

# Occasional Numismatic Papers

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The idea behind these *Papers* is simply to create a fresh venue for interesting research on numismatic topics along with a forum for numismatic notes and queries. Because these *Papers* will be occasional, they will not appear at fixed intervals and there is no certain date when the next will appear.

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### About the Contributors

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## Chasing Joseph Moreau

*Alexander Noran*

About 10 years ago, while living in Montreal, I acquired a pair of silver coins countermarked JOSEPH MOREAU as part of a larger accumulation of such material. Without any obvious leads, the coins ended up in the “future projects” box and sat for much of the interceding decade until a recent review. By locating Mr. Moreau in the Montreal directories, I was soon able to assemble a rough sketch of a Montrealer who is compelling for the very reason that he was something of an “everyman” – an individual who typifies a common narrative being written by many similar inhabitants of the city at the time. What is more, the coins themselves serve to give us a snapshot of what was used in everyday transactions, making this pairing a great way of accessing the world of mid-19th century Montreal.



Figure 1. An 1817 British half crown countermarked by Joseph Moreau. Images courtesy of the author.



Figure 2. A 1778 Spanish 4 reales countermarked by Joseph Moreau. Images courtesy of the author.

A chance encounter with the 1851 *Canada Directory* led to me finding a lead on Joseph Moreau – conveniently the only person by that name who appears in the metalworking trade in the city at the time (Mackay 1851: 238). As was mentioned, Joseph Moreau was quite a typical person for his age, and not being litigious, criminal, or financially unstable, his documentary footprint is admittedly light. Appearing in the 1842 census, we find him living in the Queen’s Ward of Montreal, heading a household of six individuals, and working as a tinsmith (1842 Census, Canada East).<sup>1</sup> From the 1861 census, we glean that he was born in either 1813 or 1814, was married to Julie Moreau (née Poupart), and is at this time listed as a merchant (Canada Census of 1861). To fill in his story, it was necessary to focus on the Montreal directories.

Moreau first appears in the city index in 1843, listed as a tinsmith at 135 Aqueduct Street, which is now Lucien-L’Allier (Mackay 1843: 135). The following year, he moved to 177 St. Joseph Street (now rue Notre-Dame) before being listed just up the road at 261 in 1856 (Mackay 1844: 138; 1856: 203). At the same St. Joseph address, he is suddenly listed as a merchant in 1859, and then appears as a horse dealer in 1863 (Mackay 1859: 129; 1863: 227). In 1865 he again moved up the street to 419,

followed by a move back to Aqueduct Street in 1868 which saw him occupying 181 and his son also operating as a horse dealer next door at 183 (Mackay 1865: 230; *Montreal Directory* 1868: 265). Interestingly, he purchased his premises on Aqueduct Street, as later documents show his widow owning the property (*Quebec Official Gazette*, Vol. XIII, No. 51: 2706). Joseph is not listed at all in 1871, and in 1872 the address is inhabited by his now-widowed second wife Octavie (*Montreal Gazette* 1872: 452). From this, it would appear that Mr. Moreau passed away sometime in late 1870 or early 1871, since he is also absent from the 1871 census. Tracing Joseph’s trajectory from tenant-tradesman to landowning merchant nicely parallels the general trend of the city, which saw its population swell while “a dynamic merchant class involved in the import and export trade replaced the fur-trade magnates” (Linteau 2009).



Figure 3. Detail from an 1843 map of Montreal, arrow indicates intersection of Aqueduct and St Joseph. Image courtesy of Ville de Montréal. Section des archives. Cote: CA M001 VM066-4-P007.

<sup>1</sup> The Queen’s Ward corresponds roughly to what is today downtown Montreal.

As trade and the domestic economy expanded, so too did the demand for specie with which to conduct business – a situation that became critical during Joseph’s lifetime (Haxby 1986: 35). Although British authorities continued to push for the use of sterling currency, a chronic lack of supply from the mother country meant that most Canadian merchants favoured Spanish colonial and American currency (Haxby 1986: 32). This problem was further compounded by complicated exchange rate systems as well as a discrepancy in value between the North American and British pounds (Haxby 1986: 33, 35).

