

Compliments of
W. A. D. Lees

THE SHIPS, COLONIES & COMMERCE TOKENS.

(Breton, No. 997).

A REVISED LIST BY W. A. D. LEES.

These tokens, in common with many others, were circulated in Canada in large numbers from about the end of the first quarter of the last century to meet the need for small change caused by the absence of an official coinage.

Owing to the large number of varieties and the extreme rarity of some of them, the series is one of great interest to collectors.

Prior to the year 1903 little or nothing had been published that was of practical help to the collector in identifying the different varieties. Dr. Leroux in his Numismatic Atlas, published in 1883, placed the number of varieties at not less than 14; in the first and second editions of his Canadian Coin Cabinet, published, respectively, in 1888 and 1892, he says, strangely enough, "10 to 12 varieties." Breton, in his Illustrated Canadian Coin Collector, 1890, and in his Illustrated History, 1894, says, "about 25 varieties." W. Elliott Woodward offered, in a sale in 1882, a set of 21 varieties, and in the Frossard sale of the Gerald E. Hart collection, in 1888, there was a set of 32 varieties with the ship obverse, said to be all from different dies. None of these writers or cataloguers made any attempt to describe the different varieties.

In THE NUMISMATIST for May, 1903, Mr. Jeremiah Gibbs of Hamilton, Ontario, to whom all honor is due as a pioneer in this difficult field, published a descriptive list of 28 varieties, which has not only been of great value to collectors, but has served as the starting point for all later research. It is now somewhat out of date and difficult to obtain.

In 1906 Mr. Howland Wood of New York published an admirable photographic chart, showing on one sheet, without descriptions, the obverses of 43 varieties and the reverses of 41. This has been an almost indispensable aid to the collector, but, unfortunately, it is now out of print and the negative broken. In the ten years since its publication some new varieties have been discovered, and this seemed to the writer to suggest the need of a revised list, brought down to date and made as complete as is reasonably possible.

The general description of the coin is: Obv., a ship sailing to the right within a beaded border. Rev., the words SHIPS COLONIES & COMMERCE in four lines within a beaded or toothed border. All have plain edges, and most of them straight reverses. On the obverse of some varieties a letter H is to be found between the exergual lines, probably the Heaton mint-mark; on others a second letter H is incused on the waves above the first and below the bow of the ship, and the remainder lack the H entirely. In sorting a mixed lot of these pieces I have found this feature to afford the most convenient guide, and I have, accordingly, divided my list into three groups, the "No H," "Single H" and "Double H" varieties.

Other differences are to be found in the nationality and shape of the flag, the form of the waves, the size and spacing of the letters and words, etc. All the ships have thirteen sails; Nos. 1 and 2 show eleven of these unfurled, the others ten only. For shapes of flags see under group headings.

The character "&" takes four general forms. In describing them I refer to the upper terminal as the knob or bar and the lower as the tail. In the first form the upper terminal ends in a distinct cross-bar, and I call it "bar &"; in the second form the upper terminal ends in a round knob, called the "round-knob &"; the third has a round knob with a wedge-shaped

piece cut out next the stem which carries it, called the "cut-knob &"; the fourth has its knob in the shape of a bent club, which I call the "club-knob &"; the last is found with three different tails, "thick, sharp," "thick, blunt," and "thin, sharp," all pointing downwards, while the other forms all have upward-pointing tails. These different forms of "&" are specified under the different numbers in the list, and are here illustrated:



Bar.



Round-knob.



Cut-knob.



Club-knob.

Two other coins of the same type are shown in Mr. Breton's book under the numbers 999 and 1000, but since I have not been able to get definite enough information about these, I have not included them in the list.

