

THE SHADOWY ISSUES OF THE BELLEVILLE MINT

Wayne Jacobs, 1995

In his book "Hard Times Tokens" (1900), Lyman H. Low gave about as complete a description as we have of the operations of the so called "Belleville Mint". Of it he says: "In this town (Belleville, N.J.) there was, as early as 1835, a manufactory for making and rolling sheet brass, conducted by a firm known as Stevens, Thomas & Fuller. Mr. Fuller died about 1940, but his partners continued the business. They added to it that of making the dies and striking minor coins, most entirely in copper, for Brazil, Liberia and Santo Domingo. For various American firms they made tokens and store cards, but the latter business was given up two or three years later. John Gibbs (whose store card is Low 150) was born in Birmingham, England, in 1809, and came to this country with his father, William. He was early at Belleville where he procured a building on the premises occupied by Stevens, Thomas & Fuller, and with John Gardner, began the manufacture of brass buttons, procuring his "sheet stock" from that firm. Their industry and skill brought them business and they are reputed to have cut numerous dies for store cards and tokens. They had a large forge or smithy in which the blacksmith work was done..."

"So many of the 'Hard Times' tokens came from Belleville that some further notes on the establishment there seem desirable, to complete the history of these pieces. Belleville was a quiet little town in Essex County, New Jersey, on the Passiac River, three miles from Newark. Here, about 1830, was situated the factory in which was carried on the business - extensive for the period - to which reference is made above. The sheet brass which was rolled there was chiefly designed for the manufacture of buttons, then an indispensable part of the attire of a man of fashion and used to adorn the gay uniforms of the militia. These buttons were often quite elaborate in design and were struck from dies, many of which showed considerable skill and taste in their workmanship. The demand for skilled labour in their production brought to this country, and finally to the village of Belleville, Mr. Stevens - the founder of the concern already named. If I am rightly informed, he had been trained in England, probably at Birmingham, in cutting dies and striking buttons, etc.; and with him came as his partner, a Mr. Uffington, who is said to have supplied much of the capital for the business. More or less closely allied with these gentlemen were Gibbs and others. In the course of time, the establishment came to be currently known to the residents of the neighbourhood as the 'Belleville Mint'. The demand for a metallic currency to take the place of the 'shinplasters' soon led to the striking of store cards, tokens and the like, and

of the imitation of cents; to protect their makers from the charge of counterfeiting and the danger of seizure, or from the facetious whim of coiners, these pieces were inscribed 'Not One Cent'. During the period of dearth of a legitimate minor coinage, such issues had a wide circulation and were generally accepted without objection. In addition to these pieces, the 'Belleville Mint' executed numerous orders for supplying minor coin for Brazil and other countries, as had been mentioned, including various tokens for circulation in Canada ... There was nothing in the United States laws at that time which prevented such a coinage, and even now, it is well known that private firms occasionally enter upon contracts to strike coins for foreign governments which have no mints of their own, and without objection. Some of the Belleville issues, however, if the account just quoted is to be accepted (Note: Low quotes much of the above from the 'Newark Sunday Call', June 2, 1895 - wlj), were ordered by irresponsible parties for their private ends, with the intention of exporting them, putting them in circulation, and receiving whatever profit might accrue from the enterprise, and this practice is said to have led to complaints which finally resulted in putting a stop to this business. The fashion of store cards, like that of wearing brass buttons on the coat or vest, passed away, and with its departure the Belleville concern ceased to do any further coining."

Although Low, himself, says that the report upon which his writing is based was "romantic" in nature, such was the tenor of the reporting of the times and we can probably assume that it is, nevertheless, based on interviews and research of company files and public records. In its salient points, the "Call" feature is probably correct. Accepting this, the "Belleville Mint" was, in effect, engaging in counterfeiting on contract!

The Numismatic Trial

But do we have any proof of this allegation or surmise? Do we even have good circumstantial evidence beyond the bald words of the "Call" as quoted by Low? If we do, something should turn up in the numismatic history of one or more of the countries mentioned during the period roughly spanning the 1830s. Let's look at each in sequence:

LIBERIA - In some ways, this country was initially the most unsatisfactory of all to research. The current Krause catalogue¹ lists the earliest copper coinage of Liberia as not beginning until the issue of copper 1- and 2-cent pieces in 1847, too late to be of interest to us. However, not included today as a Liberian coin but apparently relegated to the status of "token", is the 1-cent

American Colonization token of 1833, formerly included in the Yeoman catalogues of world coins as Liberia Y-1. Its description is as follows:

Obv: Freed slave emanating rays with Liberty Tree; sea and ship in distance. LIBERIA around above, 1833 in exergue.