The host coins for these countermarks are an 1817 British half crown and a 1778 Potosí mint 4 reales – both likely circulating at the same rate despite the difference in silver content (92.5% versus 90%), in line with what would become official policy in some provinces after 1859 (Cross 2014: 7). It is difficult to ascertain exactly when Joseph Moreau marked these coins, but we know that he was an active business owner from 1843 until his death around 1870. Owing to the dramatically reduced importance of British coin from the first half of the 1850s, we can glean that these pieces were possibly countermarked when Mr. Moreau was operating as a tinsmith in the 1840s-50s (Haxby 1986: 36). This dating is consistent with the fact that the pieces are worn, indicating prolonged circulation, and it is interesting to note that

the 4 reales is a full 39 years older than the half crown, and indeed itself would have been an atypical piece in circulation by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century (not to mention the fact that it is from an unusual branch mint). The presence of a British sterling issue circulating alongside a Spanish colonial one (as confirmed by Joseph Moreau having countermarked both) gives us a lovely snapshot of the diversity of the complex monetary landscape.

#### Research Notes and Queries

The 2021 *American Journal of Numismatics* has just been published (March 2022). In addition to the usual articles on the numismatics of the Ancient and Medieval world there is one article on modern numismatics. “The Origins and Context of the First Coinage for Liberia” by Bill Dalzell deals with production of the American Colonization Society’s 1833 cent which was struck for Liberia at the so-called Belleville mint. The article provides much new information about the mint’s activities and some of its personnel. Because the majority of the bouquet sous were struck at Belleville, this is an important article for anyone interested in the numismatics of pre-Confederation Canada.

In his study of British countermarks, Gavin Scott posits that before considering why a coin was marked, we must first ask whether “the purpose is explicit and genuine,” or a “simple cas[e] of vandalism” (Scott 1975: 1). It does not seem

likely that these were simply the product of a bored tinsmith, as “a second piece gives credence to the marking; it was not a solitary production, or a private pocket piece” (Baker 2006: viii). Indeed, as Mr. Moreau was a business owner, these coins should be seen as “the work of an individual who may have had reason to introduce his name into [general] circulation” (Baker 2006: viii).

Turning to exactly why Joseph Moreau marked these coins, it is useful to take into consideration the countermarks themselves – differences between the two are to be noted, especially in the J and O. The J is a slightly different shape on each, while the O is wider and finer on the half crown, and thicker as well as more oval on the 4 reales. What is more, the punches for these letters used on the Spanish piece are 0.5 mm larger than those employed on the half crown. This being said, the similarity of the punches would tend to indicate that they themselves were probably from the same maker. Thus, we can see that they were made using different sets of punches, and each letter has been stamped into the coin individually.

That would seem to rule them out as advertising pieces, as the time-consuming process of hammering each letter would preclude a scaling of production (in comparison to the Devins & Bolton tokens, which were marked using a single punch). The fact that they were marked with different punches may indicate that they were produced at different times, implying that they were probably not used as part of a set of pay or tool tickets. What seems most likely is that they were produced as what Scott calls “shop tickets” – namely, “issued to a customer, either in change to serve as an advertisement or trader’s card [...] or, more likely, as a discount offer against the next transaction” (Scott 1975: 1). Such pieces would have been given to customers in change and accepted back “for say double the face value as an incentive to return” (Baker 2006: viii). It is worth noting that Canadian merchant countermarks on silver coins are quite unusual, with Warren Baker speculating that larger denomination countermarked coins (such as Ohman’s fifty cent pieces) were issued as value checks (Baker 2006: viii).

Although it is likely impossible to confirm the above motive without anecdotal evidence, the speculation seeks only to play on commonalities – Joseph Moreau was a man typical of his time and place, as are these countermarked coins. Montreal in the decades leading up to Confederation was a place of change and opportunity – a dynamic environment that was mirrored in Mr. Moreau’s own life, and consequently accessible through this pair of tickets. Although he did not leave us with a great deal for posterity, Mr. Moreau ensured that his name and trade would be remembered in perpetuity the moment that he “introduced his name into circulation.”

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### Archives, Museums, Libraries

Dundas Museum and Archives  
139 Park Street W., Dundas, Ontario L9H 1X8  
905 627-7412  
[www.dundasmuseum.ca](http://www.dundasmuseum.ca)  
[mail@dundasmuseum.ca](mailto:mail@dundasmuseum.ca)

Impressive permanent and rotating exhibits display artifacts related to the nineteenth and twentieth century social and commercial history of Dundas and the surrounding community. As collectors of pre-Confederation tokens are aware, Dundas was the home of the Lesslie family. Archival material includes a notebook kept by William Lesslie and a remarkable scrapbook assembled by John Lesslie which contains original broadsides and other documents related to the family's friendship with and political support for William Lyon Mackenzie. The museum holds a small collection of pre- and post-Confederation tokens related to Dundas and to Upper Canada. Among these tokens is what may be an unknown cardboard milk token:



## The St. Amant Mystery and McLachlan's Hoard of Canadian Coppers

*Christopher Faulkner and Jacob Lipson*

### Introduction

Sometime before 1889 the numismatist R.W. McLachlan had the opportunity to examine a hoard of about 5,000 assorted coppers that had been stashed in the vault of the Bank of Montreal at Quebec City. McLachlan was of the opinion that these coppers had been “the contents of some commodious till” belonging to a merchant in Montreal that were sent to Quebec City in 1837 for safekeeping (1889: 34). Why they needed safekeeping he did not say, unless he thought that if the Lower Canadian Rebellion of that year were to succeed they would all be dumped back into circulation. In any case, there were no military engagements in Montreal and, of course, the Rebellion failed. McLachlan reckoned that after the threat of Rebellion passed, the Montreal merchant deemed his coppers worthless and never reclaimed them. McLachlan was therefore under the impression that he was looking at a hoard of pre-Confederation tokens which had lain untouched for fifty years. Every collector's dream! The opportunity to sort through a random accumulation of old coins or tokens!

McLachlan wrote up his account of the hoard and offered a general inventory of its contents. Something in the order of 12,000 coppers in total were in the hoard when it was first discovered in the vaults of the bank a short time before McLachlan wrote his 1889 article. They were turned over to a number of collectors, one of whom sent McLachlan the 5,000 in his possession:

This lot, after having carefully looked it over, I find to consist mainly of such light brass and copper tokens as were struck and circulated in Canada between the years 1810 and 1837; together with worn out halfpence of George II and III, brass buttons and battered and bruised coins the rejectamenta of other countries (1889: 27).

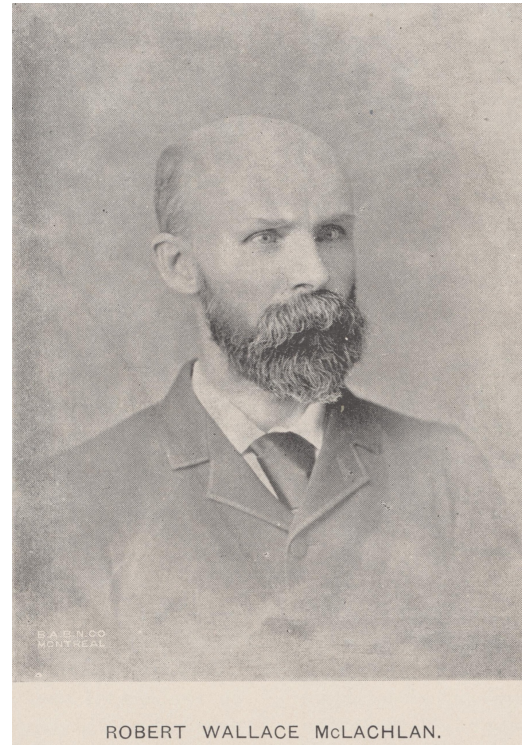


Figure 1. Montreal numismatist R.W. McLachlan (1845-1926). Image taken from P.N. Breton's *Popular Illustrated Guide to Canadian Coins, Medals, etc.* (1894: 25).



The brass and copper tokens were mostly Tiffin halfpennies (3,000 pieces), Bust & Harps (800), Ships Colonies & Commerce (600-700), various Blacksmiths (525), along with a smattering of other pieces. Presumably, McLachlan took what he wanted for his own collection and returned or disposed of the rest.



Figure 2. Obverse and reverse of Canida / St. Amant token. Images courtesy of Heritage Auctions, HA.com.

### The St. Amant Token

There was one piece in the hoard that McLachlan had never seen before:

When I first examined this piece I was inclined to throw it aside as an odd specimen stamped for amusement but, finding about sixty specimens in the hoard, all similarly stamped, and that not over old coppers but on plain planchets evidently cut out for the purpose, I concluded that it was a private token made for circulation. The letters of the misspelled 'Canida' are each stamped on separately in very irregular fashion. The letters, in the name, 'St. Amant,' on the reverse, are part of a steel stamp that had been used for marking goods. The planchet was too small to receive the whole stamp, although the stop and part of the initial letter of the first name can be seen on some specimens. Who St. Amant was or his business I have not been able to learn. There are a number of families of that name living in and around Quebec (McLachlan 1889: 32).

Sixty specimens having survived seems about right. Apparently, none of those examined by McLachlan featured any additional characters in the legends. However, a minority of St. Amant tokens known today include both a date (1820) above CAN / IDA, with the digits hand-stamped from individual punches, and a first initial O. before ST. AMANT on the reverse. The presence or absence of the O. is due entirely to whether the flan has or has not received the

whole punch. The presence or absence of the date cannot be explained. Examples are known with and without 1820 on both ~25mm and ~27mm planchets. Note that CAN / IDA is always on two lines. These tokens come without rims, resulting in sharp, plain edges from the planchet cutting tool. Weights of recorded specimens range from 4.70 grams to 6.36 grams, more or less in correlation with the diameters. The die orientation is entirely irregular. There are reports that the token was struck on both brass and copper planchets, but metallurgical analysis would be required to confirm.



