

Occasional Numismatic Papers

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 next will appear.

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Collectors are encouraged to submit for consideration letters to the editors, research notes and queries, or original articles of any length on any aspect of Canadian numismatics. Anyone interested in submitting material is asked to read and follow the contributor guidelines on the last page.

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About the Contributors

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Christopher Faulkner is the author of three books on pre-Confederation tokens and has completed a fourth, *A Door in Time: What People in Lower Canada Did for Money in 1837-38*, which will be published by Spink & Sons in spring 2025.

Jacob Lipson is a professional numismatist and owner of Jacob Lipson Rare Coins. Before opening his own business, he worked as a dealer in a retail shop in Montreal for four years and served as a U.S. Coin Cataloguer Heritage Auctions for nine years. He is president of the Ottawa Numismatic Society and is the recipient of the 2018 Medal Collectors of America Georgia Stamm Chamberlain Award.

Ray Malone is an avid collector of pre-Confederation tokens. He is the author of the privately printed *A Library of Numismatic Auction Catalogues Relating to the Historical Coinages of Canada* (1995). He is currently at work with David Fanning on a study of the Wood 23 family of Blacksmith tokens.

Letters to the Editors

John Sallay wrote:

Another terrific publication – please keep up the great work!

As you probably suspect, I especially liked your article, “LeRoux-1233: The Collège Saint-Laurent Medal”. There were two more of these medals auctioned recently, from the Sherbrooke Seminary Collection a few years ago, included in lot 791 (which I purchased). That lot also included another Saint-Laurent medal, which was dated 1902, having the same reverse (photos attached). I don’t think that changes the dating of pre-1888 that you determined based on the auction listing, but the medals do have a very similar look and feel.



Collège Saint-Laurent medal dated 1902. Encan Champagne Auctions ... lot 791.

And this from **Richard Saunders**:

The article about the hoard of Canadian coppers in your issue No. 1 and McLachlan’s reference to the “rejectamenta” (lovely word!) which circulated in nineteenth century Canada got me thinking about something I’ve wondered about for a long time. Has anybody written about or done any research on the other kinds of coins that circulated alongside current Canadian decimal coins over the course of the last half of the nineteenth and through the twentieth century?

When I was a boy growing up in Nova Scotia in the early 1950s I delivered the daily newspaper, the *Halifax Chronicle-Herald*. Customers would pay me or tip me when I went to collect not only with Canadian coins, including Victorian 10 and 25 cent pieces, but with Newfoundland ten, twenty, and fifty cent pieces, large cents of George V, and British halfpennies of George V. The Newfoundland coins were very common, the large cents and the halfpennies less so. When we moved to central Canada in the late fifties I remember putting together a complete collection of Wheat Ears, all pulled out of circulation, and a nice selection of Indian Head cents and Buffalo nickels as well.

I seem to recall published accounts of the Straits Settlement coins which were introduced into and circulated in Alberta in the early twentieth century. But do we know what was accepted elsewhere in the country for periods of time over the course of the last century? In Newfoundland before it joined Confederation, for example? Did all Canadian decimal coins circulate equally everywhere? What temporarily replaced or supplemented their presence? It seems to this correspondent that the what, the where, and the why of this problem should be of interest to all serious collectors.

Wood 23 Error: Double Flip Strike

Ray Malone



Example #	Type	Weight, g	Diameter, mm	Thickness, mm	Die Orientation	Metal
RM 33a	23.7	3.268	26.69/26.17	0.80	NE, 80 deg cw	copper

An interesting Wood 23 error Blacksmith token was acquired recently. It was obvious this Wood 23 was a late die state, but the double strike made it difficult to pick out design details. Analysis of this error token is part of a much more extensive study of Wood 23 and related Blacksmiths. The study is a cooperative effort between David Fanning and me. The study includes 93 examples of Wood 23 and examples of all the related Blacksmiths that have been reported (Wood 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 28A, 29, 29A). The identities of the various die states used in our study were originally introduced by Ernie Everingham and Warren Baker in Jeffrey Hoare Auctions Catalogue No. 13 (October 1989).

Wood 23.1A is the earliest known die state. The only three examples known to the author are included in our larger study. Wood 23.1A is a distinctly different issue than 23.1B and 23.1C. After 23.1A was struck, the dies were removed from the press and reworked. The thin die crack of 23.1A may have occurred on striking and examples without the die crack may exist. However, another possibility is that the crack occurred prior to striking tokens. The die would not have been fashioned from hardened carbon steel. The steel would have been annealed prior to producing the dies. After die preparation, the die face would have been hardened by heating it to a temperature near the melting point of the steel. The die would then have been quickly quenched in a water bath. This process produces stress in the steel and hardens it. The initial crack could have occurred at this critical stage of the process.

The major die states of Wood 23 are shown in the chart below.

Wood 23 listed in order of Emission by Wood-Baker Number





23.1A
140 degrees cw (NS)



Obverse and Reverse Dies Reworked, 180 degrees die rotation
23.1B, 23.1C, 23.2, and 23.3
 320 degrees cw (NN)



Reverse Die Modified, rotated 180 degrees
23.4
 160 degrees cw (NN)



Reverse Die Reworked, rotated 180 degrees
23.5 and 23.6





23.8
260 degrees (NW)

Reverse Die Reworked, die rotated 180 degrees



23.7
80 degrees (NE)