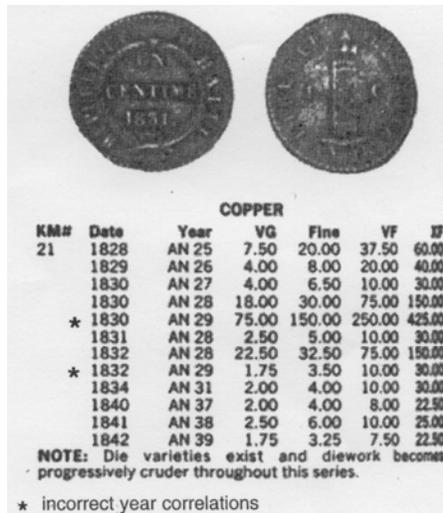
Rev: AMERICAN COLONIZATION SOCIETY. ONE CENT around FOUNDED/A.D./ 1816. Copper. In the past, the writer has seen quite a few of these coins -they aren't rare - but has very little information on them. It was assumed, probably correctly, that they were of Birmingham manufacture as the . ones he has seen were more or less of neat design and manufacture, virtually identical to the illustration in the Yeoman 3rd edition of his catalogue. ²

However, the chase now heats up: in checking a later edition (the 8th), of the Yeoman catalogue, we find a new illustration present for the Liberia Y-1 and an obvious die variety at that, Nor is the latter piece illustrated of quite as good workmanship as the former; there is slightly more sloppiness in the spacing of letters, some letters are slightly out of alignment and the whole appearance is one of slightly second-rate. Not only that, but unless the later photo was over-exposed, the latter coin is brassy in appearance.

So we have our first clue. There does, indeed, exist More than one variety of the Liberian coinage in the 1830s, with one noticeably worse in appearance than the other.

SANTO DOMINGO - This one did not at first make sense. Santo Domingo, the eastern part of the island of Hispaniola, was conquered by her western neighbour, Haiti, in 1822 and thereafter, ceased to exist. In 1844, she won her independence and, at that time, assumed the name of ~ Dominican Republic, by which she is still known. Therefore, Santo Domingo had no coinage in the 1830s.

But the “Call” article was emphatic that Santo Domingo received coinage from the Belleville Mint in the 1830s so we must take the next logical step: that a shipment or shipments of coins was made for what had been Santo Domingo, but was now part of the currency area of Haiti. Therefore, perhaps we should examine Haitian coinage of the 1830s for peculiarities. Therefore: (see below)



HAITI - ⁴ During the 1830s, Haiti did, indeed, have a copper coinage, pieces of 1- and time period of 1828 to 1842. In general, the description of the 1-centime (as an example) was:

Obv: REPUBLIQUE D'HAITI around UN / CENTIME / (date) within a wreath, star at top.

Rev: LIBERTE EGALITE around fasces, phrygian cap above, AN (year designation varies).

Copper.

Two-centimes. The same with appropriate differences for value & size.

Most interesting is that beneath the listing of each coin (KM #21, 22 respectively) is the notation: "Die varieties exist and die work becomes progressively cruder throughout the series."

Also, the one-centime coin listed stands out as unusual. Each of these coins carries a date on each side - our calendar on the obverse and the corresponding year on the reverse expressed as "AN such-and-such" computed from the date of independence in 1803. Since the actual date of independence was part way through 1803, AN 1 (which never appeared on a coin) could have appeared on coins dated in the Roman System 1803 or 1804. Noting this possible "two-dates within-one-year", we are yet struck with a copper centime piece that is dated 1830/AN 27 (correct: the first part of the Roman year), 1830/AN 28 (correct: later part of the same year), but also 1830/AN 29 (which is an impossibility; the Roman date would have had to have been 1831 or 1832). In the 2-centimes series, something similar occurs: we have recorded 1828/AN 26 (correct), 1829/AN 26 (correct) and 1830/AN 26 (incorrect). Note that both of these blunders were made in the same Roman year - 1830. Although tenuous, it would seem to indicate a mistake made, not in the Haitian mint where such a mistake would have been obvious, but rather in a foreign one, unfamiliar and uncaring of the necessary correspondence of the two dating systems.



