

The W.W. Wilbur Auctioneer Tokens, Charleston SC | NovaNumismatics.com

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Created: 11/11/2015 1:51 PM

Updated: 11/11/2015 1:52 PM

Tags: WW Wilber SC Slave A

URL: <http://www.novanumismatics.com/numismatic-research/the-w-w-wilbur-auctioneer-tokens-charleston-sc/>

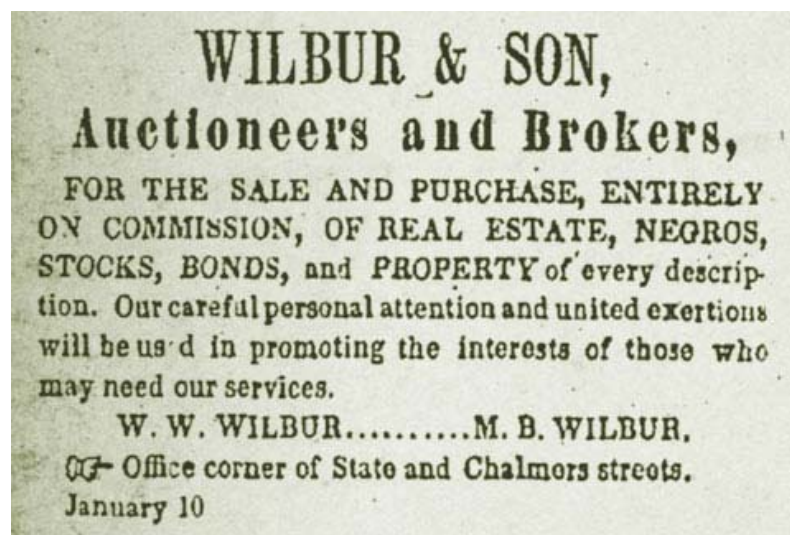
The W.W. Wilbur Auctioneer Tokens, Charleston SC



Slave Sale, Charleston South Carolina, Sketch by Eyre Crowe

William W. Wilbur is infamous for having been an auctioneer who owned and operated a mercantile during the pre-Civil War era of Charleston, South Carolina. Wilbur's business activities were quite varied, and included auctions, retail, brokering, notary, and most notoriously, being an active agent in the slave trade.

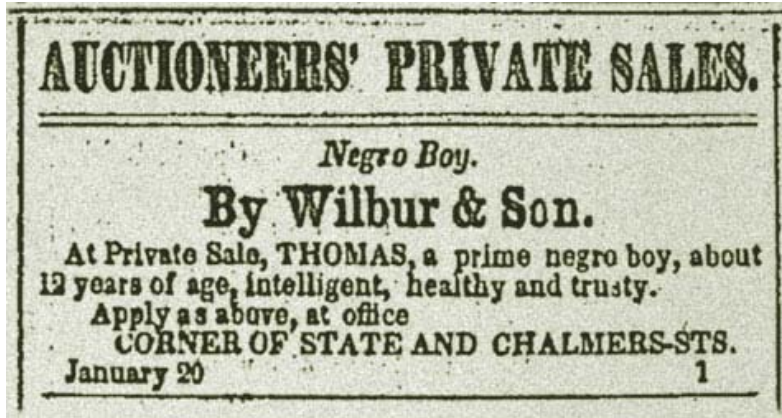
As a means to advertise, Wilbur issued storecard tokens to the public, and dispensed them to customers when giving change. The size of 1840s U.S. Large Cents, Wilbur's tokens were traded at the value of one cent.



Newspaper Advertisement: The Charleston Mercury, Monday January 10, 1859

Research indicates that there wasn't much that Wilbur wouldn't sell or attempt to purvey. Advertisements from The Charleston

Mercury beginning during the 1840s include Wilbur's promotions for utensils and cutlery, stationery and books, tea and coffee, fruit trees and flowers. Moreover, his auction notices include offerings of real estate and land, estate sales and dry goods, and most horribly, slaves and servants.