After the serial numbers in the list I have given the corresponding numbers from Mr. Wood's chart and Mr. Gibbs' list, indicated, respectively, by the letters W. and G., to facilitate reference to these lists. At the end of each description I have inserted a number with the letter R to indicate my opinion of the comparative degrees of rarity from 1, the commonest, to 10, the rarest. These, of course, are only approximate, since no two collectors have exactly the same experience in this regard; also, these standards of rarity have no relation to those adopted by writers on other series of coins.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge, with sincere thanks, much valuable help in the compilation of this list from Dr. E. G. Courteau of St. Jacques, Quebec; Mr. S. S. Heal of Toronto, and Mr. Howland Wood of New York. To the two first named are also due my thanks for the loan of pieces from their collections for illustration. I had intended mentioning the names of the discoverers of certain varieties with a view to stimulating interest in the search for still other new varieties, but I found such difficulty in determining the real discoverers that I decided to omit all reference to them except in one case that comes within my personal knowledge. The difficulty mentioned arises from the fact that the same variety may be found, independently, by more than one collector at about the same time. An instance is No. 33, which Mr. E. W. Barton of Toronto and Dr. Courteau were both fortunate enough to discover shortly after Mr. Wood's chart was published.

In some cases I have, for convenience, followed Mr. Gibbs or Mr. Wood in giving separate numbers to certain varieties which differ only in the die being re-cut or otherwise altered; in other cases I have noted these only as variations of the original die so as not to increase the numbers unduly.

I cannot hope that errors have not crept in. Corrections and descriptions of new varieties will be gladly welcomed, also correspondence with all who are interested in this series.

GROUP I: NO H.

Varieties without letter H on waves or between exergual lines. Nos. 1 to 8 show various flags as noted; Nos. 9 to 22 all have curved-top flag.

1. (W. 1; G. 2). Obverse, ship showing U. S. flag with double curve and initials W & B N. Y. below exergual lines. Reverse, top of & under O; bar &. Found on thick, thin and extra thin flans. R. 8.

2. (W. 2; G. 1). Obverse, ship taller than on No. 1, leaving less space below exergual lines; U. S. flag with single curve; sprit-sail larger; no initials. Reverse, lines of legend closer together; letters differ from No. 1; top of & almost under N; bar &. This has hitherto been assumed to be the work of Wright & Bale, New York, as No. 1, bearing their initials, undoubtedly is. The obverse is apparently a copy of No. 1, but the workmanship differs somewhat. The letters of the reverse are strikingly like those of No. 8, below, particularly the &, the defective P in SHIPS and the EEE, but their alignment in the words is different, suggesting that the die may have been made with the same letter-punches. If so, either No. 2 is of British origin or No. 8 was made in the U. S., which seems unlikely since

the obverse of No. 8 is also found on Breton 1003, always supposed to be British. This is nominally an upset reverse, but, like many others of the series, it diverges from an exact upset at different angles showing either that the die was loose in the press or that issues were struck at different times with the die differently set in the press. R. 4.

3. (W. 3; G. 3). Obverse, distinguished by a large flag drooping almost to the deck of the ship. The lines on the flag are not usually very plain, but seem to be those of the Union Jack. Reverse, COLONIES and COMMERCE farther apart than on other varieties; first S of SHIPS over O of COLONIES; bar &. Found on large, thick flan with straight reverse and on smaller flans of two thicknesses with straight and upset reverse, the latter with and without die defects, due to rust, between main- and fore-masts; the thick flan variety is also found with a perfectly plain reverse. R. 7.

4. (W. 4; G. —). Obverse, same as No. 3. Reverse differs from No. 3 in first S of SHIPS being more to the right; a die defect is sometimes found above P of SHIPS. It is the same reverse as Breton 998 or Wood's Blacksmith No. 10, hence it is known as the Blacksmith variety. This reverse has hitherto been considered the one exception to the rule of a beaded or toothed border, but careful examination of a good specimen discloses several beads of the border close to first C of COMMERCE; upset reverse; bar &. This variety was not listed by Gibbs, but appeared first in Wood's chart. R. 10.

