

An Intriguing "Collection" from Springfield, Ohio

by Tony Chibbaro, NTCA CM#252

If you have been collecting exnumia for as long as I have, chances are you have come across some interesting accumulations from time to time. Such was the case for me last year when I was offered a group of tokens by an acquaintance. The group was comprised of 93 items (mostly trade tokens, but with some keys, tags, and foreign coins mixed in) strung together by small brass rings into 3 long "chains" measuring about 3 feet each.

The "collector" who put together this "collection" many years ago drilled two holes in each item, usually at 6 and 12 o'clock, and placed small brass jump rings into each hole. He then connected the items into a long chain which has since broken apart into 3 pieces. This "collector" was most likely from the Springfield, Ohio area, as almost a third of the items seem to be connected to that city in one way or another. I have had this "collection" sitting on my desk now for over a year. I haven't yet mustered the courage to take it apart, even though it contains some really neat pieces like a horsehead-shaped saloon token, an unlisted BBC token, and an unlisted Indian Territory trade token. My hesitation is two-fold. The group needs to be documented, as it contains quite a few mavericks which might be more easily attributed if examined in the context of the other tokens in the group. Also, I can't quite bring myself to destroy such a neat "window" into the past.

So, in order to fulfill the need for documenting the group, I will list each item in order as it appears in the "chain." Standard token-listing format and abbreviations are used.

1. (trade token) - EBERLE / & / HARTMANN / CAFÉ // GF / 5¢ / IT rd, br, 25mm
2. (trade token) - H.J. SHEELY / 13 / W. / MAIN ST. // GF / 2½¢ oval, alum, 19x27mm
3. (foreign coin) - Four Chinese ideograms, probably a Chinese or Korean cash coin
4. (tool check) - 207 (incuse serial number) / THE FOOS GAS ENGINE CO. rd, br, 29mm
5. (trade token) - H.J. SHEELY / 13 / W. MAIN ST. // BOTTLE / 5¢ / CHECK horseshoe-shaped, alum, 26x29mm
6. (trade token) - A / 1 // GF / 5¢ / IT rd, br, 21mm
7. (trade token) - MOOSE HOME / 5 / NO. 536 / SPRINGFIELD (sic), O. // (moose head pictorial) rd, alum, 26.5mm
8. (trade token) - LAGOS BROS / 5 // (Wadsworth signature) / GF / 5¢ / IT rd, br, 23mm
9. (trade token) - MOOSE HOME / 5 / NO. 73 / DAYTON, / OHIO. // (moose head pictorial) rd, alum, 27mm
10. (trade token) - ST. JAMES HOTEL / GF / 5¢ / IT // 5¢ scal (8), br, 29mm
11. (trade token) - GF / 5¢ / HILDERHOF (on panel) / IN / TRADE // 5 oct, alum, 27.5mm
12. (trade token) - G.S. / BAY HORSE / EXCHANGE // GF / 5¢ / IT horsehead-shaped, br, 23x31mm
13. (trade token) - THE / DAIRY / KITCHEN // GF / ONE / MEAL rd, alum, 29.5mm
14. (slot machine token) - 7648 / GF 5¢ IT rd, br, 21mm, c/h
15. (trade token) - CENTRAL / CAFÉ. // 15¢ rd, nickel, 29mm, all incuse
16. (trade token) - H.E. WALTON / 5 // (Ingle System 1909 signature) rd, br, 19.5mm
17. (telephone token?) - C B C // LL rd, br, 18mm, c/h extending to edge at 6 o'clock
18. (foreign coin) - 1906 Canadian Large Cent
19. (slot machine token) - 3957 // GF / 25 / IT rd, nickel-plated steel, 18mm, all incuse
20. (trade token) - H.M. / McDONALD / B M C / SPRINGFIELD, O // (Wadsworth signature) shield-shaped, br, 24x25mm
21. (slot machine token) - 3957 // GF / 10 / IT rd, nickel-plated steel, 18mm, all incuse
22. (trade token) - 5 / J.J. BETZOLD. // (blank) rd, br, 23mm