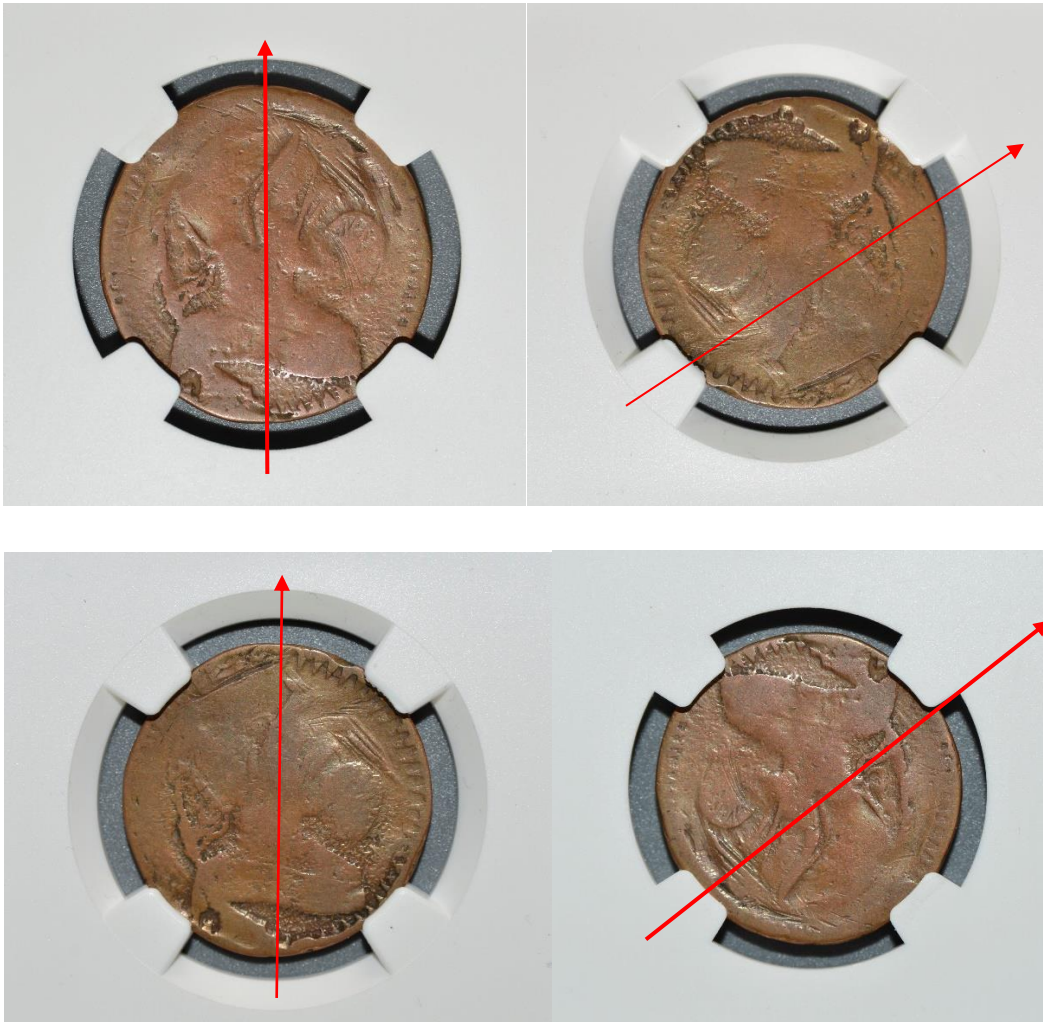
Die rotated 90 degrees



23.6
340 degrees (NN)

The objective of the present study was to determine the die state of the double flip strike. There are many factors that help identify the die state of Wood 23 examples: die cracks, rust, and die modifications. However, one of the most straightforward factors, particularly for the late die states, is the die orientation. In general, die orientations vary among the Wood 23s by some number of 90° increments. So, for example, as indicated by the preceding images, 23.6 has a roughly NN die orientation, 23.7 has a NE die orientation, and 23.8 has a NW die orientation. The die orientations imply that the shaft of the die was roughly square. The die would very likely have been made from carbon steel of the type used for tools – perhaps, steel bar stock. Carbon steel, although very hard, is very prone to rust.

The Wood 23 Flip Strike is an example of the very rare 23.7.





The Wood 23 Flip Strike is an example of the very rare 23.7.

Warren Baker said of the seventh issue: “By far the rarest piece of the series. I’ve only seen two specimens” (1989: 144).

RM 23.7



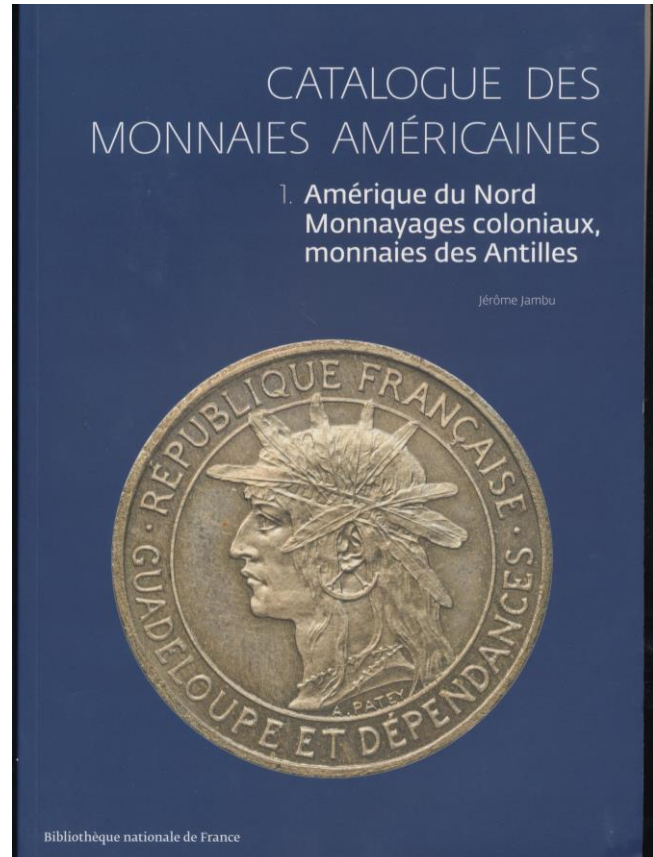
Example #	Type	Weight, g	Diameter, mm	Thickness, mm	Die Orientation	Metal
RM 33	23.7	6.853	26.88/26.72	1.58	NE, 80 deg cw	copper

Bibliography

Everingham, Ernie, and Warren Baker. 1989. “Wood 23: Issues and Die States,” in *Jeffrey Hoare Auctions, Catalogue No. 13, TOREX, October 26, 27, 28*: 142-144.

Research Notes and Queries

Researchers interested in the circulation of French coins in North America and the Caribbean might wish to consult *Catalogue des monnaies américaines: Amérique du Nord — Monnayages coloniaux, monnaies des Antilles* (141 pages; 44 plates). This 2021 French language catalogue is authored by Jérôme Jambu and published by the Bibliothèque nationale de France. As its title indicates, it covers coins and tokens, including cut and countermarked money, held in the collections of the BnF, which circulated in the French, British and Spanish colonies of the West Indies and North America from the seventeenth through the twentieth centuries. This is a sylloge and is therefore neither a comprehensive catalogue nor a priced catalogue of such pieces. It can be purchased from the Bibliothèque nationale de France. A promised second volume will be entirely devoted to French coins in the United States and Canada and is to be entitled *Monnayages révolutionnaires et fédéraux des États-Unis et du Canada*.