5. (W. —; G. —). Obverse differs from Nos. 3 and 4 in the following particulars: The pennant is straighter and does not show the square hollow next the mast nor the split point; no ball where upper guys join main-mast; smaller balls on tops of main- and fore-masts; ball on top of mizzen-mast does not hang over to right; upper wave projects farther at left and is split like an alligator's jaws; lower wave is sharp-pointed; exergual lines do not extend as far to left and do not end together, the upper being the longer; a short spike projects from stern of ship; more space between flag and deck; after brace of mizzen-mast joins flagstaff instead of deck. Reverse same as No. 4; bar &. Dr. Courteau and Mr. Heal consider this to be from the same die as Nos. 3 and 4 in a different state of preservation, but I incline to the belief that it is an imitation of that die. The differences seem too radical for even a recut die. Mr. Wood considers it, by reason of a die defect to left of flag-staff, to be from the same die as his Blacksmith No. 9, and, with this reverse, a new combination to which he gives the number 9a in the Blacksmith series by joining the ship of No. 9 with the reverse of No. 10 in his Plate I of that series. R. 10. I regret that I have not been able to illustrate this piece owing to failure to obtain it back from a collector to whom I sent it for examination and comparison with the only known specimen of Wood's Blacksmith No. 9.

6. (W. 5; G. 4). Obverse, flag and pennant almost straight; waves short and choppy. Reverse, large letters closely spaced; COLONIES and COMMERCE closer together than in any other of the series; long left leg to N of COLONIES; CE of COMMERCE joined; bar &. Found on thick and thin flans. R. 8.

7. (W. 6; G. 5). Obverse, pennant almost straight; flag curves upwards toward mizzen-sail; flag close up to ball of flag-staff; long running waves. Reverse, same as No. 6; bar &. Found in red copper on large thick and small thin flans and in brassy copper on small flan. R. 7.

8. (W. 7; G. 6). Obverse, hull of ship shorter than in any other; flag "hump-backed" with diagonals crossing each other, the only instance. Reverse, letters similar to those of No. 2, which see, but their alignment in the words is different; upset reverse; bar &. This is the obverse of Breton 1003 combined with the reverse of B. 1002. Found with perfect and rusted reverse dies. R. 4.

9. (W. 27; G. 20). Obverse, a line runs from lowest fore-sail to corner of lower sprit-sail; the jib is not joined to the lower sprit-sail; yard of lower sprit-sail does not project beyond the sail; curved flag. Reverse, medium-sized letters, closely spaced; I of SHIPS over ON of COLONIES; more fully described under No. 19; bar &. Found with all lines and shrouds well struck and with some weakly struck or partly wanting. In all I have seen of both the two upper left guys of mizzen-yards are partly wanting. R. 6.

10. (W. 28; G. 27). Obverse probably from same die as No. 9, but in various states as mentioned below. Reverse, small heavy letters, widely spaced; large centre-strokes to EEE; with and without dot below last C of COMMERCE; round-knob &. Found with well struck, and weakly struck, lines and shrouds, with whole and broken mizzen-guys, with and without defects in obverse and reverse borders and with and without various cracks in both dies. R. 6.

11. (W. 42; G. 27). Obverse, same as No. 10, except the left guye above the unfurled mizzen-sail, which is double-cut. Reverse, same as No. 10; round-knob &. R. 10.

12. (W. 43; G. 27). Obverse, same as No. 10, but with a large die flaw below exergual lines at right. Reverse, same as No. 10; round-knob &. Found with and without defects in reverse border at left and with perfect and rusted reverse dies. R. 6.

13. (W. 41; G. 28). Obverse, a line running from top of mainmast to flag and not touching the yard of the unfurled mizzen-sail is a feature peculiar to this variety; several of the sail-yards end in round knobs; possibly from the same die as No. 9, recut. Reverse, same as No. 10; round knob &. R. 10.

NOTE: The reverses of Nos. 14 to 22 are all of the same type and differ so minutely in the relative positions of the letters that some system of measurements is necessary. Place the coin in a hole in a card to keep it from slipping; lay over it a piece of transparent celluloid on which are ruled with a fine pencil or needle a horizontal line and an upright exactly at right angles to it; align the horizontal accurately with the base of the word COMMERCE and let the upright touch the left side of first S in SHIPS; then note where this line, called "first upright," cuts the letters of COLONIES and COMMERCE; then shift the celluloid to the right till the upright touches the right side of last S in SHIPS, still keeping the horizontal aligned with the base of COMMERCE, and note where this "second upright" cuts the letters of COLONIES and COMMERCE. The reverse descriptions below, Nos. 14 to 22, are based on this system. The words, as well as the letters, are differently spaced in some varieties.

