

EDWARD HULSEMAN

Hard Times Token Engraver

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Since writing my paper on the "Rhode Island Tokens" which was published in the July-September and October-December 1964, issues of the TAMS JOURNAL, I have continued my research on this subject and now find that Edward Hulseman could very well have been the leading token die -sinker of the 1833 to 1844 Hard Times period.

As I have been unable to locate any additional information on Edward Hulseman, I have had to base my research on the statement by Mr. Bushnell; "That the dies of the Robinson, Jones & Co and the R & W Robinson cards were cut by Edward Hulseman." In addition there is the information by Mr. Lyman H. Low that Hulseman was listed as a card engraver in the New York directories from 1837 to 1841.

That Hulseman had a real talent for engraving a die is clearly shown by a study of his Hard Times satirical classics. His eye appealing arrangement of subject matter and his expert use of letter, numeral and ornamental punches all indicate an ability to turn out serious medallic works of merit. Unfortunately there does not appear to be any record of his work. There is no question that the Hulseman designs were popular at that time. As recent proof of this point, it is interesting to note that out of the 12 dies selected by Don Taxay to illustrate Jacksonian or "Hard Times" tokens for "Counterfeit Mis-Struck and Unofficial U.S. Coins," 10 were engraved by Hulseman!

While there is always a certain element of risk in attributing the die work of medals, tokens and buttons struck from unsigned dies. I'm rather certain that Hulseman cut the majority of the button dies illustrated in "Patriotic Civil War Tokens" by George and Melvin Fuld; Dies 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492 and 493A. These old Robinson button dies, in combination with die 481 (Obv., arms of R.I. dated 1844), were used to strike a series known as the "Rhode Island Tokens."

The following entry which appears in the March, 1833, "American Turf Register & Sporting Magazine" provides a very valuable clue as to the period in which these Sporting button dies were cut:

"Sporting Buttons - The editor (J. L. Skinner, Baltimore) has been complimented with a set of beautiful sporting buttons, manufactured by Robinson, Jones & Co., of Attleborough, Mass. The stag, fox, the rabbit, the greyhound, pheasant, foxhunting, shooting, &c. are beautifully delineated on the buttons."

The dies for Low 51 were cut by Edward Hulseman in the fall of 1833. There is the distinct probability that the decision to strike a caricature of Gen. Jackson with the motto - "I Take The Responsibility" on copper planchets of large size was intended to represent a subtle satire on Jackson's hard-money ideas, rather than to supply a substitute for the U.S. cent.

This ties in with my belief that the firm of Robinson's, Jones & Co., formed in 1831, had employed Edward Hulseman as a die-sinker and that he remained with this firm until 1836 when they were reorganized under the name of R. & W. Robinson.

It would be interesting to know where Bushnell received the information that Hulseman cut the dies for the Robinson cards and why he listed the cards under New York in his work published in 1858. While this error in location naturally raises some question in respect to the accuracy of his statement regarding Hulseman, a study of the Hard Times series would lead one to believe that he was correct in this particular case, with one minor exception. I believe that the reverse die of the 1836 R. & W. Robinson card was cut by a different die-sinker.

In the following account, I will attempt to show how a good many questions regarding the Hard Time series are cleared up when one assumes:

1st. That Hulseman was located in Attleboro, Mass., from 1833 to 1836 and cut all the engraved dies used in that city to strike Hard Times tokens.

2nd. That Low 51 (Dies cut by Hulseman in 1833) triggered the production of large cent size tokens as a circulating medium.

3rd. That the political token dies dated 1837 and 1837-184 1, which were cut by Hulseman while located in Attleboro, -were first struck for the 1836 presidential campaign.

4th. That the firm of J. M. L. & W. H. Scoville struck the majority of their Hard Times tokens during the years 1836 and 1837. Also, that Low 68 dated 1837-1841 was first struck for the 1836 campaign.

5th. That the majority of the Hard Times tokens were struck in locations which were well known button manufacturing centers of that period: Attleboro, Mass.; Waterbury, Conn. and Belleville, New Jersey.

6th. That government action taken In 1837 to suppress the further issuance of large cent size tokens struck in copper was effective in halting this particular operation in these three locations by the end of 1838.

As the above six assumptions are based on a rather limited knowledge of the die-sinking and minting processes used during the Hard Times period, it is very likely that new information may alter or change the points somewhat. However, it does appear from a check of the background information supplied by Lyman H. Low and that indicated by Alfred Z. Reed in his very informative and well illustrated article on "Hard Times Tokens of Large Cent size" which appeared in the January and April, 1939, issues of "The Coin Collector's Journal" that the above general conclusions are correct.

One of the fascinating questions raised by this study is whether Lyman H. Low would have drawn different conclusions on the Attleboro operation if he had known at the time he published his Hard Times Token listing that the correct location of Robinson's, Jones & Co. and its successor R. & W. Robinson was Attleborough, Mass. The 1833 date of the Robinson's, Jones & Co token which predates that of H. M. & E. I. Richards would suggest that Hulseman was in the employ of that concern rather than the Richards.