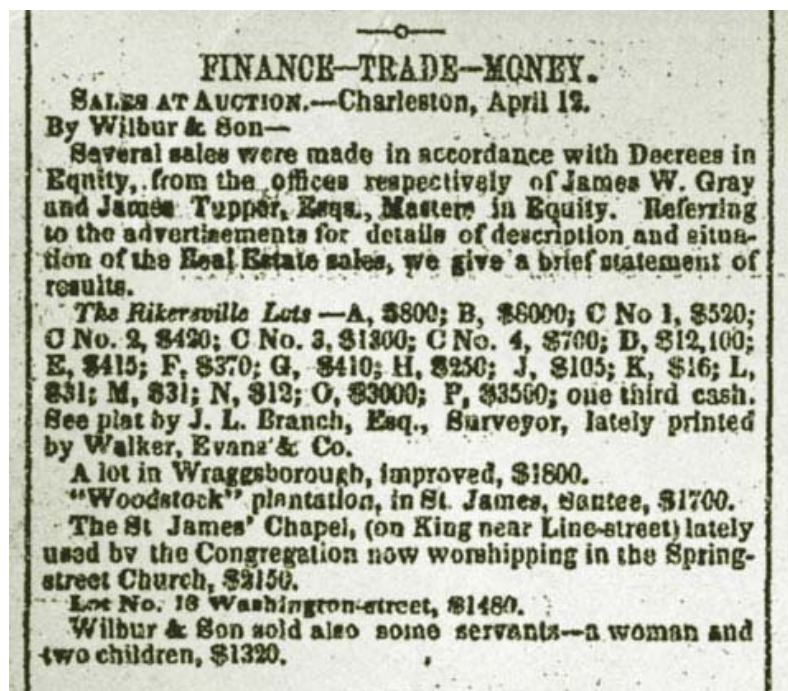


Newspaper Advertisement: The Charleston Mercury, Thursday January 20, 1859

Charleston newspapers of the era confirm the existence of W.W. Wilbur's ghastly slave trade, including, abominably, an advertisement for the sale of a 12 year old boy.



Sadly, in another, the published results of an auction where a mother and her two children were sold for \$1320.



Newspaper Notice: The Charleston Mercury, Thursday April 14, 1859

Numismatic Overview & Recent Discovery

Until only recently, Tony Chibbaro, author of South Carolina Tokens, reported 12 different confirmed varieties of W.W. Wilbur tokens. In July 2010 the author, A. Packard, discovered a another variety. Struck in brass, the token was then silvered.

Portions of the silvering on the discovery piece was worn off due to circulation:



Discovery Specimen

Upon examination of token photographs, Tony Chibbaro wrote:

"I have looked over your pictures and can tell that your token is an unpublished variety! Your token is not German silver (which would make it Adams/Miller 8B, Rulau SC8B), but is silvered brass. This is decidedly a silvered brass

planchet because the brass is plainly evident where the silver plating has worn off. This can easily be seen when looking at the figure of the auctioneer and the palmetto tree, both of which show the underlying brass planchet. I noted in my article that there were silvered brass examples of a different die linkage. Yours is the first silvered brass specimen reported in the die linkage 2-B."

Varieties, Types, and Diagnostics

Due in part to the number of specimens that are available in various numismatic venues, it is plausible that many thousands of these tokens were minted. And due to the multitude of various varieties proffered, it's most plausible that varieties of these tokens were minted over a period of several years.

With this recent discovery, there now exists 13 confirmed varieties of this token, with two distinct obverse types and three distinct reverse types. The various varieties consist of combinations of these obverse and reverses, in conjunction with various metal compositions.

The varieties are the following. Of all varieties, there exist 4 obverse types and two reverse types, pursuant to taxonomies by developed Tony Chibbaro.

Obverse Types

1. No period after 'CA'
2. Period after 'CA.'
3. Period after 'CA.,' also "GOING AT ONLY A PENNY"
4. No period after 'CA,' also "GOING AT ONLY A PENNY"

Reverse Types

- A. Thin Tree
- B. Bushy Tree

Though previously listed by Miller et.al. many years ago, Tony Chibbaro reports that those in light blue are presently unconfirmed:

WW Wilbur Variety and Attribution Chart								
Miller / Chibbaro	Metal	Dies	Rarity*	Co Type	Stop	Star	Rotate	Notes
Miller SC-5 1305-CQ	Brass	1-A	R-7	Plain	+	✖	Medal	
Miller SC-5A 1305-CR	Copper	1-A	R-7	Plain	+	✖	Medal	Packard: All specimens encountered have the exact same medal turn (slightly offset.) This would indicate a single probable run. The spacing between CHARLESTON and SO. is less than the SC-7.
Miller SC-6 1305-CS	Feucht- wanger	2-A	R-10	Plain	+	✖	--	Unconfirmed by Chibbaro or A. Packard
Miller SC-6A 1305-CV	Silvered Brass	2-A	R-9	Plain	+	✖	--	Chibbaro reports probable silvering before strike. In his research, Chibbaro has only encountered one.
Miller SC-7 1305-CT	Copper	2-A	R-6	Plain	+	✖	Medal	Packard: All specimens encountered have the exact same medal turn (slightly offset.) This would indicate a single probable run.
Miller SC-7A 1305-CX	Copper	2-B	R-4	Under score	•	★	Medal	Packard: All specimens encountered have the exact same medal turn (slightly offset.) This would indicate a single probable run.
Miller SC-8 1305-CU	Brass	2-A	R-3	Plain	+	✖	Medal	Packard: All specimens encountered have the exact same medal turn (slightly offset.) This would indicate a single probable run.
Miller SC-8A 1305-CY	Brass	2-B	R-4	Under score	•	★	Medal	Packard: All specimens encountered have the exact same medal turn (slightly offset.) This would indicate a single probable run.
Miller SC-8B 1305-CW	German Silver	2-B	R-10	Under score	•	★	--	3 specimens encountered. Only white metal variety encountered
Miller SC-8C Not Listed	Gilt Brass	2-B	R-9*	Under score	•	★	Undet	Recently confirmed by Chibbaro.
Miller SC-8D Not Listed	Silvered Brass	2-B	R-10*	Under score	•	★	Medal	Discovery specimen found by Aaron Packard in the summer of 2010, and confirmed by Chibbaro thereafter. Rotation offset different than found with SC-8A.
Miller SC-9 1305-CZ	Brass	3-B	R-2	Under score	•	★	Coin	Packard: All specimens encountered have the exact same medal turn (slightly offset.) This would indicate a single probable run.
Miller SC-9A 1305-DD	Silvered Brass	3-B	R-9	Under score	•	★	--	
Miller SC-10 1305-DA	Copper	3-B	R-4	Under score	•	★	Medal	
Miller SC-10A 1305-DB	Cupro Nickel	3-B	R-10	Under score	•	★	--	Unconfirmed by Chibbaro or A. Packard
Miller SC-11 1305-DC	German Silver	3-B	R-10	Under score	•	★	--	Unconfirmed by Chibbaro or A. Packard
Miller SC-12	Copper	4-B	--	--	--	--	--	Chibbaro - Unconfirmed, Questionable, Probable Worn SC 10
Miller SC-13	Brass	4-B	--	--	--	--	--	Chibbaro - Unconfirmed, Questionable, Probable Worn SC 9

For reference purposes, below please find Tony Chibbaro's rarity scale that he uses to rate the quantity of remaining specimens still in existence:

South Carolina Rarity Scale (Chibbaro Rarity Scale)			
Rarity	Estimated Extant	Surviving	
R-1	500 or more		
R-2	200 - 499		
R-3	100 - 199		
R-4	50 - 99		
R-5	25 - 49		
R-6	16 - 24		
R-7	9 - 15		
R-8	5 - 8		
R-9	3 - 4		
R-10	1 - 2		

Alternate Method for Determining Obverse Type-1 and Type-2

**Alternate Method:
Identifying Obverse Types**



Obverse Type-1
'N' over 'L'



Obverse Type-2
'N' over 'E'

While diagnosing my own specimens, I noticed that with worn examples sometimes it is difficult to distinguish the difference between Obverse Type-1 and Type-2, as the period after "CA" may be completely worn off.

The simplest way to assuredly identify a Type-1 obverse is to compare the placement of lettering between AUCTION and CHARLESTON. If the letter 'L' in CHARLESTON falls directly below the letter 'N' in AUCTION, it is an Obverse Type-1.

For Obverse Type-2, the letter 'E' in CHARLESTON falls directly below the letter 'N' in AUCTION.

Presentation of Specimen Types

The following plates are photographs of each of the confirmed W.W. Wilbur token varieties. Rarities are listed using the Chibbaro Rarity Scale.



Above: Miller SC-5, Obverse Type-1 (No Period), Reverse Type-A (Thin Tree), Brass.
Chibbaro SC-1305-CQ, Rarity R-7 (9-15 specimens known)



Miller SC-5A
c.1846

W.W. Wilbur
Auction & Commission Merchant
Charleston, SC

- EXTRA FINE DETAILS -



Above: Miller SC-5a, Obverse Type-1 (No Period), Reverse Type-A (Thin Tree), Copper.
Chibbaro SC-1305-CR, Rarity R-7 (9-15 specimens known)