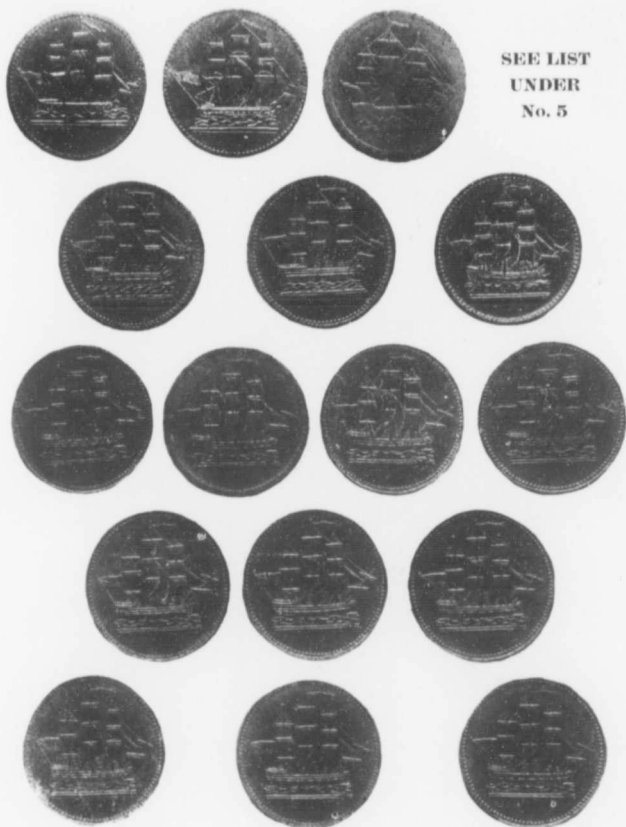
14. (W. 33; G. 19). Obverse has two guys from bow-sprit to yard of unfurled sprit-sail, meeting at same point on bow-sprit, and four ratlines in forward shroud of main-mast. This and the next three are known as the "large guy" varieties. Reverse, first upright cuts O of COL at centre and O of COM to right of centre-hole; second cuts E to right of upright centre-stroke and C about centre of down-stroke; upright centre-stroke of first E of COMMERCE is cut off above the horizontal centre-stroke, hereafter referred to as, "E cut"; faint centre-spot above &; bar &. R. 9.

15. (W. 34; G. 19). Obverse, same as No. 14. Reverse, first upright cuts O of COL well to right of centre and runs between O and M of COM but nearer to O; second cuts E to left of upright centre-stroke and touches C lightly at left; all E's cut; centre-spot nearer N than &; bar &. Found with and without defect in border below COMMERCE. R. 9.

16. (W. —; G. —). Obverse, same as No. 14. Reverse, first upright cuts O of COL to right of centre and runs between O and M of COM but nearer to M; second divides upright centre-stroke of E and cuts down-stroke of C more to right than in No. 15; all E's cut; faint centre-spot half way between N and &; top of first S in SHIPS is double-cut and its lower terminal sharp; lower curve of & flattened and its tail longer than in any other; bar &. This variety was discovered by Dr. Courteau while this list was in preparation, and was kindly loaned by him, with others, for illustration. R. 10.

17. (W. 35; G. 19). Obverse, same as No. 14. Reverse, first upright cuts O of COL to left of centre-hole and O of COM to right of same; second divides left upright of E and passes to left of C; all E's cut; centre-spot closer to N than to &; bar &. R. 9.

18. (W. 36; G. 19). Obverse, similar to No. 14, but the sprit-sail guys are shorter and do not come exactly together on bow-sprit, the upper extending farther than the lower; the forward main-shroud has only three ratlines, and the two lower ones are much closer together than in No. 14. This and the next four are called the "small guy" varieties. Reverse same as No. 17; bar &. R. 10.