During the late 1820's and early 1830's the production of buttons with patterns or inscriptions resulted in the quality of the work as being a leading factor in the success or failure of any concern in this highly competitive field. At first, in order to compete, the different button co.'s had the die cutting performed by the few experts available in New York and Philadelphia. Charles Cushing Wright, Richard Trested and Robert Lovett are a few known to have cut button dies.

The delays and inconveniences caused by the sending out of the die work next led the button makers to import skilled die-sinkers from abroad. Around 1835 the Scovills had one die-sinker in their employ who was acquired

from England in 1829. Robinson's, Jones & Co. had at least two die-sinkers working for them at this time. Of the two, it is evident that Hulseman was the most proficient in executing the engravings. A comparison of his die work with that of the Scovill engraver clearly shows why the Robinson's Jones & Co. was awarded a medal by the American Institute in the fall of 1833 for the best "Military, Naval, Sporting and Plain Flat buttons."

In 1833 Hervey Manning Richards, at the age of 21, and his cousin Edmund Ira Richards, who was just 18, formed the firm of H. M. & E. I. Richards for the purpose of manufacturing jewelry. As H. M. Richards had already proved himself as a successful salesman of jewelry, there would seem to be no question that he continued to handle this end of the business, and it is very likely that in his travels he was exposed to the political reaction to Jackson's war on the Bank of the United States.

While this is mere conjecture, it would seem possible that he was given the idea of striking a political token at one of his stops in Boston. In any event, "they "bought copper cents from a firm in Taunton, which also sold to the government, and stamping them with a caricature of Gen. Jackson, and the motto-I take the responsibility, -put them on the market.' These were at once in great demand, and purchasers, finding they could be passed as money, proceeded to pass them; but Government soon vetoed the enterprise." The above intriguing quote is found in "A Sketch of The History of Attleborough" by John Daggett which was published in 1894.

From the above, which obviously quotes an earlier source, we have a rather important clue as to which Hard Times token (Low 51) triggered the production of large cent size tokens as a circulating medium. The reference to the firm (Crocker Bros. & Co.? -Adams 133 & 134) in Taunton as supplying the copper planchets also suggests the interesting possibility that the half-cent tokens (Low 49) were struck on half-cent planchets which were originally intended to be sent to the Philadelphia Mint in 1836. Only proofs were struck in that year.

My only question with the Daggett account, as well as with the Lyman H. Low reference, concerns the implied impression that the Richards' struck all the Hard Times tokens that were produced in Attleborough, Mass. It would seem more logical to assume that the Richards', not having a skilled diesinker in their employ or having suitable equipment to strike the tokens, would naturally turn over the task of producing the Low 51 tokens to the button firm of Robinson's Jones & Co.

The early strikes of Low 51 as well as Low 74, 75, 76 and 78 all unmistakably reveal the fact that they were produced by a firm well versed in this department. While some of the later issues indicate the possibility that they were struck by some other party, the same symptoms could be attributed to a stepped up production of cent tokens. One of the major reasons why it is so difficult to prove this one way or the other is illustrated by a study of the tokens struck in Attleborough which reveals that there had to be a close working relationship between the two firms. Just as a minor illustration, I might mention the interesting fact that Williard Robinson married a Richards.

The very detailed information supplied by John Daggett on the Robinson's and Richards' would seem to shed some doubts on the conclusions I drew in my previous paper on the "Rhode Island Tokens." It now appears that the Rhode Island Civil War tokens were struck by D. Evans & Co. This firm succeeded the Robinson's in the making of metal buttons in about 1848. From this time up to the Civil War they manufactured both plain and

fancy army and navy buttons, all kinds of military and livery gilt and silver-plated buttons. During the war, the large government contracts made it a very profitable business.

This would offer a very logical explanation for the appearance of Patriotic Civil War the 493 (CW dog tag) struck in combination with Fuld Patriotic die 481, and would leave very little doubt that this concern was responsible for the later inter-muling of dies in order to supply the Providence, R.I. collectors with a rather unusual series of Civil War tokens. The business was conducted at Robinson now a part of Attleborough Falls.

Low, as a result of the Bushnell statement, considered it fair to assume that all the tokens of the Hard Times period signed with the initial H could be attributed to Hulseman. The three following dies are found signed with the Initial H:

No. 1. The copy of the American Institute die. This obverse die is found on Low 75, 76, 103, 104 and 105.

No. 2. Military bust of Jackson In treasure chest, holding a sword in right hand and money bag in left. This was used in the striking of Low 51, 52, 171 and “. Low 53 is a fair copy made by some other engraver and is not signed.

No. 3. Lafayette, standing, with hat and cane in right hand. Copied from an engraving after Ary Scheffer's celebrated painting. Legend: LAFAYETTE, A FRIEND TO AMERICA & FREEDOM/ Died May 20, 1834. This die was used in the striking of Merchants' tokens; Low 79, 83, 86, 94, 100 and 101.

