

In Retrospect

March 16, 2025

### #1 Connecticut Coppers

In the July 1961 issue of *The Colonial Newsletter* (p. 32-3), the colonial coin collector and numismatist, Edward Barnsley, reported on the discovery of a new 1787 Connecticut Copper reverse. Designated as the Z.25, it was included within the Miller system of attribution, though it was unlisted by Henry C. Miller in his 1920 survey. Barnsley included images taken by Cyril H. Hawley of the coin in his collection. Hawley's coin had the Z.25 reverse paired with the 33.29 obverse die. Another die combination using this reverse (33.48-Z.25) was discovered in 1970 by Richard Picker while reviewing coins from the Appleton/Massachusetts Historical Society collection, later sold by Stack's.

The 1787 Reverse Z.25 is described on page 531 of Randall Clark's award-winning C4 publication *The Identification and Classification of Connecticut Coppers*. Both die pairings remain very rare today. When an example of the 33.48-Z.25 was sold by Stack's Bowers Galleries in 2024 as part of the collection of past C4 Newsletter Editor and American Numismatic Society President, Sydney Martin, it was described as one of four known. In 2023 Stack's Bowers cataloged Martin's 33.29-Z.25 variety, as also only having four known examples.



1787 Connecticut Copper. Miller 33.48-Z.25, W-4040. Rarity-7+. Draped Bust Left. VG Details--Environmental Damage (PCGS). From the Sydney F. Martin Collection, Stack's Bowers Galleries, August 2024, lot 7238.

● A NEW CONNECTICUT REVERSE, Z(25) ●

The 1787 Connecticut "Z" reverses provide what is probably the most interesting sequence of sub-varieties in the entire Connecticut series. So the discovery of a new member of this family is indeed an event of great import.

Miller describes twenty-four different "Z" dies, many of which were, in the undersigned's opinion, altered one from the other. A good example of this might be cited from evidence of the blundered N of INDE which appears in both Z(21) and Z(22). Miller says of the former, "N struck with a punch altered probably from an O." Concerning the latter, he says, "N struck with same altered punch as in Z(21)."

I do not agree that there could possibly be such a thing as an N punch altered from an O punch, showing both letters at the same time. There would be no metal in the center of the O to make the diagonal of the N, unless the former were entirely ground down; but such is not the case because both letters are of equal height. Therefore, I believe that the blunder in question was made, like so many others in the legends and dates of the Early American Series, by first striking the die in error with an O punch, then correctly striking on top of it with an N punch. W. H. Breen evidently concurs in this theory; vide "Blundered Dies", item no. 35.

See the adjoining plate for an illustration of the aforementioned blundered N, which was kindly photographed by W. P. Keller from the 33(46)-Z(21) in his own collection. Our thanks to Mr. Keller for his cooperation.

As mentioned in the last Newsletter, Z(25) is a new die unknown to Miller. We are now pleased to publish for the first time its numismatic description as reported by C. H. Hawley who discovered the variety in combination with obverse 33(29). The accompanying illustration is also thru the courtesy of Mr. Hawley to whom we are deeply indebted for his courtesies.

"First cinquefoil slightly closer to foot than to I. I distant from N. NDE evenly spaced. First colon low; lower dot slightly below lowest horizontal stroke of E. Second, third and fourth cinquefoils widely but evenly spaced. Top leaf of branch points directly at third cinquefoil. Branch hand opposite E and the space between D and E. Fifth cinquefoil midway between head and pole, and on a horizontal plane. TL higher than adjoining letters. L tips slightly to left. Last cinquefoil opposite upper dot of colon, and close to shield. All figures in date break the lower exergue line. Numeral 8 higher than the others."

Edward R. Barnsley



1787 Connecticut Reverse Z<sup>21</sup> Showing Blundered  
N in INDE



New Connecticut Reverse Z<sup>25</sup> Reported by C.H. Hawley