23. (slot machine token) - 3957 // GF / 50 / IT rd, nickel, 18mm, all incuse
24. (dog license) - DOG TAX / 481 / SPRINGFIELD / 1911 // (blank) lock-shaped, br, 27x33mm
25. (trade token) - (name obliterated) // GF / 5 / IT oct, br, 22mm, all incuse
26. (trade token) - GF / 5¢ / HILDERHOF (on panel) / IN / TRADE // 5 oct, alum, 27.5mm
27. (trade token) - 214 / N. HIGH ST. // GF / 5 / AT BAR rd, br, 23mm, all incuse
28. (trade token) - NATIONAL / BILLIARD / HALL / HERR / & HUSTMYER // GF / 2½c / IN / TRADE sq w/ clipped corners, alum, 24mm
29. (tag) - THE PEOPLES / LIGHT, HEAT & POWER CO. / 139 (incuse) / SERIES / ARC. // (Wadsworth signature) rd, br, 46mm, all lettering except serial number is in relief inside incuse rectangles
30. (trade token) - 5 / W // (eagle on wreath pictorial) scal (16), alum, 31mm
31. (key) - Key for Yale Paracentric door lock
32. (trade token) - LOCKWOOD'S / BAKERY / MUNCIE, IND. // GF / ONE LOAF / OF / BREAD rd, alum, 26mm
33. (tool check?) - F O G // 2208 rd, br, 26mm, all incuse
34. (trade token) - JACKSON HOTEL BUFFET / OXFORD HOTEL / BUFFET / CHICAGO. / JACKSON BLVD. / & / HALSTED ST. / ADAMS & CANAL STS. // GF 5 CENTS / 5 / ON YOUR / NEXT WHISKEY oct, alum, 25mm
35. (trade token) - S. & K. // GF / 6¼ / IT rd, br, 21mm
36. (trade token) - THE IDEAL / BILLIARD / PARLORS / 141 W. CENTER ST. / ANAHEIM, CAL. / (L.A. Rubber Stamp Co. signature) // GF / 5¢ (within curl) / IT scal (4), alum, 27mm
37. (foreign coin) - unidentifiable foreign coin
38. (trade token) - NEW / FLORIDA // C.W.L. rd, alum, 27mm
39. (slot machine token) - 2706 // GF / 5¢ / IT rd, br, 21mm
40. (trade token) - F // 5 rd, br, 21mm
41. (trade token) - GARAGE CAFÉ / (old car pictorial) / 697 WOODWARD AVE. // GF / 10¢ / IT / AT THE BAR oct, alum, 26mm

42. (vehicle license) - (Hiss, Columbus, Ohio signature) / 2 HORSE VEHICLE / 2121 / SP'F'D OHIO. // (blank) Roman numeral "X"-shaped, nickel-plated brass, 47x62mm
43. (trade token) - WOLFE & COMBS / BAR / 5 / IT // (Wadsworth signature) rd, br, 21mm



44. (trade token) - ENDICOTT / MERC. CO. / WILBURTON, I.T. // GF / 1¢ / IM rd, br, 18mm
45. (trade token) - C.H. / FERGUSON // 5 rd, alum, 23mm
46. (trade token) - A.J. PAUL / 5 / BELVIDERE / 107 / W. MAIN ST. // 5 rd, br, 21mm
47. (trade token) - THE / HOME. // (Wadsworth signature) shield-shaped, br, 24x25mm
48. (trade token) - CRESCENT / SALOON // (same) rd, br, 21mm
49. (trade token) - F // 5 rd, br, 21mm
50. (trade token) - (ornate monogram MC or CM) // (same) rd, br, 21mm
51. (trade token) - CHERRY HOTEL / BAR / 5 / IT // (Wadsworth signature) rd, br, 21mm



52. (trade token) - GF / 5¢ / IT / E. HYNES / SPRINGFIELD, / OHIO. // (BBC signature) rd, br, 25mm

53. (trade token) - BARRY'S EXCHANGE / WASHINGTON C.H. / OHIO. // GF / 5¢ / IT rd, br, 21mm
54. (vehicle license) - SPRINGFIELD, O. / VEHICLE LICENSE / \$050 / No 3915 / BICYCLE 1909 // (blank) sq w/ clipped sides, br, 39mm, all lettering incuse
55. (trade token) - CAPT. HENRY SEIBERT / 440 / S. HIGH ST. / COL, O. // GF / 5¢ / IT rd, alum, 28mm
56. (trade token) - NONPAREIL / CLUB. / 12 (numerals incuse) / SPRINGFIELD / OHIO. // (Wadsworth signature) scal (4) w/ points, br, 32mm
57. (key) - skeleton key of unknown manufacturer
58. (trade token) - CHARLES // SCHULLMAN rd, br, 21mm