From a study of the information on hand, it would appear certain that the above three dies were cut In the late 1833 to middle 1834 period. Low was rather uncertain as to the dating of Low 51 as he lists it under 1837 in his second revised edition of “Hard Times Tokens” published in 1899. Later, in the 1906 supplement, he refers to a Brigham's token dated 1833 struck over Low 51 as being acceptable evidence that it was not struck later than 1833. While I disagree with this type of proof as to the dating, as the overstrike could have occurred at a much later period which could only be determined by the length of time that the Brigham's token dies were preserved in workable order, It would appear that he was correct in this case as all the evidence points to the dies as being engraved In the later part of 1833.

While it is necessary to have an understanding of the background of the other two dies signed with H to have a clear picture of the Attleboro operation, it is my Intention to first cover the political tokens. The other two dies will be covered under the merchant token section.

A check of the political tokens struck from dies engraved by Hulseman reveals the likelihood that only two types were struck in copper and brass for general circulation. The first is “Jackson in Safe” with the donkey reverse. The second is the “Running Boar.” As the obverse of the first type is signed with the letter H and the second is not, it would seem logical to assume that as a result of the political and satirical nature of the tokens it was found advisable to discontinue signing dies after the issue of the first type.

The dies for Low 51 were evidently cut shortly after President Andrew Jackson revealed his intention to remove the public deposits from the Bank of the United States. His “Removal of the Public Deposits” message was read to the cabinet on September 18, 1833. This famous paper contained the following statement: “Its responsibility (the measure of removal) has been assumed, after the most mature deliberation and reflection, as necessary to

preserve the morals of the people, the freedom of the press, and the purity of the elective franchise.” This allusion to the people and the press as being captives was highly resented by those favoring the cause of the Bank.

As a consequence of this message, he faced the threatened resignation of McLane and Cass. From a friend of the Secretary of War, Frank Blair learned that Cass would remain if a paragraph in the President’s message would exempt him from responsibility. Jackson, amused at the suggestion that Cass might be held responsible, said, “I am very willing to let the public know that I take the whole responsibility.” An amended message to this effect was then sent to the Washington Globe for publication.

It was probably from this source that the term “I TAKE THE RESPONSIBILITY” which appears on the obverse of the token was suggested to individuals interested in the well being of the Boston branch of the Bank of the United States. They evidently were also influential members of the old political party which controlled Boston at that time. This party was putting on the new title of “Whig” under which it subsequently fought. Not even the L. L. D. conferred upon the President at Harvard could reconcile this group with the acts of this administration.

Lyman H. Low in his notes regarding Low 51 lists three stages of die wear. While he indicates that the die was retouched in the second condition, which is possible, it would appear that the three stages of the wear are in logical order. His third condition (Every space of the safe filled with lines) being the first stage. His second the second stage of die wear and his first being the last stage.

This natural order of die wear is indicated by a study of the progress of the die crack which starts from about the middle of the E in RESPONSIBILITY and runs through the S, then through the H, then along the right edge of the safe and ends after passing through the I. The V. F. specimen in my collection which shows this advanced stage of the die crack shows a great deal of evidence of having been struck from rusted dies. In contrast a V. F. specimen of the first stage of die wear shows none of this evidence.

In addition the first stage pieces also appear to be sharper strikes and show less “creep” of the metal toward the edge which affects the beads of the border and the serifs of the legend. While this effect can vary in relation to the method of striking and the metal composition of the flans, the above observation appears to hold fairly true in the case of Low 51. Thus it would appear that Low 52 struck in brass was an early strike, while some of the third stage pieces were struck at about the same time or later than Low 44, which was struck with this same Jackson in treasure chest die.

Low 44 represents a mule struck from the obverse the of Low 51 and the Reverse the of Low 63 and 64. From a study of the Jackson die on the pieces in my collection it would appear that they were struck in the late second and third stage of die wear. An AU specimen shows the die crack in almost the same advanced stage as the Low 51 described above. While it shows some evidence of having been struck from rusted dies, the evidence is so slight that it is rather hard to reach any final conclusion on this point.

In 1932, Dr. George P. French, of Rochester, N.Y. reported that he had a beautiful uncirculated specimen of Low 44 struck in brass. Possibly a study of this piece would clear up the question as to when this political type was struck. It is interesting to note that Bushnell fails to list this type under political tokens; although this can not be taken as proof that it was not struck during the Hard Times period, as his listing is far from complete. Possibly

this type was struck after the issuance of the “Specie Circular” as an additional illustration of the effect of the Jackson experiment on the currency.

The second political type which was generally struck in copper and brass with dies cut by Hulseman, was also intended to influence the 1834 political campaigns.

Obverse: PERISH CREDIT. PERISH COMMERCE Boar running left. MY / VICTORY / MY THIRD HEAT / DOWN WITH THE BANK / 1834

Reverse: Above - *MY SUBSTITUTE* small military bust of Jackson, head tamed slightly left

Below - MY / EXPERIMENT / MY / CURRENCY / MY / GLORY. / FOR THE U.S. BANK.

Low 10 struck in copper is evidently the first die combination of this political type. This variety shows a die break which runs from the edge between the “C” and “R” of CREDIT to eye of boar through the “T” of THIRD; thence downward through the “W” of WITH and “K” of BANK to the edge between the period and “4” of the date. This would seem to explain why Low 10 is not listed as struck in brass in the Low reference.