COPPER						
KM#	Date	Year	VG	Fine	VF	XF
22	1828	AN 25	12.00	30.00	75.00	150.00
	1828	AN 26	10.00	30.00	75.00	150.00
	1829	AN 26	3.00	6.00	10.00	28.00
*	1830	AN 26	12.50	30.00	65.00	120.00
	1830	AN 27	3.00	6.00	10.00	25.00
	1831	AN 28	2.50	5.00	8.00	20.00
	1840	AN 37	2.50	5.00	8.00	20.00
	1840 backwards 4					
		AN 37	3.00	6.00	10.00	25.00
	1841	AN 38	2.50	5.00	8.00	20.00
	1842	AN 39	2.50	5.00	8.00	20.00

NOTE: Die varieties exist and became progressively cruder throughout this series.

* incorrect year correlations

In each of these cases, it would seem that a fair number were initially struck at the time since today they are merely scarce in the lower conditions, not common as the other dates might be.

Of course, the legitimate coins of these Haitian series were themselves of sufficient crudity that if there were counterfeits, such spurious pieces could easily hide themselves among the genuine as varieties. In fact, if we expand on the Krause comment of later dates tending to be worse than the earlier, it could be that the counterfeits of the early 1830s were in fact better than the coins they imitated! ⁵

BRAZIL - ⁶ This was the final country listed by the "Call" article and, in many ways, its coinage is the mother lode of things that weren't supposed to be but were.

The Brazilian coinage of 1823-33 must have been a nightmare to the users of the time; certainly its chaotic system was ripe for those ready to seize any monetary advantage whatsoever. During these years - the first years of the United Kingdom of Brazil - copper coins were struck in denominations of 10, 20, 37-1/2, 40 and 80 reis. In general appearance they were similar, differing mainly in size and denomination designation:

Obv: PETRUS I D.G. CONST. IMP. ET PERP. BRAS. DEF. around value in arabic numerals within a wreath. Date and mintmark below.

Rev: Crowned arms of Brazil, sprays with tie both sides, IN HOC VINCES around top.

Beginning in 1831/2, the obverse legend was for PETRUS II.

However, Brazil, striking these copper coins for six different states, was forced to coin them to no less than four different standards! They were as follows:

Mint & Mintmark	10-r	20-r	40-r	80-r	37 ^{1/2} -r	75-r	Standard
Rio de Janeiro (R)	x	x	x	x			1
Bahia (B)	x	x	x	x			1
Goiás (G)		x	x	x		x	2
Cuiabá (C)		x	x	x			2
Minas Gerais (M)					x		3
Sao Paulo (SP)				x			4

Standard 1: 20-reis weighs 7.17 grams, 40- and 80-reis proportional.

Standard 2: 20-reis weighs 3.59 grams, (i.e., half Standard 1) 75-reis weighs 14.34 grams.

Standard 3: 37 1/2-reis coin weighs same as 40-reis Standard 2 (or Standard 1 20-reis piece)

Standard 4: 80-reis weighs 19.13 grams.

If the reader finds these weights and values hard to follow, imagine the confusion of the contemporary Brazilian user. Coins tend to flow where they are the most highly valued and for the user at the time - unless unusually attentive to the weights and values or quick at mental arithmetic, it must have been a nightmare. Then, into this mess, appears (as quoted by Krause):⁷

LIGHTWEIGHT COINS. Many coppers are found as much as 15 per cent or more below the official weights, and even heavy specimens are occasionally observed. Most of the above coins were counterfeited as their face value exceeded the cost of metal and minting. Though usually crude and carelessly engraved, some counterfeits are of decent workmanship, and entirely undistinguishable from government issues. Brazilian collectors generally accept these contemporary counterfeits as collectable due to their historical value.