Cover image of Catalogue des monnaies américaines: Amérique du Nord.

The P.E.I Penny: The Case for Dennis McCarthy

Edward Banning and Christopher Faulkner

Ever since an article by one J. Metcalf appeared in the *Canadian Antiquarian and Numismatic Journal* in 1890, some numismatists have repeated the mistaken notion that a certain Peter McCausland was responsible for the scarce Prince Edward Island penny stamped with the letters “P.E.I.” (without the final period after the “I”).



Fig. 1. Obverse and reverse of a P.E.I one penny token. Courtesy Heritage Auctions, HA.com.

This is what Metcalf said of what he called “The Peter McCausland Penny:”

... a round piece of copper, cut out of a sheet, furred up round the edges with the letters P.E.I. [*sic*], indented across. Mr. McCausland resided on and owned Rustico Island, and farmed, fished and sold goods to the French people of that locality for a long period (Metcalf 1890: 99).

The problem with Metcalf’s claim is that it lacks any foundation. Metcalf also makes claims concerning a number of other examples of Prince Edward Island currency that are questionable or incorrect, notably his description of the PEI Holey Dollar and Dump (Faulkner 2012: 84).

Notwithstanding Metcalf’s incomplete knowledge of the numismatics of Prince Edward Island, the implication of his 1890 article is that he was a collector of coins, tokens, and paper money. As the article gives his place of residence as North Wiltshire, a small community west of Charlottetown, we can identify him as the Jonathan Metcalf who was born in Preston Patrick, Westmorland, England, on September 26, 1837, and worked as a clerk in a coffee brokerage in Birkenhead, near Liverpool. He, his wife Sarah Jones, and daughter Rachel immigrated to PEI around 1876, and Jonathan found employment as a clerk in the Charlottetown store of James Desbrisay “for many years.” Sometime in the 1880s, the Metcalfs bought a farm on Lot 30. In addition to running the farm, at the time he wrote his article Metcalf was a partner in the firm of Tremaine and Metcalf, a dry goods store at 127 Queen Street in Charlottetown. He lived variously

on Richmond Street and at 176 Sydney Street (Canada Census 1881; 1891; 1901; England Census 1871; England Marriages 2014; Historic Places n.d.; Rogers 1983: 235; Teare 1880: 176-81). He died August 20, 1901, at his home on Appin Road, in rural Bonshaw (Find-a-Grave n.d.: 153339629; *The Morning Guardian*, August 22, 1901).

Ignorance, Misinformation and a Non-existent Token

Inexplicably, our early cataloguers, Alfred Sandham, R.W. McLachlan, Joseph Leroux, P.-N. Breton, and Eugene Courteau ignored the very existence of the P.E.I penny (they also ignored the PEI Holey Dollar). However, Metcalf's claim that the "P.E.I" penny was issued by a Peter McCausland was taken up by R.C. Willey, who catalogued it and illustrated an example in his serialized "The Coins of Canada" in 1960 and again in "Colonial Coinages of Canada" (Willey 1960: 413; 1979: 446). Thereafter, it entered the mainstream of Canadian numismatics. To this day, auction catalogues and fixed price lists persist in repeating Willey's attribution.

Metcalf complicated matters further. While he attributed the 'P.E.I' penny to Peter McCausland, he attributed another, nearly identical, piece to Dennis McCarthy, a Charlottetown tinsmith:

Very similar was the "DENNY MACARTHY" (Dennis) Penny with the letters D. M. C. [*sic*]. About the same size, and made in the same way as those on the McCausland Penny. Mr. McCarthy was a tinsmith whose dwelling and store covered half the ground at present occupied by the fine hardware store of Mr. W. E. Dawson, on Great George street (Metcalf 1890: 99).

Willey (1960; 1979) also took up this piece stamped "D M C" (without punctuation), and it entered the Canadian numismatic mainstream with references in *The Currency and Medals of Prince Edward Island* (Graham et al. 1988: 27), Haxby (2012: 72), and the current edition of *The Charlton Standard Catalogue of Canadian Colonial Tokens* (Chapados-Girard 2023, no. PE-3A). However, no sales record or photograph documents a piece simply stamped with the letters "D M C". In all likelihood, this is a product of Willey's imagination based on his understandably literal reading of Metcalf's remark and this phantom should be deleted from the catalogue record.

What does exist – although it may be unique – is a piece stamped "D M C / P.E.I". While it is certainly possible that Metcalf was aware in 1890 of a penny with the mark "D M C" by itself, it is more likely that he was referring to the "D M C / P.E.I" token. Because the piece appears to be unique today, one wonders in what local collection Metcalf may have had occasion to observe it.



Fig. 2. *Obverse and reverse of D M C / P.E.I. token. Courtesy National Currency Museum (Object ID 1976.0102.00004).*

Wiley maintains the distinction between McCausland and McCarthy (not “Macarthy”) that Metcalf introduced but does not consider the rather obvious possibility that the “D M C / P.E.I.” and “P.E.I.” tokens were made and issued by the same person. *The Currency and Medals of Prince Edward Island* (Graham et al. 1988: 27) does consider that possibility, but still maintains Wiley’s distinction between the issuers of the two tokens:

The P.E.I. punch ... appears to have been the same one that was employed in producing the McCausland pennies. This raises the interesting possibility that McCausland may have engaged the Charlottetown metal-worker to manufacture his tokens (Graham et al 1988: 27).

The Charlton Standard Catalogue of Canadian Colonial Tokens perpetuates the distinction between the two issues, although it too allows that “it is possible” Dennis McCarthy produced both tokens (Chapados-Girard 2023: 8). The lot descriptions for two of the “P.E.I.” tokens in the August 14-16, 2013, sale of the John J. Ford collection have both McCausland and McCarthy in the title, but John Kraljevich’s no-nonsense text makes it very clear that McCarthy was logically the issuer: “Since the punches and planchets on the McCausland pieces and the DMC/PEI [*sic*] piece are the same, if McCarthy made one, he made them all. Needless to say, it makes more sense that a tinsmith would make these tokens than McCausland” (Stacks-Bowers 2013: lot 21042).

Finally, the lot description of an example from the George Thomson collection in the May 29-30, 2014, catalogue of Geoffrey Bell Auctions is categorical in its attribution of the token to McCarthy:

There is no justification for attributing this piece to Peter McCausland (also spelled MacAusland or MacAuslane), as has usually been the case. Everything, including its likely date of production about 1840, and the identical features

with the unique DMC / P.E.I piece, point to Dennis McCarthy of Charlottetown as the issuer (Bell 2014: lot 1497).