Low 11 in brass (V.F. to Unc. pieces are usually found lightly silver coated) and Low 168 in bronze were struck from, the second combination of dies. Obverse of Low 8 and the reverse of Low 10.

Low 8 In copper and Low 9 In brass (lightly silvered) were struck from the third combination of dies. Of Low 8, I have a BU piece in my collection which shows evidence of having been struck from rusted dies. Stack’s Fixed Price List No. 86 lists a Low 8A with the following explanation; “From the same die as last, but struck in Brass on a Thick Planchet, and quite rare. Do not confuse this with the more common Low 9.”

The early reference to the foes of the hard-money policy circulating gilt counters (to simulate gold and silver coins) with grotesque figures and caustic inscriptions - the “Whole hog” and the “better currency,” in an effort to ridicule Benton’s reform out of existence, supplies an interesting clue to the story behind the silvered brass varieties. Not having seen the original quote of the above, I can only surmise from several later accounts by persons not familiar with the Hard Times token series that the original account referred to the silvered brass and the gilded copper varieties of the above political type.

DeWitt lists these two varieties under No. CE 1834 - 10. (Same as preceding “Low 8” except struck on thinner planchet with square edge.) The above reference to gilt counters is especially interesting when one notes that Benton’s bill to revise the valuation of gold from 15 to 1 to 16 to 1 was passed by Congress in June 1834. The revaluation resulted in a new flow of gold to the government mint and it was not long before the gold coins were being referred to as Benton’s “Mint Drops”; a term, which was soon used by his foes to include all the U.S. coinage of hard money.

The above would also indicate that, while the Low 51 pieces were first struck in late 1833, the dies were again used to strike Low 52 (brass) and Low 171 (gilded copper). The expensive process of gilding may have led to the issuance of brass strikes to supply the same allusion to gold. In a round about way this may also explain why Low 12 was not struck in brass for general circulation.

There is good reason to believe that the selection of a small military bust of Jackson on this political type was suggested by the “Affair of the Figure Head,” which created intense excitement in Boston and which, from its peculiar aspects, was soon communicated all over the seaboard. This situation was started by the arrival of the

frigate Constitution with a figure-head of President Jackson. When it became known that it was the intention of Commodore J. D. Elliott, commandant of the Boston Navy Yard, to thus ornament the frigate's bow, threats were freely made that she would not be allowed to go to sea with the obnoxious image.

After this image had been placed at the Constitution's stern, it was discovered on July 3rd, 1834, to have been mutilated. On that date the "Boston Daily News" published the following item of news:

"THE FIGUREHEAD. - A report is in circulation this morning that the Figure Head on the U.S. Ship Constitution has been DECAPITATED. It is rumored that it was affected last night. As to the truth of this report we cannot vouch."

This first announcement of the event dropped like a bomb on the political world. The newspapers, across the country, quickly reacted according to their love or hatred of President Jackson. The Whig papers printed acres of sarcastic sympathy.

The inside history of the decapitation was published by Mr. W. H. Pierce, of Spring Water, N. Y., in June, 1911. He says:

"One day, while sitting in the counting-room of William and Henry Lincoln on Central Wharf, the subject of the Figure Head came up. Capt. Dewey remarked "I have a great mind to go over and' cut it off.' To that William Lincoln replied in a bantering way; Dewey if you will, I will give you \$100.' 'Done,' said Dewey, 'I will take that.' "

The third political type engraved by Hulseman is Low 12. In the Bushnell listing of political tokens the following description is found under No. 21:

OB: A full length figure of Jackson, facing to the left. A drawn sword in one hand, a purse in the other. "A plain System void of Pomp."

REV: An Ass. Upon his side, the letters "LL. D." Above the ass "ROMAN FIRMNESS." and the date "1834" below the ass. "The Constitution as I understand it."

This token illustrates very clearly how deeply Jackson's war on the Bank of the U.S. had aroused the opposition party in the New England States, which had united under the name of "Whig." This name that was commonly used all through the political campaigns of 1834.

While there would appear to be no question that the dies of Low 12 were engraved by Hulseman and that they were struck in Attleboro, it does seem rather odd that this political type was not also struck in brass. A dose look at the pieces in my collection would suggest that they were struck In 1836-37 rather than 1834. Possibly the dies were cut at the earlier date, but for some reason were not used to strike tokens until the demand for a circulating medium was at its height in 1836-38. At least this would explain why it is only known struck in copper. I may be completely wrong on this point, but mention it to show one of the questions that 'a study of the other two early political types raises in my mind regarding this piece.

It is evident that Van Buren's reputation has never quite recovered from the brilliant smear campaign waged by the Whigs in the 1836 Presidential campaign.

After the 1834 issues, the next political types were issued with the 1836 Presidential campaign in mind. The Whigs went all out to win this national election. That they waged an impressive campaign is shown by the belief

held by a good many people “that Van Buren stood little chance of winning.” Even the fluffy-haired Van Buren was astonished when the Democrats took the country by storm. They larruped the old Whig war horse, Harrison, in one of the most upsetting elections of the nineteenth century.