Some of the issues known to be counterfeits although “undistinguishable from government issues” are so classified as they are of years, mints or denominations - in part or combination - that were never officially struck. Included are: 20-reis 1831-R; 20-reis 1829-G; 40-reis 1823-C; 40-reis 1831R; 80-reis 1831-B; 80-reis 1826-G; 80-reis 1832-SP. In addition, are all 80 reis coins of this series with the fictitious "P" mintmark and most examples of the 40-reis 1828-R, 1829-R and 1830-R. This listing does, not, of course, include numerous examples of counterfeit coins of the regularly struck issues.⁸

In about 1835, Brazil was forced to countermark most previously issued coppers with a new value equal to halving the value on the Standard 1 coins; i.e., the Rio and Bahia 20-reis pieces of 1823-33 were countermarked "10", all other coins of the other mints and weights proportionately. Presumably, this action would have made counterfeiting a much less profitable enterprise.

Summing up the oddities and facts of the coinages of the above three countries, a strong case can be made that Belleville did, indeed, engage in the activities such as the "CA" alleged. Then, we have the latter section of the same quote as recorded by Low: "and this practice is said to have led to complaints which finally resulted in putting a stop to this business."⁹

This would be entirely logical. When known counterfeits appeared in any of these countries, we may be sure that the authorities would exert every effort to ascertain its source. First apprehended would be the actual utterers, then the importers and finally the paper chase would lead to the "mint". Even though, as Low points out, immune under U.S. law, we may be sure that the strongest possible protest would be lodged with the U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT or its equivalent through ambassadorial channels and, we may also be certain that, verbally or written, a "cease-and-desist" order would be placed on the offending "mint". This is purely logical progression; except for the veiled statement in the above quote, we have no concrete evidence that this took place - but it probably did.

THE CANADIAN CONNECTION

That the Belleville Mint struck tokens for Lower Canada is, of course, elementary. The Haxby-Willey catalogue ¹⁰ lists 33 issues of Bouquet Sous in all, ranging from the very common to unique. Eighteen obverses are paired with sixteen reverses, all of them the same in their general design: an obverse that reads AGRICULTURE & COMMERCE. BAS CANADA. around a bouquet and a reverse reading TOKEN / MONTREAL around a wreath containing UN / SOU. The differences lie in the details of the bouquets, the shape and spacing of the letters and such-like. The whole point of this particular discussion is to note that the Belleville Mint did a roaring trade in supplying tokens to Lower Canadian exchange houses/merchants, much in excess of Birmingham's total of six issues and the local, production of only two. When we include the pieces listed as "Miscellaneous" Bouquet Sous, we find three rare issues, probably struck for collectors only at a later date and the "Duseaman" piece is yet another Belleville issue.

During the 1830s, Lower Canada laboured under not a dearth of copper coin, but rather a surfeit of light pieces - even to light brass imitations of what was, already underweight tokens. The quality and weight of the tokens steadily decreased until we arrive at such numismatically interesting - but monetary junk - as the brass, imitations of the Bust & Harp halfpence (antedated 1820 - Breton #1012 and HW-112 or 113) and the brass copies of the 1812 Tiffin halfpence (Br-960, HW-121 through 122a). These pieces were apparently among the very last struck before banks refused to accept this "metallic trash" except by weight in 1835; the writer reaches this conclusion on the basis of R.W. McLachlan's¹¹ description of such a hoard of light coin still in the vaults of a Quebec bank decades later. McLachlan noted that two of the main varieties represented consisted of just these two Breton numbers, most of which showed little or no evidence of circulation.

When the Lower Canadian banks refused to accept this lightweight "trash" (their term) except by weight, it threw huge amount of the ordinary citizen's pocket change into a category of being devalued by a half or more. Since there was scarcely any copper coins or tokens of full weight in circulation, it would seem that most tokens received by the banks would be thus discounted. Then, too, in examining the business practices of the day, it seems hardly credible that the profit motivated businessmen of the time would overlook an opportunity to receive in the better tokens by weight and pay them out at face - after all, an immediate return on capital of 20% or more would thus be realized.

Whether or not this happened, the direct effect was that a monopoly in copper coin was created for the Bank of Montreal when that institution stepped into the breach - self-caused in part - and had struck an issue of better halfpence that the banks would accept. The issue, of good weight and Birmingham workmanship, was probably released in 1835 and records show that 72,000 pieces were struck (Br-713); almost immediately, the Bank followed with a second and equal issue (Br-714), this time with BANK OF MONTREAL impressed on them.