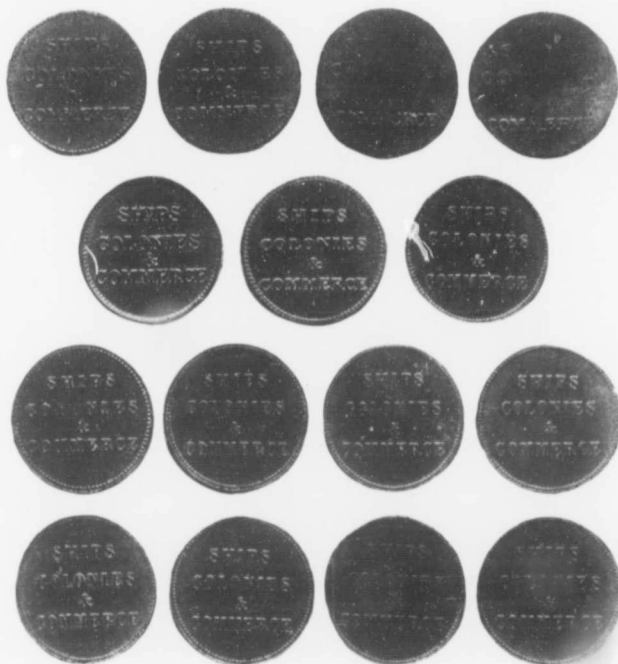


SEE LIST
UNDER
No. 5

OBVERSES.

The numbers below occupy the corresponding positions of the coins above.

1	2	3, 4	5
6	7	8	
9, 10	11	12	13
14 to 17	18 to 22	23 to 33	
34 to 38	39 to 42	43 to 46	



REVERSES.

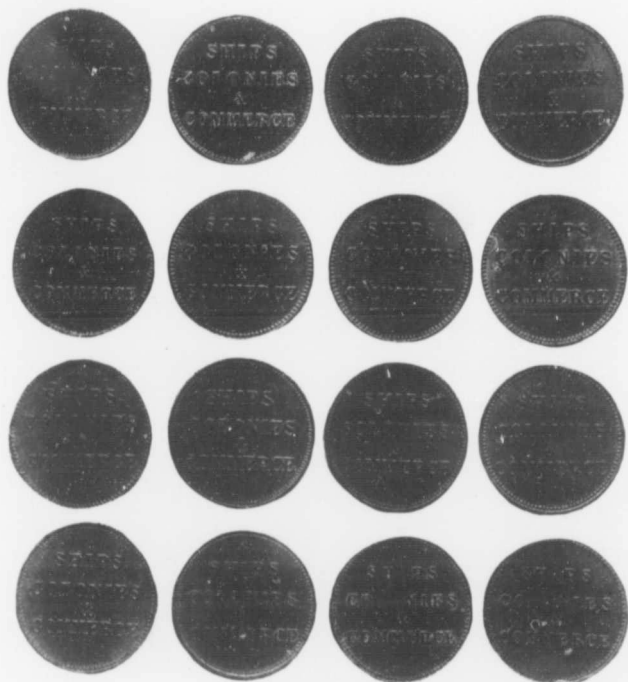
The numbers below occupy the corresponding positions of the coins above.

1	2	3	4, 5
6, 7	8	9, 19, 35	
10 to 13, 41	14	15	16
17, 18	20	21	22

19. (W. 37; G. 19). Obverse, same as No. 18. Reverse, first upright almost exactly as in No. 15; second divides left upright of E and cuts into down-stroke of C; first E of COMMERCE cut, others perfect; spike at top of &; double-cut I in COLONIES; bar &. Found with whole obverse border and with defect in same below ship. R. 7.

20. (W. 38; G. 19). Obverse, same as No. 18. Reverse, first upright as in No. 14; second runs along right edge of left upright of E and barely touches C; first E in COMMERCE cut, others perfect; bar &. R. 10.