The identical lot description reappears in a Geoffrey Bell sale of 2015 (Bell 2015: lot 246) and two later sales (Bell 2018a: lot 520; 2018b: lot 497). We need to keep in mind that it was Jonathan Metcalf and Metcalf alone who initiated the attribution of the “P.E.I” token to Peter McCausland.

In point of fact, no one named Peter McCausland ever existed. The person to whom Metcalf refers is undoubtedly Peter McAuslane, who did own a lease on Rustico Island (he did not “own” the Island), but always spelled his name “M’Auslane” and never “McCausland.” This is easily confirmed by the numerous advertisements and notices that appeared under his name over the years in Charlottetown newspapers, *The Weekly Recorder*, the *Royal Gazette*, and the *Prince Edward Island Register*.

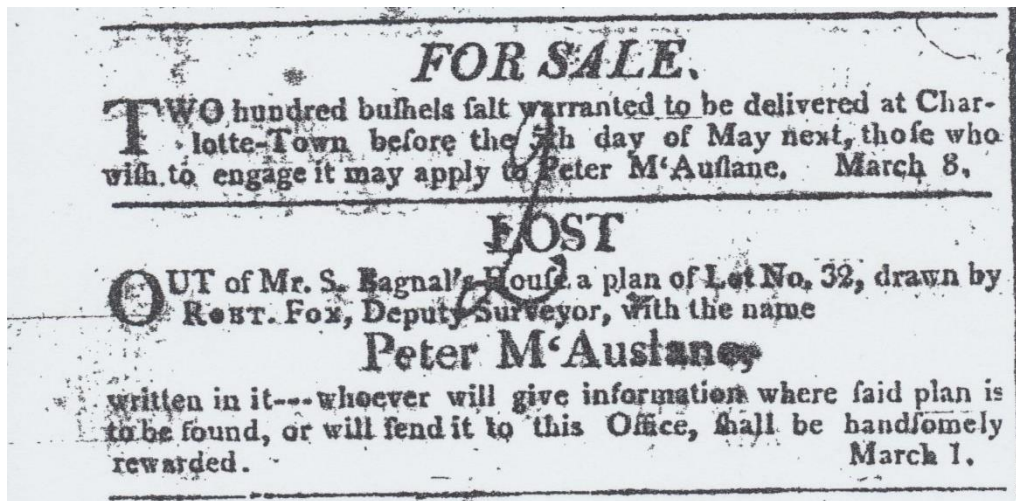


Fig. 3. McAuslane notices from *The Weekly Recorder*, March 25, 1811.

There were no other McAuslanes or McCauslands on PEI when the tokens were issued. That being said, there is nothing in the historical record to tie Peter McAuslane to the P.E.I penny either. Why Metcalf fixed on him is unclear.

Furthermore, Peter McAuslane was never a blacksmith or tinsmith. He did own a shop when he moved to Charlottetown after the sale of the lease to Rustico Island in the late 1830s. That shop was in a building called White Hall, on the west side of Great George Street, just north of Queen Square. Newspaper advertisements in the *Colonial Herald* and the *Royal Gazette* indicate that he sold anything and everything that came to hand: window glass, household furniture, codfish oil, bolts of cloth, ships’ rigging, etc. McCarthy’s Charlottetown tinsmith shop was located at the northwest corner of Kent and Great George Streets. Metcalf is therefore correct when he places McCarthy at the site of what in 1890 was the W.E. Dawson hardware store on Great George Street opposite the store of the merchant and shipowner Thomas Boggs Tremain and the baker, Davis (personal communication from Gary Carroll; Rogers 1983: 83). That means McAuslane and McCarthy were but a block apart and must surely have known one another. In July 1841, the population of Charlottetown and Royalty was 3,896 (*The Colonial Herald*, January 22, 1842: 3). It was a small town.

MacLaren and his P. E. I Token

Early on, there were collectors who knew that the token had nothing to do with McAuslane and they attributed it to Dennis McCarthy. In June of 1890, six months after Metcalf's article appeared, the well-known numismatist from Newport, Rhode Island, Dr. H. R. Storer, vacationed in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick and took the opportunity to visit some coin collectors there. One of those he visited was Jack MacLaren, who lived in Saint John. According to an excerpt of his letter to the editor of the *American Journal of Numismatics*, Storer saw "a curious piece of Prince Edward Island, that we do not remember to have seen previously described." Storer explained:

It is in the Cabinet of Mr. John S. MacLaren, Inspector of Customs for New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, who calls it the 'Dennis Macarthy [*sic*] (blacksmith) penny.' The obverse has P E I [*sic*] on the centre of the field; the upper and lower bar of the E not crossed: no other device or lettering on obverse or reverse (Storer 1890: 32).

John Smith (Jack) MacLaren was born in Richibucto, New Brunswick, on February 20, 1845. MacLaren began work in the Department of Customs in January 1868, first as a clerk and, by 1877, as customs cashier in Saint John (Civil Servants 1872: 23; 1878: 1886: 85; McAlpine 1877: 143).

Despite his continued description as a "cashier" in the Civil Servant Lists until 1885, MacLaren worked as a Customs detective, charged with rooting out smuggling. Apparently, he was very good at this, although not without controversy. In fact, his methods attracted attention in the House of Commons in 1885, when William Berrian Vail, the Liberal member for Digby, Nova Scotia, demanded of Mackenzie Bowell, future Prime Minister but then Conservative Minister of Customs, "whether he intends to keep Mr. MacLaren in the employ of the Department, knowing the very improper course he took last year in order to obtain information as to goods shipped from the United States to the Maritime Provinces?" Bowell replied that MacLaren "has done more to put a stop to the continued and extensive smuggling which has been going on in those Provinces ... than all the other officers we have had" ((Commons Debates 1885: 3237, 3239). On January 1, 1886, he was promoted to Inspector in the Customs Department's Outside Service, with his annual salary increased from \$1100 to \$2000, a substantial income in those days (Civil Servants 1886: 66; 1887: 85; 1889: 81; 1894: 84; 1899: 86).

Our first indication that Jack MacLaren was collecting coins comes from an 1881 directory that tells us he specialized in English coins and medals (Mercer 1881: 32; 1884: 36). Renart (1895: 696) says he collected coins of all kinds plus military medals, and Gneccchi and Gneccchi (1903: 520) give his collecting specialties as Greek, Roman, American, and English coins and war medals, the "American" embracing Canadian and U.S. coins.

