

Manhattan Coin Club Minutes

March 2017

President Allan called the meeting to order at the American Legion.

Old Business:

Preparations look good and we are ready for the coin show. Special thanks to Chris for all of the hard work he puts into getting things ready for the show. Not to be forgotten are all of the volunteers and vendors.

Program

Allan had the program and talked about Civil War tokens. Civil War tokens are generally divided into two groups: tradesmen's tokens (also called store cards), and anonymously issued pieces with political or patriotic themes. These were struck during the Civil War, mostly in 1863. In July of that year federal cents disappeared from circulation and were hoarded. Various substitutes appeared, including tokens. Most production ended after bronze federal cents again became plentiful in circulation in the summer of 1864.

The tradesmen's tokens were purchased at a discount by various firms, who distributed them with advertising messages. Some of these were redeemable in goods. Political and patriotic tokens were produced at a profit by private manufacturers and put into circulation, with no identification as to the issuer. As there was no provision to redeem these, tokens of both types remained in circulation for many years, until they gradually disappeared.

These tokens are of great variety in composition and design. A number were more or less faithful imitations of the copper-nickel cent. A few of this type have the word NOT in very small letters above the words ONE CENT.

Many pieces, especially tradesmen's tokens, were individual in device and size, representing any caprice of design or slogan that appealed to the maker. Some were political or patriotic in character, carrying the likeness of some military leader such as McClellan or bearing such inscriptions as "Millions for contractors, not one cent for the widows." An estimated 50,000,000 or more of these pieces were issued. Approximately 10,000 different varieties have been recorded. Among these tokens are many issues made for numismatists of the era, including overstrikes on Indian Head and Flying Eagle cents and silver dimes, and strikings in white metal and silver. These are highly prized today.

The legal status of the Civil War tokens was uncertain. Mint Director James Pollock thought they were illegal; however, there was no law prohibiting the issue of tradesmen's tokens or of private coins not in imitation of United States coins. A law was passed April 22, 1864, prohibiting the issue of any one- or two-cent coins, tokens, or devices for use as money, and on June 8 another law was passed that abolished private coinage of every kind.

Patriotic Civil War Tokens

Fuld numbers designate these token dies. Since two dies are used for each token, then two Fuld numbers must be used to identify a specific token.

For example, the following token is made up of dies: 191 and 443. This would result in a Fuld designation of F-191/443.



The token is also made of copper. One or two letters are used to designate what metal is used for the token. For copper, the letter 'a' is used by appending the Fuld designation: F-191/443a. This becomes the number found on NGC and ANACS holders and allows you to search for a specific token.

Civil War Store Cards

These token dies are designated by an older system, which makes use of four different numbering systems:

The original system was created by Hetrich & Gutttag, or H&G Numbers. These are seldom used anymore and this website will steer clear of them.

The second system was developed by George and Melvin Fuld and separates the obverse and reverse dies as follows:

The obverse number indicates the token's state of origin by a two-letter abbreviation like the postal system. This is followed by a two or three digit number indicating the city of origin for the token. Finally, one or two letters of the alphabet follow the city code to indicate which die from this city was used for the obverse.

The reverse number is a sequential number indicating which reverse die was used for this obverse die. This number is followed by the material composition letter in lowercase.

Example: NY 630K-1a would indicate the token was made in New York, City using die 'K' for the obverse and die 1 for the reverse. The token is made of copper as indicated by the ending lowercase 'a'.

This is currently the system also used by the Third Party Graders and will be used for Store Card identification throughout this website.

Material Composition (Mat)

Tokens made of metals other than copper are significantly rarer. See the table below for material composition designators used in the die tables:

- a : Copper (C)
- ap : Copper plated (Cpl)
- b : Brass (Br)
- c : Nickel (N)
- d : Copper-Nickel (C-N)
- e : White-metal (WM)
- f : Silver (S)
- fp : Silver plated (Spl)
- g : Lead (L)
- h : Rubber (R)
- i : Zinc (Z)
- j : German silver (GS)
- k : Gilted (Gt)
- l : Gold (G)
- lp : Gold plated (Gpl)
- m : Tin (T)
- mp : Tin plated (Tpl)

Minting Errors

Since these tokens were not made by the US Mint, quality of workmanship was not always the best. Almost every token will have some type of "mint error". But, there are a few which really stand out. These are the 'Overstrike', the 'Incuse', and the 'Double-strike'.

The 'Overstrike' occurs when the token is struck on a non-standard planchet, such as: an Indian Head Cent, a US dime, or even another token.

Example:



F-180/430do : Token images struck over 1859 Indian Head Cent

The 'Incuse' is a full brockage. A condition where a token sticks to the hammer die. This stuck token has an image from the anvil die exposed and when it strikes the next token planchet, it imprints that image as an incuse, but reversed, strike on the obverse side of the token.

Example:



F-231/231ai : Full brockage (reverse is incuse)

The 'Double-strike' is normally only considered if the token significantly rotated, or flipped over after the first strike and then was struck a second time.

Example:



F-20/303ao : Flipped-over Double-Strike

Coin Show

The Manhattan Coin Club held its 23rd Annual Coin Show on March 19th in the Four Points by Sheraton here in Manhattan.



The club appreciates the donation of raffle prizes and a big shout out to: Mathew – 1888 Silver Eagle, Alan – 1881 S \$1 MS63, Doyle – 1896 \$1 AU50, and Tom – 2017 Eagle.



The winners of the raffle prize drawing were: 1st Hal K., 2nd Jim C., 3rd Tom T., 4th Tuila B, and 5th Keith H.



The turn out for the show was busy over noon but was slow otherwise. Many deals and trades did take place. A number of people brought in their private collections for professional evaluation.