Figure 3. Obverse and reverse of St. Amant token with full date and first initial. Images courtesy of Jacob Lipson.

### Attempted Attributions Since 1889

The origins of this mysterious piece have remained unknown to numismatists since McLachlan published his observations in 1889. To be sure, the token's rarity and the obscurity of its legends make pinpointing who made it and why a distinct challenge.

There have been at least a few attempts over the past 130 years to identify St. Amant, usually as either a place or a family name. The 1890 edition of J.W. Scott's *Standard Coin Catalogue* attributed the St. Amant tokens, listed as D. St. Amant rather than O. St. Amant, to Quebec City. However, the author provided no justification for that claim.

A lot description in Schulman's 1944 sale of the Eugene Courteau Collection described one of these coppers as a "Counter and token of the St. Amant College" (Schulman 1944: 108). In a letter to Schulman dated March 4, 1946, J.D. Ferguson queried the attribution: "While it has always been indicated as a Canadian token, I had never previously known who had actually issued it, nor have I heard of such a college. There is no town of that name in the Province of Quebec. There is a St. Amand in Madawaska County in New Brunswick." In reply, on March 7, Schulman defended the lot description, "because this was Dr. Courteau's interpretation" (from Ferguson correspondence files, Bank of Canada). Was this on Courteau's envelope of this piece in his collection? Saint-Amand, as it is properly spelled, is indeed a tiny village in New Brunswick, but not the source of the token.

In cataloguing the Warren Baker Collection of Canadian Blacksmith Coppers (Bowers and Merena, 1987), Michael Oppenheim noted in his description of lot 1111: “The Canida [sic] token is very scarce, but it does appear in collections and auctions from time to time. It most surely is a blacksmith ...”

McLachlan, it turns out, was absolutely correct when he said in 1889 that there were – and still are today – “a number of families of that name living in and around Quebec” (1889: 32). As he suspected then, we believe today that a Quebec City resident – a man by the name of Onésime St. Amant – was responsible for making these tokens and presumably putting them into circulation.

### Onésime St. Amant and Family History

Onésime St. Amant was born June 15, 1819, in Deschambeault, Quebec, to Anselme St. Amant (1786-1832) and Thérèse Bedard (1797-1825). Parish records show Onésime marrying Joseph Hamel (b. November 22, 1819) on September 14, 1841 in L’Ancienne Lorette, Quebec.

We know little of his education or early working years. St. Amant was listed in the 1842 Canada East census as a non-property-owning resident of St. Roch, Quebec, where he worked as a furniture maker (*meublier*). In late winter 1845, he signed his name to a statement by the citizens of Quebec City and its suburbs affirming the conduct of their political representatives, which was published in the March 1845 issue of *Le Castor*, a local political and literary publication.

St. Amant (often spelled St. Amand) appeared most years in the Quebec City Directory as a skilled tradesman of one kind or another. He was listed as “St. Amand, O, cabinetmaker, Richelieu street, St. John’s” in *MacKay’s Quebec Directory* for 1848-49, 1850, and 1852. He

appeared in *Marcotte’s Quebec Business Directory* in 1855-56 as “St. Amant, Onésime” – a “joiner” – on Richelieu street in the St. Jean district (Upper Town). In 1857-58, St. Amant was listed as a “turner” at 11 Richelieu street and in 1858-59 as a “cabinetmaker” at the same address. He remained listed as a cabinetmaker until 1864-65, when he was described as an “upholsterer.” In 1866-67, he was listed once again as a “turner” at 15 Richelieu street.

St. Amant disappeared from the city directory after 1867, reappearing in 1871 as “St. Amand Onésime, engineer, 11½ Richelieu, St. J.” In 1876-77 St. Amant was listed at 45 Richelieu street, and by 1880-81 he had expanded to 45