21. (W. 39; G. 19). Obverse, same as No. 18. Reverse, first upright cuts right stroke of O in COL and runs to right of left upright of first M in COM; second cuts E to left of centre upright and C to left of centre-



REVERSES.

The numbers below occupy the corresponding positions of the coins above.

23	24	25, 40	26
27, 33	28	29, 32	30
31	34	36	37, 45
38, 39	42, 46	43	44

hole; all E's perfect; bar &. Found with whole reverse border and with defect in same at right. R. 9.

22. (W. 40; G. 19). Obverse, same as No. 18. Reverse, first upright cuts O of COL to left of centre-hole and O of COM to right of centre-hole; second runs along right edge of left upright of E and to left of C; all E's perfect; bar &. Found with whole and cracked reverse dies. R. 10.

GROUP II: SINGLE H.

Varieties with letter H between exergual lines; straight-top flag.

23. (W. 14; G. 12). Obverse, a line runs from lowest fore-sail to unfurled sprit-sail; jib larger than in other varieties; furled sails on miz-

zen-mast and bow-sprit are solid as distinguished from No. 39, where these sails are shown by lines with a hollow between them. This obverse in Nos. 23 to 31 is found with and without certain of the reverse letters incused on the obverse between the sails in two different positions. Reverse, letters in COLONIES widely spaced; words COLONIES and COMMERCE far apart; all E's nicked at top of left upright; beads in border not of uniform size; cut-knob &. Found in brassy copper on thin flan with whole dies and in copper on thick flans with whole and cracked dies. R. 6.

24. (W. 13; G. 12). Obverse, same as No. 23. Reverse, same as No. 23, except border, in which the dots are of uniform size, apparently re-sunk after a large number had been struck from the die with the irregular dots, which is much commoner; cut-knob &. Found with perfect and defective reverse borders. R. 9.

25. (W. 15; G. —). Obverse, same as No. 23. Reverse, medium-sized letters closely spaced; three die-cracks distinguish this reverse from that of No. 40, which only shows one or none; both show a defect at third bead below last E of COMMERCE, but the beading is different, as noted under No. 40; bar &. R. 10.

26. (W. 16; G. 8). Obverse, same as No. 23. Reverse, very large letters; gap in stem which carries knob of &; lower strokes of EEE do not extend to left of uprights; beads of border run together; cut-knob &. Found in red copper with well struck and weakly struck ropes, and in brassy copper with weak ropes. R. 4.

27. (W. 17; G. 25). Obverse, same as No. 23. Reverse, small letters closely spaced; upright of L in COLONIES is nicked to right at top and to left at bottom; a small hump on final down-stroke of R in COMMERCE; round-knob &. Perfect and defective reverse borders. R. 5.

28. (W. 18; G. 10). Obverse, same as No. 23. Reverse, border toothed instead of dotted; blunt tail to R of COMMERCE; cut-knob &. This was regarded by Mr. Gibbs as a sub-variety of his No. 10; it was first given a separate number on Mr. Wood's chart. Found with well struck and weakly struck ropes and whole and broken dies. R. 4.

29. (W. 19; G. 10). Obverse, same as No. 23. Reverse, toothed border; MM of COMMERCE close together; nick in left side of upright of first E in COMMERCE just below upper horizontal line; first S of SHIPS not double-cut as in next; small dot under final S of SHIPS; cut-knob &. Nearly all show light cracks between letters of SHIPS and thence to E of COLONIES. Found with perfect reverse border and with breaks in some and with upper terminals of final SS of SHIPS and COLONIES joined to body of letter by rust spots in die, and not so joined; these in various combinations with the incused letters on obverse and without them. R. 3.

30. (W. 20; G. 10). Obverse, same as No. 23. Reverse, toothed border; MM of COMMERCE farther apart than in No. 29; first S of SHIPS and last E of COMMERCE double-cut; first E of COMMERCE not nicked; character "&" more to left than in 29; cut-knob &. This first appears under a separate number in Wood's chart. R. 2.