59. (trade token) - JUHLING'S / SALOON / MIDDLEPORT / OHIO // GF / 5¢ / IT horsehead-shaped, alum, 23x31mm
60. (tag) - SPRINGFIELD / METALLIC / CASKET CO. / SPRINGFIELD, O. // (blank) rd, br, 24mm
61. (transit token) - FIFTH STREET RR CO / DAYTON, O. // ONE / FARE rd, yellow celluloid, 22mm, c/h
62. (token) - OHIO STATE JOURNAL / LUCKY / 14756 (numerals incuse on panel) / CHECK // WATCH OHIO STATE JOURNAL DAILY / KEEP THIS / IT MAY BE / WORTH / \$500 rd, alum, 29mm
63. (dog license) - 1911 DOG TAX / 3 / SPRINGFIELD // (blank) doghead-shaped, br, 26x33mm
64. (Civil War token) - E.C. SAYLOR / DAILY / MEAT / MARKET / TIPPECANOE, O. // (steer pictorial) rd, copper, 19mm

65. (trade token) - COHAN / 5 / C. & C. / 5 / CAVANAUGH. // (Wadsworth signature) rd, br, 23mm
66. (tag) - C / 352 // (blank) oval, br, 21x33mm
67. (slot machine token) - YALE WONDER CLOCK / 5¢ / IT // CLOCK No / 697 rd, alum, 23mm, all lettering incuse
68. (trade token) - GF / 5¢ / JOHN E. LYNCH (on panel) / IN / TRADE // 5 rd, br, 27mm
69. (trade token) - A / 1 // GF / 5¢ / IT rd, br, 21mm
70. (trade token) - B. SCANLAN / 2 / PRIMROSE // (Wadsworth signature) rd, br, 21mm
71. (trade token) - PONY HOUSE / (horse pictorial) / 125 S. JEFFERSON ST. // DAYTON / 2½c / OHIO. rd, br, 29mm
72. (slot machine token) - 3957 // GF / 100 / IT rd, brass, 18mm, all incuse
73. (transit token) - MUNICIPAL TRACTION CO. // 3 CENT TICKET / 1908 rd, alum, 21mm, c/h
74. (foreign coin) - 1861 British Large Cent
75. (trade token) - THE ECHO // GF / 5¢ / AT THE BAR oct, br, 26.5mm
76. (trade token) - NATIONAL JUNIOR REPUBLIC / 50 / 1899 // LIBERTY EXALTS LABOR / (capitol dome pictorial) rd, alum, 32mm
77. (fob) - "SHE WAS / BRED / (man and horse pictorial seen on Green River Whiskey tokens) / IN OLD / KENTUCKY" // THE OFFICIAL WHISKEY OF THE U.S. MARINE HOSPITAL SERVICE / HIGHEST AWARDS / PARIS 1900 / ST. LOUIS 1904 / LIEGE 1905 / PORTLAND 1905 / MILAN, ITALY 1906 / JAMESTOWN / 1907 / (S.D. Childs, Chicago, signature) oval, nickel-plated brass, 33x43mm
78. (trade token) - ?. H. / GEISLER // GF / 5¢ / AT BAR rd, alum, 24mm
79. (trade token) - SCOTT // (Wadsworth signature) / 5 rd, br, 21mm
80. (slot machine token) - 1858 // GF / 5¢ / IT rd, br, 21mm
81. (trade token) - BAUM // GF / 5¢ / IT rd, br, 21mm
82. (trade token) - THE FOUNTAIN / 30 / EAST 5TH ST. / STEFFEN / BROS. / PROPS / DAYTON, O. // 2½c rd, alum, 21mm
83. (trade token) - C. BURRELL / 120 / CLIFTON / ST. // (Wadsworth signature) rd, br, 21mm