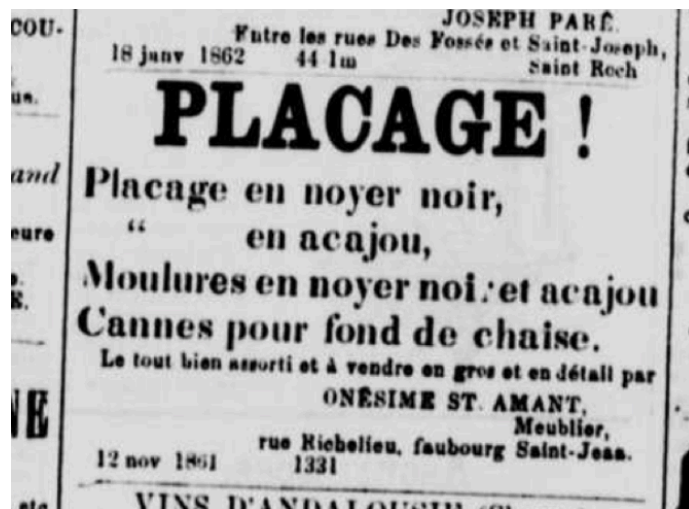


Figure 4. 1862 Onésime St. Amant advertisement for his veneering method in *Le Journal de Québec*.

and 47 Richelieu street. He was listed as an engine driver in the 1881-82 directory and as a “mécancien engineer” in 1886-87. His last appearance in any directory was 1888-89 as “mécancien, machinist.”

Onésime St. Amant died on October 2, 1888. The death notice published in *La Justice* on October 3 described him as a “mécancien” in the faubourg St. Jean area. St. Amant’s funeral was held at the St-Jean Baptiste church, and burial services took place at Notre-Dame-de-Belmont Cemetery. Several sales of his estate occurred in February and March 1889. On March 26, 1889, the Quebec *Morning Chronicle* announced the auction sale of St. Amant’s tools, including iron and wood lathes, a portable forge, screw plates and dies, emery wheels, a grinding stone, hammers, vices, anvils, files, and “a lot of Steel for manufacturing Tools and mechanical use and Scrap Iron.”

St. Amant was fairly accomplished at an early age. In 1850, then only 31 years old, he took home a prize at the Quebec Industrial Exposition for his ebony veneering. The October 21, 1850, issue of *La Minerve* noted that St. Amant deserved an honourable mention for the veneer machine he had not only designed and manufactured, but which he had also already exported in great numbers to England. In 1873, St. Amant filed a patent with Joseph Woodley, also of Quebec City, for a new sewing machine design. Three years later, in 1876, that design earned St. Amant a bronze medal at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition from the Canadian Commission. On December 6, 1877, the Canadian Patent Office awarded St. Amant another patent for a “machine for breaking pegs” (no. 8184).

Onésime St. Amant’s status as a skilled machinist, furniture maker, and engineer strongly suggests a connection to the tokens stamped O. ST. AMANT, as does the absence of any other listed individual with the same name or first initial in the Quebec City directories of the period. However, confirmation comes in the form of a series of standard weight and capacity measurements, some of which are held by the Canadian Museum of Science and Technology.

### The St. Amant Measures

The Canadian Museum of Science and Technology Collection includes at least six standard capacity measures bearing the mark of O. St. Amant. Each unit features a standardized marking system with the following format on the face of each vessel:

**Auction Sales.**

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**BY F. ALFRED ST. LAURENT.**

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Stock-in-Trade of Mechanical Tools, Estate of Mr. Onésime St. Amant, No. 47, Richelieu Street, on Wednesday, the 27th instant.

**A VERY LARGE ASSORTMENT OF** Mechanical Tools, Engine Boiler Gauge, Iron and Wood Lathes, Portable Forge, Screw Plates and Dies, Patent Planer and Drill, Box Screws and Hand Screws, Emery Wheels, Grinding Stone, Files, Hammers, Joiners' and Firesmiths' Tools, Fret Saws, Joiners' Work Benches, Anvils, Vices, Chest of Tools, also a lot of Steel for manufacturing Tools and mechanical use and Scrap Iron. Several Repairing Pieces for Sewing and Peg Machines. The Tools and Machines are in very good order. The Goods can be seen the day of the Sale from 9 to 12 o'clock A. M. Conditions of the Sale will be made known at the hour of Sale.

Sale at 1.30 o'clock P.M.  
F. ALF. ST. LAURENT.  
A. & B.  
March 26, 1889.

Figure 5. Announcement of the sale of Onésime St. Amant’s tools, published in the Quebec *Morning Chronicle*.

V.R. [Victoria Regina] L.C. [Lower Canada]  
Capacity Type  
Date

The underside of each standard capacity is stamped O. ST. AMANT, and each is dated 1860. According to Eric Little, writing in *Weights and Measures in Pre-Confederation Canada*, “there is no legislation that has been found that mentions this name nor are there records that document their purchase from such a person.” Nevertheless, the number of surviving standard capacity measures by O. St. Amant, especially relative to those of other makers, suggests he was prolific. Per Little: “The St. Amant company provided most of the measures that we have seen from that period, so that company must have prospered greatly” (2018: 28, 30).