Just as in the case of the first three political types, it is rather hard to make any definite statement as to the order in which the political types were struck for the 1836 campaign. However, I’m rather inclined to believe that the popular Webster type was struck first. This is indicated by the evidence that the Massachusetts Whigs had nominated Webster as a presidential candidate at an early date in order to influence the Whig nominations in the balance of the states. Of this type, I believe Low 63 was the earliest struck die combination.

Obverse: WEBSTER above, and *CREDIT 1841 CURRENCY* completing the circle; Ship inscribed CONSTITUTION.

Reverse: (Same as the obverse of Low 44) *VAN BUREN* -METALLIC 1837 CURRENCY Wrecked ship l., her side inscribed EXPERIMENT.

Lyman H. Low lists this variety under the year 1841. He considered it a mule and noted that the object of its issue was to contrast the results of the policy of the two parties, as the Whigs saw them. Alfred Z. Reed indicates that even though the Webster pieces were intended to influence the Congressional elections of 1838, at least one of the eight varieties (Low 63 the earliest) appeared during the preceding year.

As proof Reed refers to an item which appears in a November, 1837, issue of the “Washington Globe.” This leading administration organ referred to them as “stamped with political caricatures and other federal devices. An emission of them hails the inauguration of Daniel Webster as president in 1841, while others contain inscriptions insulting to the late and present president of the United States. There really seems to be no bounds to the limits of Federal enterprise in the manufacture of spurious substitutes for money.” (Webster originally was a member of the long defunct Federalist party.)

While I agree with Reed that Low 63 was the earliest die combination struck with the Webster die, I believe that it was first struck for the 1836 Presidential campaign. In this election Daniel Webster, along with William H. Harrison and Hugh L. White, was defeated by Martin Van Buren. Thus, the token represented what the Massachusetts Whig backers believed would happen if Van Buren took office in 1837 in contrast to the results of 4 years of the Webster policy.

The strongest evidence pointing to this conclusion is based on a great many points which show that Hulseman engraved the Webster dies for Low 63, 64 and 62 prior to 1837. In addition the “Washington Globe” shows that the Webster pieces were in circulation prior to November of 1837.

The Webster political tokens were evidently very popular in the New England states as the firm of JML & WH Scovill copied the Hulseman dies. This was a common practice in the button business. Any button pattern that proved to be a good mover was quickly copied by the other button concerns. Low 60 and 61 and their muling with other Scovill dies are clearly shown in the April, 1939, issue of “The Coin Collector’s Journal.” This evidence would also lead one to believe that Low 68, a Scovill issue, was first struck for the 1836 campaign.

Obv: Female head left. Date 1841.

Rev: BENTONIAN CURRENCY. Date 1837.

Therefore, on the political tokens, the years 1837-1841 only indicated the term in office, and would point to the conclusion that the bulk of the Scovill issues were struck in 1836 and 1837. This fits in with my belief that the government was making an all out effort in late 1837 to suppress any further issues of political and store card tokens of the large cent size struck in copper. That they were effective is shown by a study of the Whig political medals struck for the 1840 Presidential campaign.

The reason for the popularity of the Webster die in the New England States is clearly shown by a study of the political history behind this issue. In the debate on the constitutional question in 1830, his great reply to Haynes of South Carolina, in the Senate, in which he defended New England against the onslaughts of the Southern Senator, made him the idol of the people of Boston. This speech begins with the graphic simile of a ship at sea in thick weather, her position unknown and her crew filled with anxiety. In addition to this debate there is the "Affair of the Figure Head," which has already been covered. Last but not least, Webster was one of the chief defenders of the Bank of the United States on the Senate floor.

Henry Clay in his February 19, 1838, speech before the Senate on the subject of the "Independent Treasury" gives a rather vivid description of the meaning behind the Van Buren die:

"Yes, Mr. President, we all have but too melancholy a consciousness of the unhappy condition of our country. We all too well know, that our noble and gallant ship lies helpless and immovable upon breakers, dismantled, the surge beating over her venerable sides, and the crew threatened with instantaneous destruction. How came she there? Who was the pilot at the helm when she was stranded? the party in power! The pilot was aided by all the science and skill, by all the charts and instruments, of such distinguished navigators as Washington, the Adams's, Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe; and yet he did not, or could not, save the public vessel. She was placed in her present miserable condition by his bungling navigation, or by his want of skill and judgment. It is impossible for him to escape from one or the other horn of that dilemma. I leave him at liberty to choose between them."

While the following does not have a bearing on the Hulseman subject, it does illustrate the colorful subject matter one can run into in making a check of the political history behind the Hard Times tokens:

Webster's clearness of expression is well illustrated by the following anecdote of David Crockett, who, having heard Mr. Webster speak, accosted him afterwards with the inquiry, "Is this Mr. Webster?" "Yes, sir," "Well, sir" continued Crockett, "I had heard that you were a very great man, but I don't think so. I heard your speech and understood every word you said."