These tokens were extremely good business. Naturally, it did not cost the Bank a halfpence to strike a halfpence; best guess is that they were able to have the tokens struck and landed in Montreal at a price of about 20-25% off which is an immediate return on investment of 25 - 33 1/3%.¹²

The Bank of Montreal tokens received the sincerest form of flattery they were imitated. The imitations consisted of the whole series now known as the Bouquet Sous, but these latter were notable in being (with few exceptions) entirely in French. The Bank tokens reading TRADE & AGRICULTURE became AGRICULTURE & COMMERCE (which is bilingual); LOWER CANADA became BAS CANADA, BANK TOKEN became TOKEN and BANK OF MONTREAL became MONTREAL.

Starting in about early 1836, these Bouquet Sous started to be imported into the Montreal area - initially (so we're told) by Montreal exchange house broker Dexter Chapin. The first Bouquet Sous were of good weight and popular enough that importers soon found that they could shave the weight and still have them pass current. Progressively, the quality of the Bouquet Sons went down until it reached its nadir with the issues of Jean-Marie Arnault's issue of, them (Br-674) which were routinely struck over withdrawn underweight tokens; one #684, at least, is struck over the notorious brass Bust & Harp (Br-1012). These issues were probably struck in late 1836 or early 1837 - or at least the dies engraved at that time. Lower Canadians were back to metallic trash again.

Contemporarily with the Lower Canadian shenanigans of the 1830s were a whole series of counterfeits centered on the Nova Scotia halfpennies and pennies of 1832. We are told in catalogues that these were among the "products of 'clandestine mints' of Lower Canada in the 1830s ... and shipped to Nova Scotia."¹³ The writer begs to differ - strongly!

In the first place, the Nova Scotia "so-called counterfeits" were not the output of "mints", but almost certainly one establishment - if we except the cast brass pieces which were probably the slow production of private individuals. Courteau ("Coins & Tokens of Nova Scotia", 1910) listed seven 1832 halfpenny "so-called counterfeits" - six in copper and one in brass identical to one of the copper pieces; most interesting of all is that only two obverses were used on all seven and, although there were five reverses employed, one forms a die-link between the two obverses (Courteau 277 and 278 have the same reverse for each of the obverses). Therefore, this whole series came from the same shop.

The pennies are not quite so cooperative. Courteau lists three counterfeits: two with separate obverses and reverses in copper and one brass piece identical to one of the fake copper pennies. He should have also included in this list his #289 and 289a since they are identical except one is in copper, one in brass (and common enough to show that it was no error and thus no product of Birmingham). This last fact clinches the category for the writer, but Courteau seems to have had doubts as the 1832 penny (the so-called "beavertail" variety) when in copper is of quite decent workmanship and weight.¹⁴ It could, therefore, be considered as the very first "so-called counterfeit" of this series - but there is no proof of this whatsoever. Most striking of all is the great similarity in style among all these pieces, halfpennies or pennies. With a high degree of probability, all these "tokens" came from the same "mint".

Secondly, it doesn't seem likely that there was any "mint" in Lower Canada, clandestine or otherwise, that was capable of turning out these pieces. Arnault turned out distinctly second-class products before about mid-1837.¹⁵

Also, his Bouquets are typically overstruck on withdrawn tokens (the 674 possibly in all cases) so it seems to indicate that he was without machinery to create blanks for striking at this time; even his better products of 1837 such as the Molsons and Rebellion Sou are of sufficiently varying weights, diameters and edges as to raise suspicions that perhaps these last were struck on commercial blanks prepared for him. The other possible "Montreal mint", Maysenholder & Bohle, has its whole existence hinged on a report by McLachlan who interviewed a former worker of that firm; the worker insisted that he had seen the Roy tokens of 1837 struck there.¹⁶ Whether this is true or not, the Roy token is of fairly poor workmanship, both in engraving and striking. Also,

its second, light, issue caused it to be withdrawn when the minter was unable to produce blanks of the proper weight - another indication of an establishment depending on outside supply of flans.

One other point in this section should be made that has been apparently overlooked thus far: the regular Nova Scotia copper tokens of 1832 were all with engrailed edges, a device that was first used by Boulton to render more difficult counterfeiting by casting. However, engrailed edges are habitually produced by a rimming machine, the design on the plain-edge blank being rolled on under pressure and the prepared blank then coined. The Nova Scotia "so-called counterfeits" also have engrailed edges even though habitual overlap in the edge design would indicate a rimming machine not quite up to the quality of Birmingham. Nevertheless, the use of such a machine would indicate a fairly well equipped mint, a mint capable of producing the finished coin from scratch. We have no evidence - even of the most tenuous kind - of such an enterprise in Canada.