Figure 6. Images of a standard  $\frac{1}{2}$  minot measure produced by Onésime St. Amant. A  $\frac{1}{2}$  minot is slightly more than  $\frac{1}{2}$  bushel dry measure. Images courtesy of the Canadian Museum of Science and Technology. Ingenium 1997.0171.

David Pantalony, curator at the Canadian Museum of Science and Technology, informs us that the examples in the collection were obtained from Industry Canada in 1995 and 1997, when Measurement Canada transferred their holdings to the Museum. No additional provenance is recorded.

Regrettably, we have been unable to locate any documentation related to St. Amant’s work in producing these standardized units of measurements, which were regulated and subject to inspection by local authorities. However, there is no doubt that, at least stylistically, the punch is identical to that employed on the St. Amant tokens.

### Catalogue and Sales History

As mentioned earlier and as far as we know, the St. Amant token first came to the notice of the numismatic community when McLachan “discovered” a number of examples among the hoard of coppers. The token does not appear in *Canadian Numismatics*, which was serialized in the *American Journal of Numismatics* from 1879 to 1885 and published in one volume in 1886. The first priced catalogue entry was in the 1890 issue of Scott Stamp & Coin Company’s *Catalogue of Copper Coins*, where it was valued at \$2.50 in Fair condition and \$3.50 in Good,

the equal of a Vexator and more than a Jamaica Cask. However, despite being first catalogued by Scott in 1890, the token has not appeared in any other priced catalogue since, whether Taylor-James (1959 *et seq.*), Haxby-Willey (1973 *et seq.*), Haxby (2012), or Charlton (Tenth edition, 2020).

The first sale appearance would appear to be a dated example as lot 235 in a June 29, 1892, Scott Stamp & Coin Co. auction. Lyman Low sold a specimen in 1901 as one of two pieces in lot 144 of the R.O. Montambault collection for 60 cents USD. He sold a second example, “The finest I have seen,” as lot 28 in an unidentified Montreal collection in 1903, again for 60 cents USD. The first Canadian sales listing would appear to be by W.R. McColl in 1903 (“1820, CANIDA, incused, rare.” Offered for \$1.00). On June 7, 1905, the Chapman brothers sold what would seem to be an undated example for \$1.05 USD as lot 711 from the collection of J.F. McCabe of Philadelphia. There have been several auction appearances since, including the Morris (1912), Hunter (1920), Courteau (1944), Reford (1968), McKay-Clements (1976), Baker (1987), Everingham (1989), Ford (2013), Cooper (2016), and Partrick (2021) collection sales. One curious example was remarked upon by Warren Baker in his *List No. 30*: “This is without doubt a colonial coin. Not long ago, I saw a specimen struck [*sic*] over a rare variant of Br. 997, Lees 5, Haxby-Willey 257” (1977: 17). In private conversation he has informed us this was lot 653 in the 1976 sale of the John McKay-Clements collection. It sold for \$28 CAD. The lot description does not mention the undertype and the piece has not re-surfaced since.

### A New Look at the Quebec City Hoard

McLachlan reasoned that the Quebec City hoard dated from 1837 based on his analysis of its contents and where it was found. However, the manufacture of the St. Amant tokens contained in the hoard most likely occurred sometime during the third quarter of the 19th century, when we know Onésime St. Amant was active as a metal worker. Therefore, a pre-1837 date for the hoard is clearly impossible. What McLachlan overlooked was that the Customs at Quebec regularly intercepted the importation of illegal coppers and confiscated them on the spot.