MacLaren retired as Customs Inspector between 1911 and 1921 and died of a cerebral hemorrhage at his home on Coburg St. on July 15, 1928. He was buried at Fernhill Cemetery two days later (Canada Census 1911; 1921, 21; England Probate 1958: 28; NB Deaths 1928: 036098).

Further Identifications of the P.E.I Token

Two “P.E.I” tokens also appeared in Lyman Low’s January 1903 sale of Ewen McLeod’s collection, where Low says they were “issued by one McCarthy a blacksmith in Prince Ed. Is.” (Low 1903: lots 184, 185). As someone who lived most of his life in PEI, McLeod (1852-1932) may well have had good reason to associate the tokens with McCarthy and passed this information on to Low.

The Scott Stamp & Coin sale of Gerald Hart’s collection (1849-1920) in 1895 contained both the “P.E.I” Penny and the “D M C / P.E.I” token. Scott listed the latter piece as “Issued by Dennis McCarthy” and the Penny in the following lot as “Another. Probably by McC., with P.E.I only” (Scott 1895: lots 154, 155). They sold – presumably to W.W.C. Wilson (1869-1924) – for the handsome sums of \$11.00 and \$11.25, respectively. Because both use the same punch for the letters “P.E.I”, it seems obvious that they were probably made by the same person, and that this was not a case of someone adding “D M C” to pieces already struck with “P.E.I”, as Scott surely noticed when he catalogued them. “D M C” plausibly stands for “Dennis McCarthy” or “Dennis McCarthy Charlottetown”.

On August 4, 1918, Patrick Wickham (1856-1937) of St. Lambert, Quebec, wrote a letter about the PEI Holey Dollar to Sir Edmund Walker, President of the Canadian Bank of Commerce and a fellow numismatist. With the letter, he enclosed two Holey Dollars, a Spanish-American 8 reales, and a copper penny that he thought might be a communion token:

Regarding the Copper Penny P.E.I. [*sic*] I have not been able to secure any history. I may advise that it is thought no particular value is attached to them. It was customary for any person who wished, in those days, to make up any kind of copper coin and get it stamped P.E.I. I was informed that it might possibly be a communion token.

I obtained three specimens out of a collection that was owned by a gentleman of St. John N.B. who died a few years ago. He was a keen collector and would not have had them in his cabinet if there was not some value attached to them. His name was Mr. Kerr, a well known gentleman of education (from Faulkner 2012: 195).

John Kerr (1847-1913) was not so much a “well known gentleman of education” as a lawyer and, by 1891, also Chief of the Saint John, NB, fire department. He specialized in communion tokens, which is no doubt why the McCarthy Penny was in his collection and why this intelligence passed on to Wickham. Victor Ross (1920) did not mention the McCarthy Penny in the first volume of his history of the Bank of Commerce, despite the fact that he relied heavily on Walker’s knowledge and collection.

In 1923, the collector Herbert L. Doane (1860-1924) of Truro, Nova Scotia, wrote the following letter to the editor of *The Numismatist*:

In Dr. Courteau’s description of Prince Edward Island halfpennies, in the November issue of *The Numismatist*, he states that there was no penny issued in Prince Edward Island. I would, however, beg to draw attention to a special private issue by one McCarthy, who was a worker in metals, and it is said that he used occasionally to make a few pennies to buy himself a drink. These pennies were a plain planchet about the size of an English penny, on which he stamped the letters “P.E.I.” [*sic*] (Doane 1923: 25).

The second day of Part I of the W. W. C. Wilson collection sale also included both the “P.E.I” penny and the piece stamped “D M C / P.E.I” in one lot. L.A. Langstroth (1876-1946) of Saint John bought the lot for only \$2.20. Although Raymond provides no comment on this lot, the fact that he kept the two pieces together suggests that he accepted, probably through his reading of Scott, that the “P.E.I” token was made by Dennis McCarthy in Charlottetown. Part II of the Wilson sale included yet another “P.E.I” penny, again with no comment. L. A. Renaud bought the lot for \$7.50. John McKay-Clements (1901-1978) eventually acquired Langstroth’s collection and both pieces ended up in the May 1976 sale of his collection (Raymond 1925: lot 592; 1926: lot 101; Rose 1976: lots 528 and 530).

William B. Tennant (1871-1943) was also a collector from Saint John, NB, and a friend and contemporary of Langstroth’s. The undated, unpublished typescript inventory of his collection lists a “McCarthy Penny” along with an unspecified “Variety” of the same (Tennant n.d.). Mr. and Mrs. R. Henry Norweb of Cleveland, Ohio, acquired this collection and the McCarthy tokens ended up with the American Numismatic Society, where they reside today (ANS acc. nos. 1967.159.851 and 1967.159.852).

Auction and collection records since at least 1890 show that collectors had assigned both the “P.E.I” Penny and the “D M C / P.E.I” piece to Dennis McCarthy decades before either showed up in priced catalogues that mistakenly attributed the former to Peter McAuslane (or “MacCausland”). Furthermore, evidence that McCarthy was known to be the issuer existed before the claim ever appeared in print. While R.W. McLachlan was preparing his serialized “Canadian Numismatics” in the 1870s for eventual publication in the *American Journal of Numismatics* in 1879-1886 (published as a single volume, *Canadian Numismatics*, in 1886), he was in correspondence with various sources throughout the country from whom he sought information about the medals and tokens he was describing. One such correspondent in Charlottetown was a man named Robert May.

Robert May’s Contribution to the Story

Robert May Jr. was born in 1852 in Granville, Basse-Normandie, France. His father, Robert May Sr. of Greenwich, England, was British Vice-Consul at St. Malo, France, from 1847 to 1852 and then nearby Granville (*Summerside Journal* 1884; WeRelate n.d.). The family moved to Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, in 1862, and settled at the corner of Water and Prince Streets. By 1880, May was a seedsman and general dealer on Queen St. in Charlottetown. Robert May Jr. died in Charlottetown on April 9, 1884, only 32 years old, and his funeral at St. Peter’s Cathedral was three days later (Hutchinson 1864; PEI Deaths 2017; Teare 1880: 105, 176). In 1874, May wrote a number of letters to McLachlan in which he endeavoured to answer McLachlan’s questions about the issuers of various examples of PEI currency, such as the William Fitzpatrick leather note and the Ships, Colonies & Commerce tokens. On May 19, 1874, he reported: “Although some few remember Dennis McCarthy’s P.E.I. [sic] pennies, they seem to have entirely disappeared. He himself died many years ago, before my time, & I have been here eleven years.” On June 2, 1874, evidently pressed by McLachlan for more information, May wrote again: “... about Dennis McCarthy’s penny I can truly say that ‘Nobody knows & nobody cares’” (Baker correspondence files).