Thirdly, the "so-called counterfeits" were obviously the work of a shop dealing in quantity. Courteau gives a rarity scale of the halfpennies as follows: 277 - R7; 278 -R1; 279 - R5; 280 - R8; 281 - R5; 282 - R3; 283 - R6. Of the counterfeit pennies, he gives: 286 - R2; 287 - R2; 288 - R5; 289 - R4; 289a - R5. Using these scales, how many were struck? Any guess must be arbitrary, but if we are conservative, we can assume that an R1 had a mintage of over (perhaps much over) 50,000 so #278 is common indeed; and R2 is 25,000 to 50,000 and pennies 286 and 287 fall into this category; R3 may mean 15,000 to 25,000 and here we have halfpenny 282; R4 is 7500 to 15,000 (Penny 289); R5 is 5000 to 7500 (halfpennies 279, 281, pennies 288, 289a); R6 is 3000 to 5000 (halfpenny 283); R7 is 1000 to 3000 (halfpenny 277); R8 and up are never struck in large quantities - probably under 1000 - but only the famous 1382 counterfeit halfpence reaches this degree of rarity, an R8. Apparently, the mistake in die punching was discovered quickly and the date overstruck to read 1832.

If anything, the above list is too conservative; with some research the reader can determine that regular tokens, their exact original mintage figures known, tend to have a rarity scale somewhat above these figures even though only as many - or even more - were originally struck. From the above "conservative" list, it is apparent that these "so-called counterfeits" were produced by the thousands and tens of thousands - perhaps away into six figures in total. Today, they are some of the more common colonial tokens available. Any Lower Canadian "mint" (i.e., Montreal) capable of this production would have been humming day and night and it would have been impossible for contemporaries - or us - to be unaware of its existence or the details surrounding it.

Fourthly, the assumption that these counterfeits were for "export" to Nova Scotia simply doesn't hold water. By 1833, Nova Scotia would have received from her legitimate Birmingham suppliers a total of 1,318,636 halfpennies and 417,776 pennies of full weight and good design since 1823,

certainly sufficient for her needs (and, in fact, it was eight years before the provincial government deemed it necessary to import more). Had, at any time during the years 1833 - inclusive, Nova Scotia experienced a shortage of copper change, new supplies were but a few weeks away as we know from extant correspondence. Then, too, the government would not have let slip an opportunity to add to the provincial coffers; government recaps of the 1823/4 copper coinages indicate that they made a total profit of about 10% in having full weight tokens struck. This would have been done frequently and in quantity save for the inability of the Nova Scotian economy to absorb new issues. Quite simply, Nova Scotia had no need for these counterfeits and their obvious lightness would have permitted them to circulate only with difficulty.¹⁷

Fifthly, it has been assumed that Lower Canadians were responsible for striking this coinage simply because they were so common there. This is easily explained and quite obvious: in comparison to the junk circulating in Lower Canada, these counterfeits were of excellent quality, holding their own even with the better Bouquet Sous.¹⁸ In fact, their larger diameter may have even made them appear somewhat better. They were lightweight only in comparison with the real Nova Scotia tokens which they copied.

Sixth, they were produced at a time when they were compatible with the Lower Canadian economy, not that of Nova Scotia. Had it been the latter, counterfeits of the 1840 and 1843 Nova Scotia pennies and halfpennies would have been as equally common as those of 1832 - but they are not. Counterfeits of the later series are rare and probably turned out only a few at a time, certainly not as an on-going business. How were they compatible with the Lower Canadian economy? - Throughout most of the 1830s, as noted, they were of as good or better weight than the other tokens in circulation there. But in 1837, Lower Canada finally received an abundant, good coinage: the "Habitant" tokens dated 1837 with a total issue of 960,000 halfpennies and 480,000 pennies, followed rather quickly by the Bank of "Montreal tokens of 1842 and 1844 - a further 240,000 pennies and 1,920,000 halfpennies in all. Compared to these tokens, the Nova Scotia counterfeits were light and crude; they continued to pass to some extent, but there was little more call - or profit - for their production. It is the writer's contention, therefore, that the Nova Scotia "so called counterfeits" were produced for Lower Canada and not by her. Any that wound up in Nova Scotia itself would merely be due to osmosis of trade.