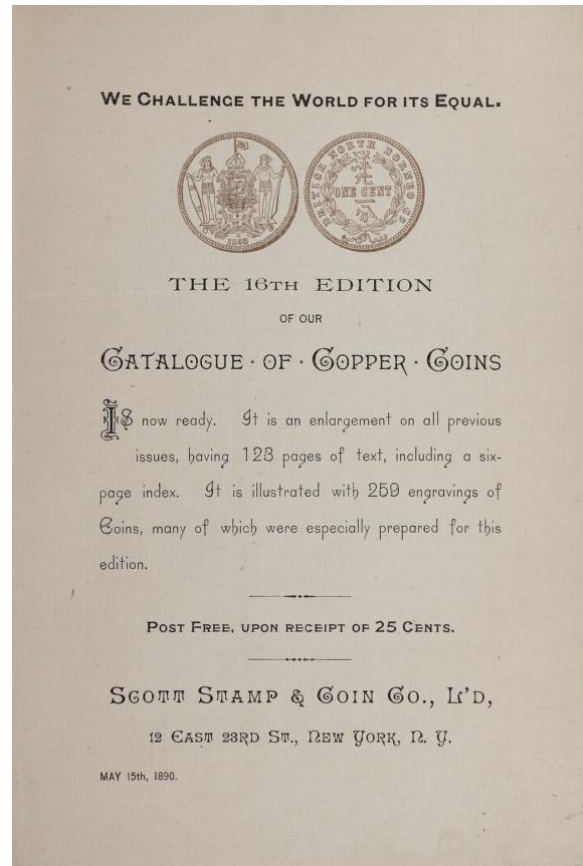


Figure 7. The St. Amant token was first priced in the 1890 edition of Scott Stamp & Coin Company’s *Catalogue of Copper Coins*.



Figure 8. A group of Tiffin and Bust & Harp tokens untouched by circulation. Similar pieces were found in the Quebec City Hoard by the thousands. Image courtesy of Christopher Faulkner.

Quebec City, not Montreal, was the main Canadian port of entry before 1840. Counterfeit and lightweight tokens were imported by the millions between 1815 and about 1840 and Customs interceptions took place with some regularity. McLachlan reported that many of the Tiffins in the hoard “seem hardly to have been touched by circulation,” as was the case with some 250 examples of the Ships, Colonies & Commerce token, Lees 2, while many of the Bust & Harps were “as bright as when they were struck” (1889: 28, 29). These observations add credence to the suspicion that a significant part of the hoard at least was confiscated by Customs before it went into circulation. There is also no reason why, over the years, some of its contents could not have been taken out of circulation in and around Quebec City, which would account for the presence of the St. Amant pieces. That they were in the hoard at all must mean that they had standing as a token or they would not have been there. The St. Amant token should not, however, be considered a Blacksmith because it does not satisfy the criteria, both with regard to its date of production and to its character.

McLachlan reported that he was informed of the existence of the hoard by a Quebec collector named W.G.L. Paxman who was, at the time, an employee of the Department of Public Instruction. It was Paxman who made the 5,000 tokens in his possession available for McLachlan's examination. But if the tokens had been stored in the vaults of the Quebec branch of the Bank of Montreal, how did they get to Paxman?

In a private communication, Ted Banning has informed us

that Paxman (b. 1859) was a native of Quebec City who worked in his father's grocery store as a young man but by 1884 had formed his own company as an auctioneer and commission merchant. According to *Cherrier's Quebec City Directory*, this business only seems to have lasted a year until he was back to selling groceries (1885: 318).

It was not until the following year that Paxman began working for the Department of Public Instruction. Was Paxman engaged by the Bank of Montreal in 1884-85 as an auctioneer to dispose of the hoard of Canadian coppers being held in the vault? That seems possible, given that there are earlier records of confiscated counterfeit and lightweight tokens being sold for scrap metal through public auction. Fortunately, Paxman was something of a collector as well as an auctioneer, so he advanced his own collection from the hoard and then contacted McLachlan, who did the rest.

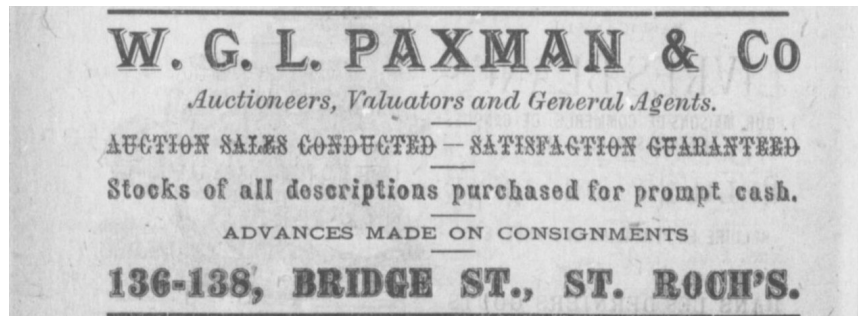


Figure 9. Paxman advertisement from *Cherrier's Quebec City Directory* for 1885.

### Lingering Questions

Has the St. Amant mystery been solved? Well, not quite. We still don't know exactly when Onésime St. Amant stamped these pieces or why he did so. The meaning of CAN / IDA remains unclear. Is it CANADA misspelled? Was it done intentionally? Is it a reference to something else? Does it represent two words? And why are some pieces stamped 1820 and some not? What does the date signify? St. Amant was born in 1819, not 1820.