May’s source for some of this information was George Augustus Thresher (1815-1880), the eldest son of the PEI painter and art teacher, George Godsell Thresher (1780-1857), originally

from Salisbury, England, but resident in Charlottetown from 1829 onward. Eliza Wilson Thresher (1788-1865), George Augustus's mother, was also a painter and teacher, sometimes described as Nova Scotia's first professional woman artist (CWAHI n.d.). Thresher Sr. was a contemporary of McCarthy's and, in his position as Deputy Registrar of Deeds and later Deputy Colonial Secretary to the Lieutenant Governor of PEI, he presumably was privy to firsthand information that he may have passed to his son. Thresher Jr. gave his notes to May, apparently an itemized list, token by token, and May forwarded them to McLachlan. In that list was the McCarthy penny. Not much else is known about George Thresher Jr. In 1870, he was living at the corner of Grafton and Rochford in Charlottetown. A decade later, a directory lists him as a painter, boarding on King St., so it appears that, like both his parents, he was an artist. He died on April 2, 1880 (McAlpine 1870: 1323; PEI 2017; Rogers 1985: 885-886; Teare 1880: 220).

Who was Dennis McCarthy?

What we know of Dennis McCarthy is quite consistent with the hypothesis that he was responsible for both these tokens. As already noted, Metcalf (1890: 99) mentioned that McCarthy was a tinsmith, and a tinsmith was capable of making a punch and using it to stamp metal. What a tinsmith could do is best described by McCarthy himself:

Dennis and Jeremiah McCarthy inform the Inhabitants of Charlotte-Town and its vicinity, that they have commenced business in the House formerly occupied by Mr. Johnston as an Office, opposite Mr. Tremain's and Davis's, baker, where they will perform the following work, *viz.* Making pipes and Cisterns for water closets, force and convey water to any apartment required, do the Plumbing work of Platforms and Gutters, make copper brewing pans of any size, do the Tin-plate work in its various branches; copper pans tinned. Kitchen Utensils repaired; articles in copper, brass, pewter and tin, and plated candlesticks repaired; Iron plate, stove and pipe work made in a workmanlike manner; delftware repaired, wire lattice for windows made, the spouts of tea kettles made staunch, and numerous other articles made and repaired.

D. and J. McC. have resided for nine years in Halifax, and were employed in his Majesty's Naval Yard as Coppersmiths and Brass Founders. Having a perfect knowledge of their business, and being determined to give the strictest attention to orders, they hope to merit a share of public patronage (*Royal Gazette*, January 11, 1831; Graham et al 1988: 27).

Jeremiah may have been Dennis's brother, but we have been unable to confirm that. Interestingly, on their arrival in Charlottetown, the McCarthys would have had to compete for the patronage of the public with another local tinsmith who would achieve numismatic fame, James Millner. Millner was responsible for the "Sheaf of Wheat" halfpenny, Breton 916 (Breton 1894: 179).

The McCarthys' advertisement is a fascinating inventory of everything made of metal to be found in a well-to-do Charlottetown residence in the early years of the nineteenth century: water pipes and holding tanks; stove pipes (and, by implication, stoves); wire lattice to secure glass windows; kitchen utensils in a variety of metals; alloyed copper pots and pans for heating and cooking; tea kettles; candlesticks; earthenware plates and bowls glazed with tin; along with

other mysteries, such as Platforms and Gutters, whose meaning and function have been lost to time.

The McCarthys clearly presented themselves as extremely adept at metal work, apparently with the credentials to prove it. However, that does not mean Dennis McCarthy could make copper planchets of a more or less uniform diameter. One peculiarity of his token is that the blanks have been through an upsetting machine because all have slightly raised rims and smooth edges. This is what Metcalf meant when he said the token was “furred up round the edges” (Metcalf 1890: 97). It seems unlikely that McCarthy could have punched out the blanks and turned up the rims himself. If the prepared blanks were imported, where were they prepared? Given his connections with Halifax, that city is a possibility. Boston, Massachusetts, or Waterbury, Connecticut, are others.

Finally, McCarthy was known publicly as a coiner during his lifetime – or at least a potential coiner. In March 1840, a report on the proceedings of the PEI Colonial Assembly includes the following exchange:

Mr. Thomson moved the following Resolution: “ –That this House will, tomorrow, resolve itself into a Committee of the whole House, to consider the expediency of establishing a Copper Currency on the Island.”

Mr. Gorman said he would second the motion, provided he knew where the mint was to be established. Was it meant to employ Macarthy [*sic*], the tinker? (*Colonial Herald*, March 21, 1840: 1).

Mr. Gorman’s question suggests that McCarthy was already known to be capable of coining tokens sometime before 1840, and within recent memory, perhaps about 1838.

The Mystery of the Dan Campbell Countermark

A “P.E.I” Penny from the collection of Norm Peters that appeared at auction in 2013 exhibits the following stamp on its reverse: “DAN. CAMPBELL. / BOSTON” (Bell 2013: lot 876).



Fig. 4. P.E.I Penny with DAN. CAMPBELL. / BOSTON stamp. Courtesy Geoffrey Bell Auctions.

The piece is holed. Whether the names on the reverse have been applied with a single stamp or stamps cannot be confirmed. Nevertheless, they are well centred, horizontal on the planchet, and the letters are of uniform height. Is this the mark of another worker in metal? It is the only known example of this mark.

For a short time about 1840, there was a tailor named Daniel Campbell at 14 Cross St. in Boston. A Daniel Campbell also appears in Boston in the 1840 census, which unfortunately provides little information other than he was in his 30s at the time and was therefore born ca. 1805. The 1850 census is more informative, confirming that he was a tailor and born about 1806, while also indicating that his wife's name was Sarah (Stimpson 1840: 111; 1842: 120; US Census 1840; 1850). However, he does not appear in the business directories around 1850, perhaps because he worked for another tailor. If this was the Dan Campbell named on the token, what possible connection he could have had with Prince Edward Island or Dennis McCarthy is a mystery.