Of Low 63, Low states: "All I have seen of this have a crack in obverse die, from second C in CURRENCY, through the ship, to E in CREDIT." As this piece is given a rarity rating of R-2, it would seem that only a small quantity were struck before it was necessary to replace the obverse die. The second the combination is listed as Low 64. Of this die combination, Low notes; "About one-half of these -have a slight break in the obverse die between the letters C and Y in CURRENCY, and on a few it extends to the ship, with another break through D in CREDIT, and sometimes continuing through CONSTITUTION. A third and still rarer break is visible at E in CURRENCY."

Low 62 is the last in this series engraved by Hulseman. It contains a new obverse and reverse die. CURRENT is used in place of CURRENCY on both the obverse and reverse. While I'm not certain as to the reason why Current was used in place of Currency, it would seem that its use might have been prompted by the specie command, issued July 11, 1836. This required all government land agents to accept only gold and silver in payment for public lands. This command, which suddenly disturbed public confidence, came at the critical point at which the campaign of 1836 opened. In addition it could be an added effort to ridicule Senator Thomas A. Benton for his efforts to establish a hard money currency in the shape of coins, which at that time were termed "mint drops."

Low mentions that a few of these are struck from dies slightly rusted, which points to this Webster die combination engraved by Hulseman as being the last in this series. He also notes that this number was struck in silver, and like its companion Low 19 (Hulseman dies) probably on the same occasion, and is believed to be unique. Under Low 19 he mentions, "This piece was also struck in silver, it is said, for Capt. Davenport, in 1837, concerning whom I have not been able to learn anything." (This may be Henry Davenport who was treasurer of the Boston Numismatic Society in 1860.)

The New Netherlands Coin Co. Inc., auction catalog dated April 22, 1955, refers to Woodward's May 17-21, 1864, sales catalog of the John F. McCoy collection as probably being the source of Low's lead. In regards to the silver Low 19 and Low 62, Woodward makes the following comment: "Me two next pieces in silver are both originals, struck for Mr. Davenport; for many years in his collection, more recently from the collection of Mr. Colburn." "This is the earliest offering of the silver issues known to the New Netherlands Coin Co. In addition they illustrate the silver Low 19 and Low 62 pieces and mention that they know of three specimens of Low 19 and 6 or 7 of Low 62.

Low 49, the well known 1837 half-cent token, appears to be another Whig issue struck for the 1836 Presidential campaign. The Whig's evidently considered the half-cent "Mint Drop" as an appropriate satire on Benton's efforts to establish a hard-money currency in the shape of coins.

Some time ago, I made an unsuccessful attempt to trace the story behind this token. While I may have missed some references, it appeared that all that was known of the history of this token was summed up in the statement made by J.N.T. Levick in a "Description of the Hard Times Tokens' of '37" which appeared in the April, 1870, issue of the American Journal of Numismatics:

"Many collectors regard this piece as a pattern; why so I can not explain; I should more readily assume it to be a satirical piece. Other collectors place it among their Half Cents of that year, there being no Half Cents issued in 1837, '8 and '9. "

The above statement clearly illustrates how difficult it is to arrive at a satisfactory answer to the story behind this token from a study of the token itself. Its true satirical nature only becomes apparent when it is considered as a 1836 Presidential campaign token struck shortly after the issuance of the treasury order (Specie Circular) dated July 11, 1836. Thus, the 1837 date only indicated the Whig's belief that Van Buren, if elected, would continue and expand the Jackson hard money policy.

In a previous paragraph, I explained my reasons for believing that Low 68 was a 1836 presidential campaign token struck by the Scovill's. The reverse of this token would represent a very obvious Whig reaction to the specie circular.

Legend around outer edge: BENTONTAN CURRENCY. Inside a wreath, MINT/DROP Ex. 1837.

The final and most conclusive evidence that this half-cent token was struck prior to 1837 is indicated by the style of workmanship and letter punches used on this token, which definitely points to Hulseman as having out the dies and that they were struck in Attleboro prior to his leaving for New York.

The last political type engraved by Hulseman for the 1836 campaign shows on one side the turtle with the safe on its back and on the other side the running Jackass. This popular type is listed under Low numbers 17, 18, 19 and 20. While it is very likely that the first variety of this issue, Low 20, was issued prior to the half-cent token, I have taken the liberty of listing this type last in order to explain the connection between Low 19 and Low 20, the dies of which were cut in Attleboro, and Low 17 and Low 18 the dies of which were cut in New York.

The term "I FOLLOW IN THE STEPS OF MY ILLUSTRIOUS PREDECESSOR," which is quoted by Low as being the exact word used by Martin Van Buren in his March 6, 1837, inaugural address, was considered as proof that they were issued after this date. The 1837 date on the obverse would also add weight to this viewpoint.

It is very likely that the dating of this token was responsible for Low not taking the time to check on Van Buren's exact words which are: "I TREAD IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ILLUSTRIOUS MEN." This declaration would fit Low's reference to the caricaturist of the period, who represented him as carefully stepping in the footprints of a jackass marching solemnly along the highway.