Who struck them? As may be guessed by now, the writer has been building a case all along that the Belleville Mint did. Consider these facts: (1) Belleville had more or less a stranglehold on the production of Bouquet Sous for Lower Canada, (2) the styles of the two series are similar not on a par with the London Mint or even the better Birmingham firms - but adequate for the purpose, (3) it seems highly probable that the Belleville Mint was at this time striking out-and-out counterfeits

for regular government coins in foreign countries, (4) Belleville was a busy concern, quite capable of turning out virtually any order with fair quality and dispatch, (5) Belleville was only a day or so away from Montreal, not an Atlantic crossing and (6) discounting a certain question of ethics, Belleville was doing nothing illegal since these copies were (i), for a foreign country and thus not prohibited by U.S. law, (ii) copies of a token, not a regular government issue, no matter who had the originals struck and (iii) they were for shipment to a third country - Lower Canada and not even for the colony of origin.

Presumably their heyday was from just after the original Nova Scotia issue of 1832 until at least the appearance of the Bouquet Sous in circa 1836 - perhaps later. We will probably never know who the importers were; exchange house owners would have been prime suspects, but the business could have been open to merchants or even just anyone with the money to pay for the work. Even if business records surface today, they will no doubt show the import of "tokens" which could as easily be Bouquet Sous as counterfeit Nova Scotia pieces.

Admittedly, much of the above is circumstantial evidence. It could not be otherwise since the whole enterprise would of necessity have operated in secrecy at the time. However, the hard facts we possess support the above scenario and not much else. Perhaps some day records will turn up (but doubtfully) so that all uncertainty will be allayed, but until then, the writer believes and states that this is probably the way it was. [CNA]

Footnotes

1. "1995' Standard Catalogue of World 'Coins. 22nd Ed.", Krause, Mishler & Bruce, pp 1378-9
2. "A Catalogue of Modern World Coins. 3rd Ed." R. Yeoman, 1959 pp 297
3. "A Catalogue of Modern World Coins. 8th Ed." R. Yeoman, 1968 pp 293
4. Krause et al., *ibid.* Haiti, pp 969
5. Krause et al., *ibid.* Haiti, pp 969
6. Krause et al., *ibid.* Brazil, pp 245-7
7. Krause et al., *ibid.*, Brazil, pp 246
8. Generally speaking, counterfeits are of genuine coins already struck and released so that the spurious issue tends to lag in date by a year or more. In this case, it seems probable that the counterfeits were actually imported from the early 1830s until all coppers were called in and countermarked in 1835.
9. "Hard Times Tokens," Lyman Low, 1900.

10. "Coins of Canada, 13th Ed." Haxby, J. & Willey, R. 1995 pp 191-7

11. "A Hoard of Canadian Coppers," R.W. McLachlan, 1889 in "Canadian Antiquarian." McLachlan notes that of five thousand coppers in the hoard, nearly three thousand were copies of the Tiffin halfpenny type about 800 of the brass Bust & Harp counterfeits.

12. Noted from "The Copper Currency of the Canadian Banks 1837-57" by R.W. McLachlan in 1903 Royal Society of Canada Trans.: After three requests, the Quebec Bank was finally permitted to import £2000 worth of copper pennies and halfpennies in 1852 (Br-528, 529). In September, 1852, the cashier advised the government that these had been received but they amounted to only £2000 face value whereas the Bank had asked for, in effect, the amount that £2000 would buy.

Therefore, he requested that the shortfall of £500 be permitted import - along with another £1000. The request was denied, but it shows us that coppers of good weight cost about 80% face, thus a return on investment of 25%.

13. Haxby-Willey, *ibid.* pp 171

14. Weights of actual specimens in VF, EF: 17.7 grains for genuine; 13.1 for the counterfeit.

15. Despite previous writings and pending full confirmation, the writer believes that all the Arnault tokens are fully engraved with no use of letter punches. McLachlan's note of Arnault having received punches for his later tokens may be based on observation/supposition or on a misreading of a record in which "letter punch" was confused with a simple punch for perforating blanks from sheet copper or brass. Even so, this would still deny him means of edge reeding or engraving.

16. Passing notation was made by R.W. McLachlan in "Coins Struck in Canada Previous to 1840," 1892.

17. Actual weights of specimens in the upper conditions average 9.4 grams for the genuine specimens, 7.5 grams for a Courteau #283.

