

## The CNLF Checklist of Early American Counterfeit Halfpence Believed Struck in America

by

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In 1964 Robert A. (Bob) Vlack published two photographic plates entitled "American 'Tory' Halfpence Struck at Machin's Mill, New York." These two plates were made up of photographs from the collections of Eric P. Newman, Robert A. Vlack and Edward R. Barnsley, plus – possibly – one or two others. Although dimmed by the shadows of numismatic history, the attribution of these various specimens to an American mint, and specifically to the mint of Thomas Machin, was first suggested in 1886 by C. Wylly Betts in his address to the American Numismatic & Archaeological Society (ANS) on this subject (See CNL-60, June 1981, "The Annotated Betts"). Betts' attribution was later expanded upon by Howard Kurth in the 1940s and even further by Walter Breen and Eric Newman in the 1950s. Bob's die variety designations carried a simple number-letter designation, i.e. 4-D.

Ten years later, in 1974, Bob published two more plates showing eleven additional die variety combinations. These two plates were entitled "Early English Counterfeit Halfpence Struck in America." The attribution to Machin's Mills was no longer carried in the title and Bob had developed a new numbering scheme for the die varieties based on the year date on the reverse of each combination. In the case above, 4-D became 3-71B.

Since that time – in 1974 – four more die variety combinations have been discovered and given the appropriate designations. The die variety designations are detailed on the following checklist under their appropriate columns, 1964, 1974 and "Later Discoveries."

Rarity estimates, as well, have changed over time. The current rarity as revised by Ed Sarrafian is presented in the year 2001 rarity column. All rarity values are based on the Sheldon Scale.

Over the years these counterfeit British halfpence specimens have been known by a number of names, including Tory Halfpence, Machin's Mills Halfpence, Atlee Halfpence (James F. Atlee was the die sinker for the Machin organization) and Counterfeit Halfpence Struck in America. Today, the general group are commonly referred to as Machin's Mills pieces. Recent research by Gary Trudgen divides the majority of these particular specimens into four groups, primarily originating from the hand of die sinker James F. Atlee, with Groups 1 and 2 struck in New York City and Groups 3 and 4 at Machin's Mills.

A few researchers insist that there is no positive evidence that any of these pieces originated at the mills of Thomas Machin. For most of the early American coinages there is very little positive evidence that any specific coins originated at any specific mint site. We can only surmise and theorize, based on testimony of contemporary reports, that such coins did originate at certain places and until more specific evidence appears, there is little more that can be said about these origins. If evidence appears that some of these assumptions are in error, they will be published and corrections made to the published theories.

A detailed discussion of the Machin's Mills operations can be viewed on the University of Notre Dame Early American Numismatic Website at:

<http://www.coins.nd.edu/ColCoin/ColCoinIntros/Machin.intro.html>

URL links to the 1964 and 1974 Vlack plates are given at the conclusion of the discussion.

**CNLF Checklist of Early American Counterfeit Halfpence  
Believed Struck In America <sup>1</sup>**

Date on Specimen	Designations <sup>2</sup>		Later Discoveries	Rarity <sup>3</sup>			Comments
	1964 Plates	1974 Plates		1964	1974	2001	
1747	1-A	1-47		5	5	5	GEORGIVS.II.REX, only bust left
1771	2-B	2-71A		4	4	4	
1771	4-D	3-71B		5	5	5	
1771		4-71C		-	8	7+	
1771			4-71D	-	-	8	Discovered 1989, not on plates
1772	5-E	5-72A		6	6	6	
1772	3-E	6-72A		7	7	6+	
1772		7-72B		-	7	6+	GEORGIUS, V replaced by U
1772			24-72C	-	-	6+	Discovered 1981, not on plates
1774	4-F	3-74A		4	4	6	
1774		7-74A		-	7	6	GEORGIUS, V replaced by U
1774	6-F	8-74A		5	5	4	
1775		4-75A		-	2	4	
1776	3-C	6-76A		2	2	4	Large date
1776	7-G	9-76B		8	8	7	CEORCIVS, small date
1777	8-H	10-77A		8	8	8	See Note 4
1778	11-J	11-78A		1	1	3	
1778	9-I	12-78B		3	3	3	
1778	10-I	13-78B		3	3	5	
1784		14-84A		-	8	6	Small head on a thin neck <sup>4</sup>
1785	12-NY	15-85NY		6	6	6	CEORCIVS III.REX./IMMUNE COLUMBIA
1786		16-86A		-	8	-	Large head, 7 shield stripes <sup>4</sup>
1786		CT-86A		-	8	8	AUCTORI CONNEC, same reverse <sup>4</sup>
1787		13-87CT		-	7	8	Reverse of 1787 G.2 Connecticut
1787	15-L	17-87A		3	3	2	
1787	15-M	17-87B		3	3	2	
1787			17-87E	-	-	7+	Discovered 1977, not on plates
1787	13-K	18-87C		3	3	4	
1787	14-K	19-87C		2	2	2	
1787		20-87C		-	8	7	
1787	VT-K	VT-87C		1	1	1	Vermont Ryder 13, reverse die worn
1787		21II-87C		-	8	7	
1787	16-N	21II-87DII		5	5	4	
1787		21I-87DI		-	6	6+	Dies of last, periphery worn
1787			23-87C	-	-	7+	Discovered 1983, not on plates
1788	10-CT	13-88CT		3	3	4	Reverse of 1788 D Connecticut
1788	17-VT	22-88VT		4	4	4	Vermont Ryder 31, reverse die worn
1788	18-0	23-88A		1	1	2	
Undated	7-NY	9-87NY		8	8	8	CEORCIVS, Indian reverse

1. These counterfeit specimens have been known by various names over time, including Tory Halfpence, Machin's Mills Halfpence, Atlee Halfpence and Counterfeit Halfpence Struck in America. Using the terminology developed by Byron K. Weston, varieties 10-77A and 14-84A are considered "Anonymous," and 16-86A and CT-86A are obviously NOT Atlee/Machin products.
2. Designations - The first refers to the plates produced in 1964 by Bob Vlack, the second to his plates as revised in 1974.
3. Rarities - the standard Sheldon scale; the first (1964) and second (1974) by Bob Vlack, and the third (2001) by Ed Sarrafian.
4. These varieties are now considered to be from a source other than "Machin's Mills." The remainder can be broken into four groups, where Groups 1 and 2 were probably produced in NYC before Machin's Mills became operational.