Thus it would appear that the somewhat different wording of this term found on the token Indicates that it was a satire on the following extract from Mr. Van Buren's letter of acceptance of the nomination of the Baltimore convention, dated May 23, 1835:

"I content myself, on this occasion, with saying, that I consider myself the honored instrument selected by the friends of the present administration, to carry out its principles and policy; and that, as well from inclination as from duty, I shall, if honored with the choice of the American people, endeavor generally to follow in the footsteps of President Jacks-on; happy if I shall be able to perfect the work which he has so gloriously begun."

The use of this term may have originated with the Democrat's belief that Jackson ostensibly followed in the footsteps of Jefferson's party.

From the following statements, it would appear that Low never quite reached a satisfactory conclusion as to the true satirical meaning behind this political token:

"The tortoise and safe are believed to allude to the slow and insecure method of moving the Government deposits from the United States Bank to the State Banks, or to the proposed 'Sub-treasuries the running jackass to Van Buren's rapid growth in popularity which is doubtful."

While, I would hesitate to say that this is the correct political interpretation of this token, I'm -rather inclined to believe that as a 1836 presidential campaign token it represented a Whig satire on the slow but steady progress Jackson had made towards creating a government bank under the complete control of the president.

The “running jackass” illustrated Van Buren’s eagerness or willingness to complete the experiment In 1837. The term ““SUB-TREASURY” (Commonly used by the opponents to the scheme to form a government bank) was placed on the safe to indicate the danger of continuing this course, which would seem to be covered by the following paragraph, which I believe represents a direct quote from the February 19, 1838, speech of Henry Clay on the subject of the “Independent Treasury”:

“The earliest and most remarkable instance of sub-treasury in history, and the most graphic picture of the system, Is found in the 47th chapter of Genesis, from the 15th to the 26th verses, under which the treasury of Pharaoh first swallowed up all the money of the people; next, their cattle were taken; then their lands; last of all, they sold themselves into perpetual bondage, to render to Pharaoh, in perpetuity, one fifth of the products of their labor; and they remained In slavery forever afterward. When Spain exhausted the mines of South America, and in the end drew forth more than a thousand millions of bullion into the royal coffers, it was all done by sub-treasurers, while the people were taxed, worn out, and kept under. Sub-treasurers are always in favor of direct taxation, and that is the only way to maintain the system. Rome was free till the system of sub-treasury was introduced. So was it in Greece. So has it been in every country that has lost its freedom. The peculiarity of a sub-treasury system is, to separate the government from the people, to raise it above them, to make the people dependent slaves. There is no sympathy between the parties, but a necessary and perpetual hostility of interests.”

The above paragraph is found on page 47 of volume two of the “Life & Times of Henry Clay” by Calvin Colton, which was published in 1845. This account, while slanted from a Whig viewpoint, contains a great wealth of information in regards to the currency and the political background of the Hard Times Tokens.

Low 20 appears to be the first die combination struck of this political type. A rather choice example of this piece in my collection shows a die crack running from the F of FINANCIERING to just below the tall of the Tortoise; then from the base of the neck through the N of FINANCIERING to the border.

Low 19, the second die combination, evidently was first struck shortly after the issuance of the “Specie Circular,” which explains the use of EXPERIMENT in place of FINACIERING, although it does not explain why a new reverse die was cut. Very likely there is a simple explanation, but until the answer is found there will remain a question mark as to whether the tokens were struck at one or two locations in Attleborough.

This same line of thought is suggested by a study of tokens struck with the Lafayette die signed H, which indicates the possibility that by the time the firm of H. M. & E. 1. Richards had the dies cut for their own card, Low 83, they were in a position to strike their own tokens. In this respect, there is good reason to believe that Low 83 represents the first tokens struck. with the Lafayette die, as we now have the information that in 1834 Ira Richards was persuaded to join ‘the boys’ and the firm thus formed was named Ira Richards & Co.

While it is evident that the reverse and obverse dies of Low 51, 74, 75, 76, 78 and 84 were cut by Hulseman, and that they were struck by Robinson’s Jones & Co., it is just as evident that the obverse dies found struck in combination with the Lafayette die were not cut by Hulseman. This should, in part, explain why it is difficult to determine who struck Low 19 and Low 62, which were restruck at a much later date from rusted dies.

Low 17 and 18 illustrate very clearly why it is difficult to reach -a satisfactory conclusion as to why Hulseman moved to New York City from Attleboro. While the style of die work indicates that he cut the dies, there does not seem to be any real clue as to why they were cut or as to who struck the tokens. The fact that the legend and the date were added with a different set of letter and numeral punches would simply indicate that he had acquired or was using a different set of punches.

That they were copies would seem to be ruled out by Low 54, which shows the familiar Hulseman style. As this token is dated 1838, and Edward Hulseman was listed as a card engraver in the New York directories from 1837 to 1841, there would seem to be no question as to his engraving or cutting the dies for Low 17, 18 and L 54.

The last of the so-called Hard Times political tokens to be struck from dies cut by Hulseman appears to be Low 54. This anti-slavery token evidently was struck by the same party that struck Low 17 and L 18.

*OBV: * AM I NOT A WOMAN & A SISTER *.*

Female slave manacled and in chains, kneeling.