18. Counterfeit Nova Scotia halfpennies can weigh up to 112 grains, although usually they are around 100-105. This weight would have contrasted very favourably with the tokens circulating in Lower Canada before the issue of the Bank of Montreal tokens circa 1836. In general circulation were:

Sloop Tokens, 1823 (Br-730a)	94 grains
Commercial Change (Br-731)	83 grains
Brocks (Br-723 to 725)	76 grains
Tiffin 1/2d brass cft (Br-960b)	74-88 grains
Waterloo Harps (Br-981)	70-84 grains
Eagle 1/2d, 1814, 15 (Br-994)	90-98 grains
Ships, Col. & Comm. (Br-997)	77-88 grains, usually worn
Bust/Harp 1/2d, 1820. Brass cft	72-91 grains (Br-1012)
Blacksmiths (the best weighed:)	85 grains

Even after the issue of the Bank of Montreal tokens ca 1836 (weighing 123 - 137 grains, 128 grain average), the immediate inundation of Bouquet Sous brought the average weight of coin in

circulation closer to their weights again: usually 98-110 grains with the average around 104. The Arnault pieces (Br-674) were the poorest, being dependent on the weights of the withdrawn coin on which they were struck; this usually meant 74-93 grains in the majority of instances.

Thus, even after the release of the Bank of Montreal tokens in 1836, the Nova Scotia counterfeits would have continued on a par with the best of the Bouquet Sons in weight and probably have, appeared somewhat better inasmuch as they were some 1 1/2 mm larger in diameter.

NOTES TO PLATES OF NOVA SCOTIA COUNTERFEIT 1d & 1/2d DIES

As noted by Courteau in 1910, only two obverse dies were used in striking all of the recognized counterfeit halfpennies of Nova Scotia. These two dies are listed on Plate III as the two centre illustrations noted by 277-281-282-283 and the one noted 278-280 (#279 is the same as #278 except being in brass instead of copper).

Obverse A is, of course, the well-known "Dirty-Nose" variety and for all the different numbers attached to it, is somewhat scarcer than Obverse B. The "Dirty-Nose" is a die error made obviously at the time when it was being engraved (or letter-punched) and before it was hardened for use. Examination seems to show that something (possibly a letter-punch handle) was dropped on the softened steel causing this crescent-shaped blemish; it seems also apparent that efforts were made to smooth out the mark with only indifferent success.

Plate IV shows the five reverse dies that were paired with the two obverses in striking all of the counterfeits. The first one (#277-278) is, in fact, the die-link tying together Obverses A and B. Reverse 280 is the "1382 Variety" and, in this form, is only found with Obverse B; almost immediately, Reverse 280 was removed and the offending date figures overpunched to accuracy (which formed Reverse 281); this reverse die, according to Courteau, was then extensively re-touched to make Reverse Die 282. Therefore, the five Reverse dies are really only three with the one die making two transformations.

On Plate V, Courteau shows the (*line missing &/or illegible*) #286 and 287. He should have probably also included #289. Missing #288 is merely #287 struck in brass instead of copper. But, copper #289 also exists as Courteau's #289a struck in brass (with a Rarity of 5, is relatively common - much too common to be a mint error and nothing that would have come from the legitimate Birmingham mint). The 289/289a is the "Beavertail" variety and almost certainly a counterfeit. Also, the reverse die of this piece displays a peculiarity shared with Reverse 286: the word PENNY is written as PENNV.

Courteau must have had the same suspi (*line missing*) these counterfeit tokens was most likely ordered by Retail Merchants, probably of Montreal, and the dies made in imitation of the regular ones." It should be strongly noted: Courteau believed that these pieces were struck for use in Montreal and no where does he intimate that they might have been for Nova Scotia circulation.

Others, too, have had their suspicions: Neil Carmichael ("Canada, Newfoundland and Maritime Coin Catalogue," 1957, pp 37): "Around 1835 many counterfeits of the 1832 Nova Scotia coins appeared in Montreal."



277-281-282-283



278-280

Plate III

LeRoux Plate I,
Obverses Page 496



277-278



280

Plate IV

LeRoux Plate II,
Reverses Page 497



281



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Plate V

LeRoux Plate VI, Reverses, Page 501



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Plate VI

LeRoux Plate VII,
Reverses Page 502

286



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