Physical Characteristics of the Tokens

McCarthy's pennies are approximately 35 mm in diameter, approximately 1 mm thick, and may weigh 12 grams or more. Diameters, thicknesses, and weights vary considerably, however.

The letters "P.E.I" without the period after the "I", and "D M C" without punctuation, were both sunk as rather crude marks into the surface of one side of the planchet only. Both "P.E.I" (including the punctuation) and "D M C" were made with single punches rather than the letters being stamped individually. The "D M C" mark is slightly taller than the "P.E.I" one. The "P.E.I" mark itself exhibits different states (not, however, different varieties), from a closed to an open loop to the "P", and from an unbroken to a broken serif to the "I". The later states of the letters are likely because of the gradual deterioration of the punch, with due allowance for the effects of a stronger or weaker force applied to the punch. The deterioration of the punch suggests that a significant number of pieces were made over some period of time. If McCarthy's activities were sufficiently well known to warrant mention in the Colonial Assembly, he may have stamped several hundred pieces. That the "D M C / P.E.I" version came first seems to be confirmed by the superior condition of the letter "P" on this token in comparison to its state on pieces simply stamped "P.E.I". That begs the question as to whether the "D M C / P.E.I" token was a trial piece. One might also ask whether McCarthy used the "D M C" stamp by itself to mark his other products.

Fakes of the "P.E.I" Penny are known. Their planchets are too smooth and the style and positioning of the letters and punctuation are incorrect.



Fig. 5. Fake of P.E.I Penny. Courtesy National Currency Museum (Object ID 1964.0043.00382).

Conclusions

Some aspects of the Dennis McCarthy pennies remain a mystery, but some things are certain. Metcalf's attribution of the P.E.I pennies to McAuslane or McCausland, which Willey amplified, is plainly incorrect. The tokens with "P.E.I" only, and any with "D M C / P.E.I", are clearly the products of the tinsmith, Dennis McCarthy, although he may have used blanks prepared by someone else. It is long past time that the standard catalogues and other literature give up the McAuslane fiction.

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank Warren Baker for access to his correspondence files; David Bergeron and the National Currency Museum for images of pieces from the collection; Gary Carroll for sharing his knowledge of Charlottetown names and places; and Heritage Auctions, HA.com for the use of images.

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Archives, Museums, Libraries

The Glenbow Institute

130 9 Ave SW

Calgary, Alberta

Canada T2G 0P3

<https://www.glenbow.org>

(The Institute's Museum is closed for renovations until 2026.)

“With more than 250,000 artworks, objects, and belongings, the museum has the largest public art collection in Western Canada, along with extensive historical collections emphasizing settler and immigrant history, decorative arts, and military history. Additionally, Glenbow stewards a range of belongings representing diverse indigenous and world cultures” (from the Glenbow website). No mention is made anywhere on the website of the Glenbow's extensive medal collection. In 1966-67, J. Douglas Ferguson sold his personal collection of more than 3,000 medals to the Glenbow. It comprised 103 Indian Peace Medals (Louis XIV and Charles II to George V, including all eleven Treaty Medals); 79 historical medals (Oswego, Louisbourg, Quebec, Montreal, etc.); 363 Canadian military medals, some in gold (War of 1812, many Fenian Raid and North West Rebellion with numerous bars, Egypt, South Africa, Arctic, World Wars I and II military groups); more than 2500 medals in a variety of categories (Governors-General; Hudson's Bay and the Arctic; Royalty; Orders and Decorations; Athletic; Religious; Political, etc., etc.; and two Beaver Club Medals). In 1966-67 this was unquestionably the best public or private medal collection in Canada and it remains so today.



A page from Ferguson's personal copy of Joseph Leroux's 1888 edition of his Canadian Coin Cabinet/Le Médailleur du Canada. Ferguson's marginal notes indicate whether he owns the piece and frequently from whom he acquired it and how much he paid. From a private collection.

A Red River Bank

Warren Baker

The Nor -Wester was the first newspaper to be published in the North West of Canada, in the Red River Settlement.



First Page of The Nor'-Wester, May 14, 1860. From a private collection.

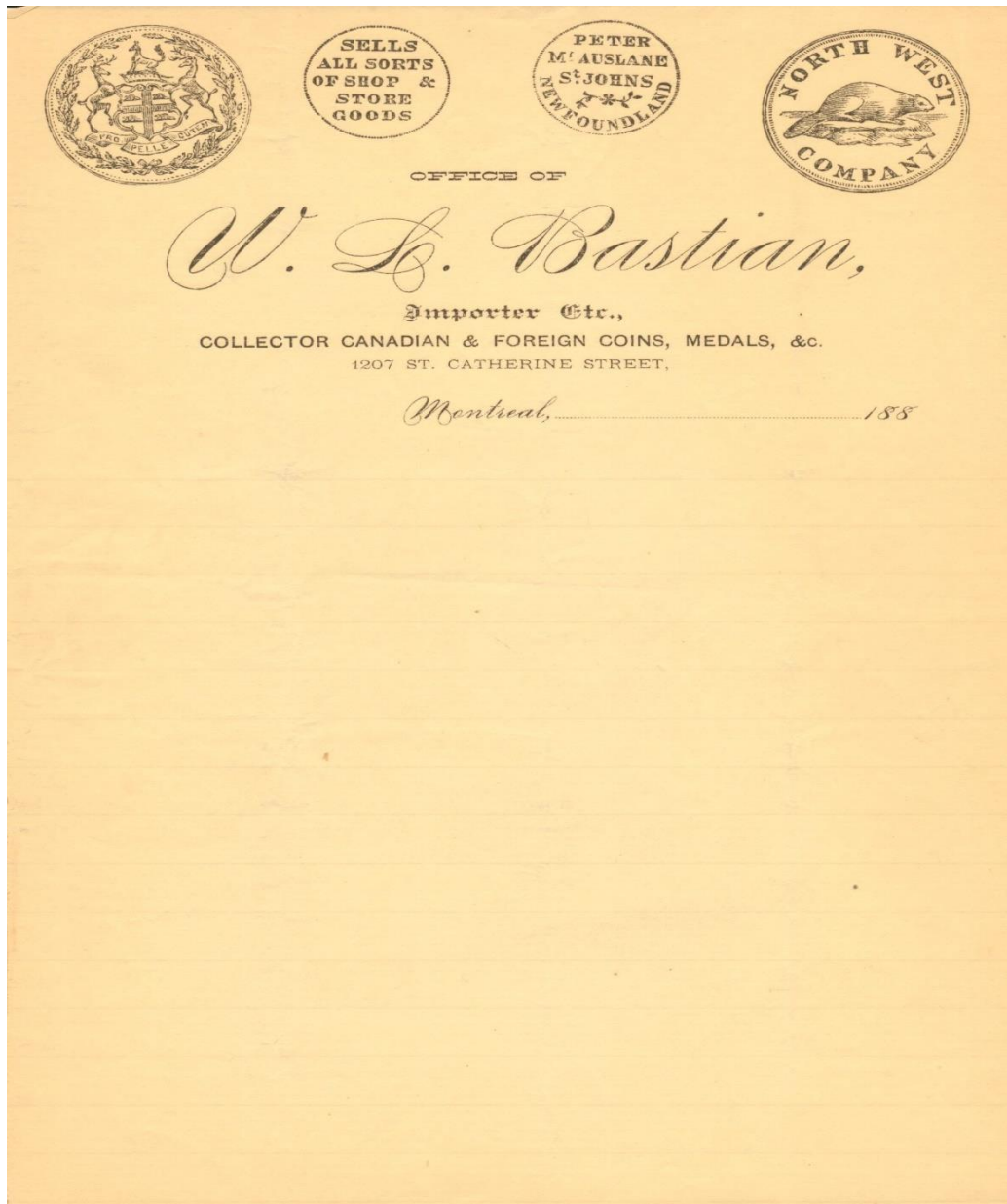
HBC sixty day sight Bills of Exchange had seen service as early as 1835, from the Red River Settlement to the Hudson's Bay Company, London. Thirty day HBC sight bills on London were also in use in 1850. Whether this ambitious scheme for a bank ever developed at this late date is unknown to me. Communication with the HBC Archives in Winnipeg, Manitoba, would be in order.