We must also address the fabric of these tokens. St. Amant was clearly a skilled technician. Yet, the tokens are conspicuously crude. Were they intentionally made to deceive? If so, why would the maker sign the token? Is there a possibility they were produced with the tools sold after St. Amant's death but before R.W. McLachlan discovered them in the hoard? Many unanswered questions remain. Let the research continue!

### Acknowledgments

Warren Baker for a recollection; Ted Banning for sharing what he knows about W.G.L.



Paxman; Heritage Auctions, HA.com; the National Currency Collection, Bank of Canada, for access to its resources; David Pantalony, Curator, the Canadian Museum of Science and Technology for the source of the Museum's St. Amant measures and accompanying images.

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désirent vendre, car aucune lettre demandant des offres ne sera  
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From a Private Collection

*Obituaries from Yesteryear: W.A.D. Lees, 1859-1941**Submitted by Christopher Faulkner*Originally published in *The Wetaskiwin Times*, November 11, 1941: 1, 4.

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**JUDGE LEES HAS PASSED TO THE GREAT BEYOND****Former District Court Judge Eighty-Two Years of Age When Death Steps In**

Though to many the sad event was somewhat of a shock, the passing of His Honour Judge William Andrew Dickson Lees, in the Community hospital here, on Monday evening at 7:15, was not unexpected by intimate friends, who were in full knowledge of his precarious condition since undergoing an operation for appendicitis about a week previously.

Funeral services were conducted Wednesday afternoon at the Campbell Funeral Chapel, by Rev. A. Willis Cann. Interment took place in the family plot at Camrose.

Active Pallbearers: C.H. Russell, K.C.; A. Simpson; E. Barnett; R.W. Manley, K.C.; B.D. Howatt; W.H. Odell, K.C.; all of Wetaskiwin.

Honorary Pallbearers: Geo. B. Henwood, Esq., Deputy Attorney-General, Edmonton; W.E. Payne, K.C., Pres. Alberta Law Society, Red Deer; W.B. Corbett, K.C., Edmonton; W.H. Wilkin, Edmonton; A.H. Sheppard of the C.P.R.; His Honour Judge A.U.G. Bury.

**In West for 37 Years**

The late Judge Lees, former district court judge for this judicial district, was born near Ottawa, on August 27, 1859, the son of Robert Lees, K.C., crown attorney and clerk of Carleton County, and Jessie Dickson, daughter of Sheriff Dickson, of the Bathurst District, Ontario.

He received his early education in the collegiate institute in Ottawa and later graduated from University of Toronto and Osgoode Hall, Toronto, following which he was articled with Lees & Gimmet [*sic*], his father and associate, in the capital city.

He was called to the Bar in 1892 and came to the West in 1904, locating in Fort Saskatchewan, where he opened a law practice. Five years later he was named to the bench and retired in 1934, upon reaching the age of seventy-five.

Judge Lees leaves one daughter, Mrs. W.M. (Verna) Beatty, who attended his bedside, to mourn his demise. Mrs. (Betty) Lees passed to the Great Beyond fourteen years ago, and the body was interred in the family plot in Camrose.

**Farm Was His Pride**

When Judge Lees was appointed in 1909 the Wetaskiwin judicial district included

Wetaskiwin, Stettler, Red Deer, and Camrose, and shortly afterwards he removed to Red Deer. With re-organization of the district in 1918 Judge Lees removed to Camrose, where he purchased and supervised operations of one of the best farms in the district. About twelve years ago, however, he disposed of his farm and removed to Wetaskiwin, where he since resided.

### Note

W.A.D. Lees is best known to Canadian collectors as the author of “The Ships, Colonies & Commerce Tokens (Breton No. 997): A Revised List,” *The Numismatist*, 30, 1 (January): 1-9. It was followed later in 1917, then in 1919 and 1926, by three short articles in *The Numismatist* which added new varieties to Lees’ initial catalogue of the Ships tokens. He also had an interest in the fur trade, as evidenced by his article, “The Hudson’s Bay Company Beaver Tokens,” for *The Canadian Science Digest* in August 1938: 236-237. Lees corresponded with other collectors of his day, such as Eugene Courteau and L.A. Langstroth. In his monographs on the Bank of Montreal tokens, the Habitant tokens, and the St. George tokens Courteau explicitly thanks Lees for lending him tokens for examination. The obituary notice remarks that Lees was born “near” Ottawa. He was born in what is known as Old Ottawa East, a fifteen minute walk from the city centre which, until 1907, was a separate community. The family owned considerable property in Old Ottawa East and today’s Lees Avenue memorializes their presence.



Figure 1. Lees’ Burial Plot in Camrose, Alberta. Image courtesy Markus Molenda.

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