeter, Norwich, and York are indicated by the letters B, C, E, N, and Y, respectively. Similarly many 18th century European coins are marked with a letter as a mint-mark.

Mint Marks on coins used in Canada

Under the French Regime...



This gold Louis was the only French gold coin to see any significant use in French North America. Note the "A" mint mark of the Paris mint.

When the Royal Mint, London, was too busy...



the services of the Heaton Mint in Birmingham were used to meet the demands of foreign orders, as shown here on this 25-cent piece produced in the first year of production under Edward VII's reign. All Canadian coins prior to 1908 came from England.

In 1998, for the first time, a "W" appeared...

it designated that this series of uncirculated coins sets were produced in Winnipeg. Without the mint mark, the coins would be indistinguishable from those produced in Ottawa, later in the same year. Some uncirculated sets dated 1997 were also produced in Winnipeg, but the less-than-brilliant background gave their origin away. In 1998 the improved finish of the Winnipeg coins would make it impossible to tell where they came from. It was a management decision to begin producing this collector coin series in Winnipeg because of a very heavy workload at the Ottawa facility.



This one is controversial...

because it is a British Sovereign which, some maintain, does not belong in a Canadian collection. It is being included here because the refining and production of gold was a part of the justification for the creation of our mint at Ottawa. Notice the "C" above and between the "90" of the date.

St. Valentine's Day History starts in 400 BC, Rome by Carol Leonard

Heart shaped boxes filled with chocolates, decorative cards, and red roses, are all symbols of what we think of as Valentine's Day. The original Valentine's Day, however, was anything but candy and roses.

As early as the fourth century B.C., the Romans engaged in an annual young man's rite to passage to the god Luperus. The names of the teenage women were placed in a box and drawn at random by adolescent men; thus, a man was assigned a woman companion for the duration of the year, after which another lottery was staged. Determined to

put an end to this eight-hundred-year-old practice, the early church fathers sought a "lovers" saint to replace the deity Luperus. They found a likely candidate in Valentine, a bishop who had been martyred some two hundred years earlier.

In Rome in A.D. 270, Valentine had enraged the mad emperor Claudius II, who had issued an edict forbidding marriage. Claudius felt that married men made poor soldiers, because they would not want to leave their families for battle. The empire needed soldiers, so Claudius abolished marriage.

Valentine, bishop of Interamna, invited young couples to come to him in secret, where he joined them in the sacrament of matrimony. Claudius learned of this "friend of lovers," and had the bishop brought to the palace. The emperor, impressed with the young priest's dignity and conviction, attempted to convert him to the Roman gods, to save him from certain execution. Valentine refused to renounce Christianity and, instead, boldly attempted to convert the emperor. On February 24, 270, Valentine was executed.

History also claims that while Valentine was in prison awaiting his fate, he fell in love with the blind daughter of the jailer, Asterius. Through his faith he miraculously restored her sight. He then signed a farewell message to her "From Your Valentine," a phrase that would live long after its author.

Valentine would later become a Patron Saint, and spiritual overseer of an annual festival. The festival involved young Romans offering women they admired, and wished to court, handwritten greetings of affection on February 14. The greeting cards acquired St. Valentine's name.

As Christianity spread, so did the Valentine's Day card. The earliest card was sent in 1415 by Charles, duke of Orleans, to his wife while he was a prisoner in the Tower of London. The card is now preserved in the British Museum.

In the sixteenth century, cards proliferated and became more decorative. Cupid, the naked cherub armed with arrows dipped in love potion, became a popular valentine image. He was associated with the holiday because in Roman mythology he is the son of Venus, goddess of love and beauty.

By the seventeenth century, handmade cards were oversized and elaborate, while store-bought ones were smaller and costly. In 1797, a British publisher issued "The Young Man's Valentine Writer," which contained scores of suggested sentimental verses for the young lover unable to compose his own.

ANCIENT HEARTS by Michael E. Marotta

Look around . . . heart symbols are everywhere on Valentine's Day. Maybe even on a coin.

The first heart symbols that appeared on ancient coins were produced 2500 years ago in North Africa.

The town of Cyrene was founded in the 7th century B.C. by Greeks. Their town was eventually destroyed, but it was near what today is the city of Benghazi, along the coast of Libya.

The city enjoyed modest prosperity . . . until its inhabitants discovered the silphium plant. (The plant is extinct now, but its closest living relative is a key ingredient in Worcestershire sauce.) Silphium was used as an herb. Its stalk was edible. Its pungent sap was the basis for cough syrups, and gave food an interesting flavor. But the most important use for silphium was as a contraceptive.

Modern research suggests that silphium actually worked, and because of this, it was in great demand. Attempts to cultivate it in Syria and Greece were unsuccessful. It only grew near Cyrene--and, starting in 500 B.C., it became a steady source of income for the townspeople. By Roman times, silphium had been

harvested to extinction.

Over the centuries, the silphium plant came to symbolize Cyrene. The plant appeared on the town's gold, silver and bronze coins, starting around 500 B.C. Often the entire plant was shown. But sometimes, only the seeds of the plant were depicted. The silphium's seeds were heart-shaped, and those heart-shaped seeds that appeared on Cyrene's coins eventually came to symbolize love—a symbol that's still with us today.

This text is from the ANA's Money Talks, Transcript No. 1401, February 16, 1998



LOVE TOKENS by Bill Fivaz

The Beatles sang, "Money Can't Buy Me Love." But it can buy . . . love tokens.

A love token is a coin which has had one side shaved off and initials, a name, or a scene engraved on it. This practice is believed to have started in England in the early 1800s, and spread to Canada

and the United States during Victorian times. It seems that it was a custom back then, just as it is now, for a beau to give a gift to his lady friend to mark a special occasion.

Since coins were easily accessible and had an obvious value, it was common practice to take a coin to a jeweler and have it engraved. Maybe the man wanted just a name or, possibly, both their names and a date engraved on the coin. Often, a scene was carved which had a particular meaning to both people. But the most common engraving was initials—most of them very delicately done, and intertwined.

When completed, the gentleman gave the engraved piece to his lady as a token of his love — giving rise to the term "Love Token." There are thousands of different styles and subjects — and because each is carved or engraved by hand, all are unique. They're found on virtually every denomination of coin, from copper pennies to five- and ten-dollar gold pieces. Obviously, these higher value love tokens were from serious admirers and many are found with raised white-, yellow- and pink-gold initials.

The love tokens pictured at left are from the United States and are engraved on silver dollars, minted in the mid- to late-1800's. The tokens at right are on Victorian 50-cent pieces and a trade dollar. However, all denominations were used and some specimens can even be found on gold coins. The collecting of these pieces has become a special branch of token collecting with the value of each piece being determined by the quality of the engraving and the intricacy of the design and condition.

Credits:

The text for this article is based on the ANA's Money Talks, Transcript No. 357, February 15, 1994.

The illustrations are from Jeffrey Hoare Auctions Inc. Numismatic Sales Number 17 (October, 1990, lots 1581-



1583) and Number 32 (February, 1995, lots 980, 981 and 983).