It is stated that among the gentlemen who will be present at the forthcoming council of the Hudson's Bay Company, a proposal to be submitted by Sir George Simpson for the establishment of a bank at St. Paul, with a branch at Red River, will form the subject of favourable discussion. The project is said to have been mooted before, and to have been maturely considered by the Governor and the chief traders in the country. If so, there is every probability of the scheme succeeding. With the present tightness of the money market in Minnesota, the project could not fail to be largely and immediately profitable as a commercial speculation, independent altogether of the ease and accommodation which it would afford to the merchants of Red River. Bank bills issued by the Hudson's Bay Company, redeemable only "at York Factory, Ruperts Land, in a Bill of Exchange, payable sixty days after sight, at the Hudson's Bay House, London," are, if we except a small quantity of English silver, the only money circulated in the Settlement. Beyond the country, these notes are unknown, and although they

the first issue was produced on December 29, 1859, by two Ontario journalists, William Buckingham and William Coldwell, under frigid conditions, "having to thaw out their paper which an excessively cold night had transformed into a block of cold ice..." The issue from which the below article has been taken, viz., May 14, 1860, coincides with the date that Sir George Simpson left Lachine for St. Paul, but being unable to complete the journey he returned to Lachine where he died on September 7.

are well worth their face, a New York shaver would hesitate to take them at ten cents a dozen. They are therefore useless for purposes of trade; and we are informed that the "solid gold" so highly prized by our neighbours below, and so liberally paid for the goods they send to the north, costs our people as much as five per cent. This rate of exchange would be done away with by the establishment of proper banking facilities, and we should have its place supplied by good mercantile paper which no commercial man who believes in fur-trading stability would hesitate to accept (*The Nor -Wester*, May 14, 1860: 2).

Documents, Artifacts, Photographs



W. L. Bastian Notepaper. From a private collection.

Obituaries from Yesteryear: W. L. Bastian, 1860-1895

Originally published in the *American Journal of Numismatics*, 30, 2 (October 1895): 61-62.

William Lander Bastian, second son of the late Thomas Bastian, was born in Montreal, March 4th, 1860, and died in that city on the 17th of July last. His business life was spent there, and by industry and uprightness he was remarkably successful. His parents were Cornish by birth, and he has among other characteristics much of the simplicity and directness of speech of that people. Numismatic tastes began to develop in him at the early age of fifteen. And such was his ardour and the energy displayed in his favourite pastime, that, during the twenty years he continued to collect, he had gathered together an extensive cabinet of coins and medals chiefly Canadian, which included some very notable pieces. He also paid much attention to Military medals, largely English. Mr. Bastian collected sometimes in a peculiar manner, purchasing and retaining large lots of coppers when offered at a reasonable price. In this way his duplicates numbered at the time of his death upwards of fifty thousand, mainly Canadian and foreign coppers. His bearing towards his confreres, especially beginners, was kindly and considerate, and, although he had only received a common school education, his knowledge of the subject was so extensive and his manner so simple and attractive, that his place of business became a regular collectors' rendezvous. He was for a long time an active member of the Numismatic and Antiquarian Society of Montreal, having served for a number of years as a member of its Council. His presence will indeed be missed at its meetings. After the death of his wife, which occurred about a year ago, he for a while took little if any interest in coins; but only a week or so before his final illness his old love returned and he purchased, besides a number of War medals, a "North West Company" beaver token, for which he paid \$65. The writer's last talk with him, only a week before his death, was about this token, which he showed with evident pleasure. The conclusion mutually arrived at was that these tokens were given to the Indians as checks in exchange for their furs, and that from the signs of wear around the hole which appears in every known specimen, they were carried on a string suspended around the neck. Shortly after his death his closed house was entered and the greater part of his collection, including many of the most valuable pieces, was stolen. It appears nothing was disturbed but his numismatic treasures. The thief must have been well up in numismatics, especially so far as the value of coins is concerned, for he carefully selected only the rarer pieces, leaving the commoner varieties and the hoard of duplicates untouched. What remained was sold in one lot, by public auction, for \$960, on the 5th of September, at his residence 89 Park Avenue.

R. W. McL[achlan]

Note: At the time of his death, W. L. Bastian advertised the sale of "glassware, lamps, oils, etc.," and was located at 2123 St. Catherine St., Montreal. The robbery of his collection was never solved and nothing is known of its contents beyond McLachlan's account. The auctioneer of the residue and the purchaser are not known either, but fifty thousand duplicate coppers tease the imagination.

Montreal Daily Herald, July 18, 1895: 5; *Lovell's Montreal Directory for 1895-96*. Montreal: John Lovell & Son, 1895: 450; *The Canadian and Antiquarian Numismatic Journal*, 1, 1 Third Series (January) 1897: 37-39.

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