REV: UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. "LIBERTY / 1838" within a laurel wreath.

This token has been considered by some as being primarily issued to influence the congressional elections of 1838. While this is possible, it would hardly seem probable, as the slavery question had become a rather sensitive political issue by the years 1837-38; especially on a national level. This may explain why the government took no apparent action to stop the rather large issue of this token struck on copper planchets of large cent size.

The reverse legend and the 1838 date would lead one to believe that it was issued by one of the U.S. anti-slavery societies to commemorate the abolition of negro apprenticeship in Jamaica, Barbados, Grenada, St. Vincent, St. Kitts, Nevis, Montserrat & The Virgin Islands by acts of the respective local legislatures on August 1, 1838.

Lyman H. Low lists Low 54 in two sizes, 27 and 28 mm. Of the latter I have a specimen in my collection, which was originally holed, then repaired and gilded. Of the other three pieces I have examined, two were approximately size 27 and one size 28 mm. In the March, 1913, issue of "The Numismatist," Everett Van Voorhis notes: "There are two varieties in size of planchets of No. 54 slave token. The smaller size always shows a slight raise on the rim of the coin on the obverse below the letter R of SISTER, and on the reverse rim below the left ribbon of the wreath."

The size 27 variety evidently was struck last as the two specimens in my collection, and the enlarged photo of the Miller specimen, show a die crack (?) running from A of AMERICA through the wreath to a point above T of LIBERTY. As these three specimens are in EX.F. to AU condition there is the hint that they were struck for sale to collectors. Whether or not this is true will depend on further research. Possibly a small hoard of uncirculated pieces turned up at a later date. In any event, it appears that the size 28 variety in choice condition is quite rare'.

The "common" rarity given this token indicates that it was struck in a sizeable quantity. Just as a rough comparison, Low 94 (Struck in Attleboro, Mass.), which is given a rarity rating of "not common" is reported as having 36,000 pieces struck. And while the latter figure may be correct there is no way at the present to determine whether this represents a true comparison of the numbers struck during the Hard Times period.

The evidence that anything in the shape of a cent (wild cat pennies) would be accepted in change until the advent of the nickel cent in 1857 definitely raises some question in respect to how many times certain Hard Times tokens were restruck. On top of this there is the chance that a few were restruck around 1860 for sale to collectors.

In respect to early restriking, an item appears in the June, 1941, "The Numismatist" which suggests that rather than being "Counterfeits of U.S. Cents in 1844" as suggested by the title, they were in reality Hard Times tokens. The "Native American," a newspaper that was published daily in Philadelphia at that time, states in the July 1, 1844, issue, "That they were made at Attleborough, Mass., and to be had for sixty cents per hundred; that they could be easily distinguished by comparison, and that a great many were in circulation."

From the date of the newspaper, I would be inclined to believe that they were circulated to influence the outcome of the 1844 presidential campaign. If they had been exact copies and were easily distinguished from the genuine, it would seem highly improbable that the Attleborough promoters would have chosen the backyard of the United States Mint to place large quantities of them in circulation.

This completes my report on the Political Hard Times token dies cut by Hulseman. In later issues of the Journal, I plan to cover the merchant token dies cut by Hulseman; the Scovills; the Belleville Mint and the relationship between Low 54 and Low 54A.

Transcription note: The following illustrations were omitted in this reprint:

1. The obverse and reverse of Low 51 enlarged 3 times.
2. The obverse and reverse of Robinson's, Jones & Co. token. Low 76. In business from 1831-1836.
3. The obverse and reverse of the R.&W. Robinson token. Low 103. In business from 1836 to about 1848.
4. The obverse and reverse of the H.M.& E.I. Richards token. Low 83
5. The obverse and reverse of the W.A. Handy Token, Low 78.
6. An enlarged engraved portrait of Andrew Jackson which appears on the \$5 note of the Bank of America of Clarksville, Tennessee.
7. The obverse and reverse of Low 44.
8. The obverse and reverse of Low 8.
9. The obverse and reverse of Low 12.
10. An engraved portrait of Van Buren which appears in "Messages and Papers of the Presidents" by Richardson. Published in 1896.
11. The obverse and reverse of Low 63.
12. The obverse and reverse of Low 60. Dies cut by Eaves, the Scovill die-sinker.
13. The obverse and reverse of Low 68. Dies {cut} by Eaves, the Scovill die-sinker.
14. The obverse of a medal issued to commemorate the unveiling of the Daniel Webster Statue on June 17, 1886 at Concord, N.H.
15. The obverse and reverse of Low 64.
16. The obverse and reverse of Low 62.
17. The obverse and reverse of Low 49. Half Cent "Mint Drop."
18. The obverse and reverse of Low 20.
19. Portrait of Henry Clay. Published by A.S. Barnes & Co. of New York for Colton's Life of Clay.

20. The obverse and reverse of Low 19.

21. The obverse and reverse of Low 18.

22. Enlarged obverse and reverse of Low 54. From the Donald M. Miller collection.

Enlarged obverse and reverse of the companion piece to Low 54 - "Am I Not A Man and A Brother."