31. (W. 21; G. 9). Obverse, same as No. 23. Reverse, same as No. 30, except that part of the serif or left foot of N in COLONIES is wanting and lower end of upright centre-stroke of last E in COMMERCE is cut off; cut-knob &. Found with whole dies and with various cracks in both dies. This is the commonest variety of the series. R. 1.

32. (W. 26; G. 11). Obverse (not shown on plate) is same as No. 23, but with a short line, probably from an accidental injury to the die, projecting from right side of unfurled mizzen-sail. Reverse, same as No. 29; cut-knob &. Reverse varies from upright at different angles in both directions. Found with perfect and defective obverse border. R. 4.

33. (W. —; G. —). Obverse, same as No. 32. Reverse, same as No. 27; round-knob &. It is exceedingly rare; the only two I have seen have the defect in reverse border below COMMERCE. R. 10.

GROUP III: DOUBLE H.

Varieties with letter H between exergual lines and incused on waves; straight-top flag.

34. (W. 8; G. 7). Obverse, no line from lowest fore-sail to unfurled sprit-sail; small jib; the upper of two lines running from unfurled mizzen-sail is double-cut. Reverse, I of SHIPS directly over O of COLONIES, the

only instance; misshapen N in COLONIES; bar &. Found with whole and cracked reverse dies. R. 8.

35. (W. 9; G. 22). Obverse, same as No. 34. Reverse, same as No. 19; bar &. Found with whole and cracked obverse dies. R. 9.

36. (W. 10; G. 14). Obverse, same as No. 34. Reverse, C of COLONIES over C of COMMERCE; club-knob & with thick, sharp tail. Found with whole and cracked dies; nominally a straight reverse but seldom found exactly so. R. 8.

37. (W. 11; G. 17). Obverse, same as No. 34. Reverse, C of COLONIES more to right than in last; club-knob & with thick, blunt tail. Like last diverges from straight at different angles. R. 7.

38. (W. 12; G. 13). Obverse, same as No. 34. Reverse, large, heavy letters; cut-knob &. Almost always shows more or less distinct cracks inside reverse border. Found with large and small, regular and irregular dots in borders and with whole and cracked dies. R. 5.

39. (W. 22; G. 16). Obverse, a line runs from lowest fore-sail to unfurled sprit-sail; jib not joined to sprit-sail; yard of sprit-sail does not project beyond sail; a ball shows where mizzen top-guys join mast; a small spike projects upward from top ball of fore-mast. Reverse, same as No. 38; cut-knob &. R. 9.

40. (W. 23; G. 21). Obverse, same as No. 39. Reverse, same as No. 25 but with none, or only one, of the die-cracks noted under that number; there is, however, a difference in the beads of reverse border, which are larger and more run together than in 25; bar &. R. 8.

41. (W. 24; G. 24). Obverse, same as No. 39. Reverse, same as No. 10; round-knob &. Found with straight and upset reverse, with and without rust spots in and above C of COLONIES, and with whole and cracked dies. Straight reverse, R. 8; upset reverse, R. 5.

42. (W. 25; G. —). Obverse, same as No. 39. Reverse, club-knob & with thin, sharp tail. Appears first in Wood's chart. R. 8.

43. (W. 29; G. 26). Obverse, a line runs from lowest fore-sail to unfurled sprit-sail; jib not joined to sprit-sail; yard of sprit-sail projects beyond sail. Reverse, I in SHIPS and L in COLONIES are weakly struck; a crack runs from left border through COM, touches & and runs to right border near S of COLONIES; round-knob &. R. 9.

44. (W. 30; G. 26). Obverse, same as No. 43. Reverse, similar to No. 43, but with I and L well struck; CO in COLONIES farther apart than in 43; no crack in reverse die; round-knob &. R. 7.

45. (W. 31; G. 18). Obverse, same as No. 43. Reverse, same as No. 37; club-knob & with thick, blunt tail. Found with straight, quarter-upset and half-upset reverse and whole and cracked dies. R. 6.

46. (W. 32; G. 15). Obverse, same as No. 43. Reverse, same as No. 42; club-knob & with thin, sharp tail; whole and cracked dies. R. 5.

Red Deer, Alberta, Canada, October, 1916.