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| <p>84. (trade token) - J.L. FLANERY, / PIANOS / SPRINGFIELD, O. // (Wadsworth signature) rd, br, 21mm</p> <p>85. (trade token) - 5 / W // (eagle on wreath pictorial) scal (16), alum, 31mm</p> <p>86. (trade token) - E.G. FREY / KENTON, / OHIO. // THIRST / 5¢ / PARLOR rd, br, 21mm</p> <p>87. (trade token) - CHERRY / 2½ / HOTEL // (Wadsworth signature) rd, alum, 23mm</p> <p>88. (tag) - THE PEOPLES LT. HT. & PR. CO. / 1243 (numerals incuse) / NERNST / LAMP. // (Wadsworth signature) rd, br, 29mm, looped</p> | <p>89. (slot machine token) - MACH. / 44 / P.J. // GF / 5¢ / P.J. / IT rd, nickel, 21mm, c/o</p> <p>90. (trade token) - H. RANKIN / 5 / BELVIDERE / 73 / W. MAIN ST. // (Wadsworth signature) / 5 rd, br, 22mm</p> <p>91. (slot machine token) - THE OHIO PHONOGRAPH Co / (star pictorial) // (same) rd, nickel-plated brass, 21mm</p> <p>92. (message wheel) - R. McKEEVER, URBANA OHIO. / ST. LOUIS 1904 / (building pictorial) // (blank) rd, alum, 32mm</p> <p>93. (trade token) - SENATE // GOOD / FOR / PIANO rd, br, 21mm</p> |
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Now, a few comments and speculations on the above "collection." Twenty-two of the pieces actually mention Springfield, Ohio by name, including fifteen items made by the Wadsworth Engraving Company. There are four metal license tags, all issued by the city of Springfield and dated between 1909 and 1911 - two dog licenses, one bicycle license, and one wagon license. Four of the six tool checks or similar tags are from Springfield. And at least twenty-two of the sixty trade tokens were struck or issued by Springfield businessmen. (Probably several of the unattributed maverick tokens can also be shown to be from that area by an astute collector with a good group of research tools.) So, I believe the odds are good that the "collector" who spent a good deal of his spare time stringing this group together lived in Springfield himself. But who was he? Well, there may be a clue offered by item number 92 in the list above. Note that the item is an identification tag which NTCA member Clark Rohmer calls a "message wheel." It is a type of aluminum ID tag which was made by a machine often found at county fairs, bus stations, and tourist destinations in the 1950s and 1960s. I remember seeing one in the mid-1960s located in a W.T. Grant's department store in Greenville, SC. I made my own message wheel (I still have it, by the way) by putting a quarter into the machine and spinning a large dial, resting it on each letter that I wanted placed onto the tag. Then I pulled down an arm which caused the letter to be imprinted into the tag, and moved the dial to the next letter.

Item 92 is one of the earliest message wheels that I recall seeing. The middle of the tag has a die struck scene showing one of the buildings constructed for the 1904 St. Louis Worlds Fair. Above the building are the words ST. LOUIS 1904. Around the outer edge is the "message" part of the tag - R. McKEEVER, URBANA OHIO. Obviously this tag was made by (or for) someone named R. McKeever (of Urbana, Ohio) while visiting the St. Louis Exposition. But is he the same person that put together the "collection" of tokens and tags? Who knows? Perhaps someone with a 1910 or 1911 Springfield city directory can see if there is a corresponding listing for that name. If so, then we may have the name of our mystery "collector"!

Another interesting speculation can be made by comparing the ratio of listed tokens in the group to those that are unlisted or unpublished. Of the sixty trade tokens in the group, only twenty have been published in any of the state token catalogs or major maverick indices (e.g., TAMS, METCA, ATCO, NTCA, or IKO-TAMS). That means a full two-thirds of the tokens that our mystery "collector" put into his "collection" may not have been encountered by today's collectors until this group fell into my hands. If one accepts that this accumulation is a representative example of the tokens in "circulation" at the time and then extrapolates this ratio to the total number of trade tokens issued in the past 150 years, it means that we collectors have discovered only about a third of the total number of tokens ever issued. If this is true, I consider it great news, as it would mean that there are many, many more tokens out there just waiting to be found!