

A picture gallery of U.S. colonial coins and tokens

Prior to the establishment of the U.S. Mint in 1792, several of the original colonies and states made their own coins, or in some cases coins or tokens were made elsewhere (usually in England, Ireland or France) for use in the American colonies. There are also some post-1792 private issues, often depicting George Washington, that are considered part of the U.S. colonial coin series. For more information, see *A Guide Book of United States Coins* ("Red Book").

Collecting colonial coins is more popular "back east," but there are a few Pacific Northwest collectors who have built collections of colonials, and there is an annual meeting of the Colonial Coin Collectors Club (C4) at the annual PNNA spring convention. "The Colonial Era" introduction on the next page was originally written for a C4 display at an ANA show in the Northwest.

The coins and tokens pictured in this gallery are from a local collection that was sold, with the exception that the Fugio Cent was from a different private collection. Enjoy!

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THE COLONIAL ERA

Coins, Tokens, Medals, and Paper Currency of Early America

This is a more general introduction to numismatic items dated from the 1500's to 1820 that either circulated in early America (the colonies, or the states prior to the U.S. Constitution) or were issued as commemorative medals. The picture gallery is a set of items from a particular collection.

Foreign coins circulated widely in early America. The Spanish Milled Dollar, or "Piece of Eight," was the most famous of these foreign coins. "Cob" coins valued at 4 reales were also made from the earliest era of Spanish exploration and conquest in the New World. Coins were also made for the French colonies, including denier and sou denominations of copper coins.

Many colonial coppers dated prior to the Revolution were of private origin, including the St. Patrick Farthing, Wood's Hibernia Halfpenny, Rosa Americana Twopence, and the Pitt Token. The Virginia Halfpenny was authorized by the Crown, but saw limited circulation because it was produced so close to the start of the American Revolution in 1776.

Post-Revolutionary copper issues between 1783 and 1788 were dominated by the coinages of the states of Vermont, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and New York. State coinage was discontinued after 1788 due to the adoption of the U.S. Constitution, which gives coinage authority to the Federal Government. The Fugio Cent, privately minted in 1787, was the first coin issued by authority of the United States.

Later private issues, such as the Washington Ship Halfpenny, were often intended as patterns for proposed Federal coinage. (George Washington rejected the idea of using his portrait on U.S. coinage.) The Talbot, Allum & Lee cents, minted in England in 1794 and 1795, were circulated in the New York City area. Trade tokens continued to be used by many businesses throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries. One especially scarce and well-known trade token is the Northwest Company Token of 1820. These tokens were used in the lower Columbia River valley in Oregon. The value of the token was one beaver skin.

Paper currency was also used in early America due to a shortage of coins and tokens. Several states issued this currency, and there was also the well-known Continental Currency.

For more information about early American numismatics, contact the Colonial Coin Collectors Club (C4) at <http://colonialcoins.org/>. Early American Coppers (EAC), at <http://eacs.org/>, also covers U.S. colonials as well as early U.S. Mint coppers (large cents and half cents).

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Page 1 - The period before the Revolutionary War

Pine Tree Shilling



Massachusetts Colony
Dated 1652,
actually struck 1667-1682.
(obverse)

Pine Tree Shilling



Massachusetts Colony
Dated 1652,
actually struck 1667-1682.
(reverse)

Saint Patrick Farthing



c. 1670-1675
brought to America in 1681.
(obverse) - The coin pictured here
is currently identified as variety
B208.0, of which only four other
examples are known, according to
John M. Griffiee.

Saint Patrick Farthing



c. 1670-1675
brought to America in 1681.
(reverse)

American Plantations Token



1688 (restruck c. 1828)
(obverse)

American Plantations Token



1688 (restruck c. 1828)
(reverse)

Rosa Americana Twopence



1722
(obverse)

Rosa Americana Twopence



1722
(reverse)

Wood's Hibernia Halfpenny



1723
(obverse)
Both the Rosa and the Hibernia
were ventures of William Wood, an
Englishman with a royal patent to
make tokens.

Wood's Hibernia Halfpenny



1723
(reverse)

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Page 2 - The period before the Revolutionary War (continued)

French Billon Coinage



1739 sou marque
(obverse)

French Billon Coinage



1739 sou marque
(reverse)

French Colonies



1767 sou
(obverse)

French Colonies



1767 sou
(reverse - counterstamped "RF" for
"République Française")

Hibernia - Voce Populi Token



1760
(obverse)

Hibernia - Voce Populi Token



1760
(reverse)

William Pitt Token



1766 Halfpenny
(obverse)

William Pitt Token



1766 Halfpenny
(reverse)

Virginia Halfpenny



1773
(obverse)

Virginia Halfpenny



1773
(reverse)

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Page 3 - The period after the Revolutionary War: State Coinages

Connecticut Copper



1788
(obverse)

Connecticut Copper



1788
(reverse)

Massachusetts Cent



1788
(obverse)

Massachusetts Cent



1788
(reverse)

New Jersey Copper



1788
(obverse)

New Jersey Copper



1788
(reverse)

New York (Nova Eborac) Copper



1787
(obverse)

New York (Nova Eborac) Copper



1787
(reverse)

Vermont Copper



1786 "Landscape Issue"
(obverse)

Vermont Copper



1786 "Landscape Issue"
(reverse)

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Page 4 - The period after the Revolutionary War: Misc. Coinages

North American Token



1781
(obverse)
Made in Dublin, Ireland later than
the date shown.

North American Token



1781
(reverse)

Nova Constellatio Copper



"New Constellation"
1783
(obverse)
Made in England.
Private coinage venture.

Nova Constellatio Copper



"New Constellation"
1783
(reverse)

Bar Copper



undated, c. 1785
(obverse)
Believed to have been made in
England for a New York merchant
using a Continental military uni-
form button as a prototype.

Bar Copper



undated, c. 1785
(reverse)

Immunis Columbia



1787
(obverse)
Possible prototype for Federal
coinage.

Immunis Columbia



1787
(reverse)

Fugio Cent



1787
(obverse)
First coin authorized by the Conti-
nental Congress.

Fugio Cent



1787
(reverse)

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Page 5 - The period after the Revolutionary War: Misc. Coinages (continued)

"Kentucky" Token



c. 1792-1794
(obverse)
Made in England.

"Kentucky" Token



c. 1792-1794
(reverse - "K" appears at top of triangle; otherwise not directly connected with Kentucky)

Washington & Independence (Military Bust) Cent



Dated 1783,
actually made in early 1800's.
(obverse); one of a number of
Washington pieces.

Washington & Independence (Military Bust) Cent



Dated 1783,
actually made in early 1800's.
(reverse)

Mott Token



Dated 1789,
actually made c. 1809 or later.
(obverse)
See
[The Mott Token - The Final Chapter](#)
by William Anton and John Lorenzo.

Mott Token



Dated 1789,
actually made c. 1809 or later.
(reverse)

Franklin Press Token



1794
(obverse)
English tradesman's token with
connection to Benjamin Franklin.

Franklin Press Token



1794
(reverse)

Talbot, Allum and Lee Cent



1795
(obverse)
Made in England; company based
in New York City and involved in
trade with India.

Talbot, Allum and Lee Cent



1795
(reverse)