SC-6A
c.1846

W.W. Wilbur
Auction & Commission Merchant
Charleston, SC

- FINE DETAILS -



Above: Miller SC-6A, Obverse Type-2 (Period), Reverse Type-A (Thin Tree), Pre-Strike Silvered Brass.
Chibbaro SC-1305-CV, Rarity R-9 (3-4 specimens known)



Miller SC-7
c.1846
W.W. Wilbur
Auction & Commission Merchant
Charleston, SC
- VERY FINE -



Above: Miller SC-7, Obverse Type-2 (Period), Reverse Type-A (Thin Tree), Copper.
Chibbaro SC-1305-CT, Rarity R-6 (16-24 specimens known)



Miller SC-7A
c.1846
W.W. Wilbur
Auction & Commission Merchant
Charleston, SC
- VERY FINE -



Above: Miller SC-7A, Obverse Type-2 (Period), Reverse Type-B (Bushy Tree), Copper.
Chibbaro SC-1305-CX, Rarity R-4 (50-99 specimens known)



Above: Miller SC-8, Obverse Type-2 (Period), Reverse Type-A (Thin Tree), Brass.
Chibbaro SC-1305-CU, Rarity R-3 (100-199 specimens known)



Above: Miller SC-8A, Obverse Type-2 (Period), Reverse Type-B (Bushy Tree), Brass.
Chibbaro SC-1305-CY, Rarity R-4 (50-99 specimens known)



Miller SC-8B
1846

W.W. Wilbur
Auctioneer
Charleston, SC

- NGC MS-63 -



Above: SC-8B, Obverse Type-2 (Period), Reverse Type-B (Bushy Tree), German Silver.
Chibbaro SC-1305-CW, Rarity R-10 (1-2 specimens known)



Miller SC-8C
1846

W.W. Wilbur
Auction & Commission Merchant
Charleston, SC

- CHOICE VERY FINE -



Above: SC-8C, Obverse Type-2 (Period), Reverse Type-B (Bushy Tree), Gilt Brass.
Unlisted in Chibbaro's book



SC-8D
c.1846

W.W. Wilbur
Auction & Commission Merchant
Charleston, SC

- FINE DETAILS -



Above: SC-8D, Obverse Type-2 (Period), Reverse Type-B (Bushy Tree), Silvered Brass.
Unlisted In Chibbaro's Book. Discovery piece made by A. Packard



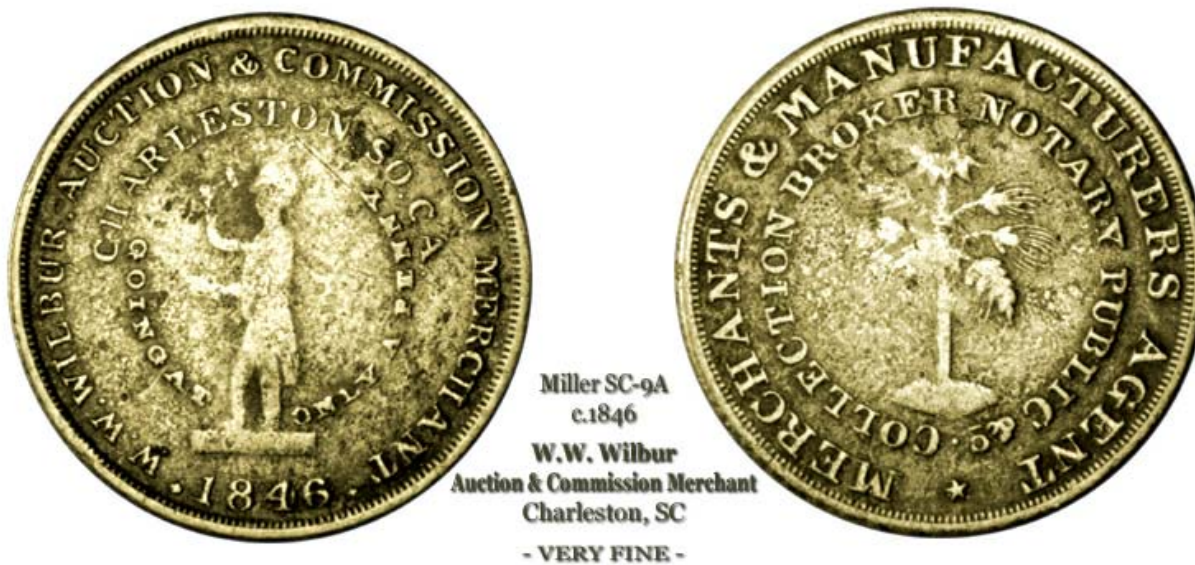
Miller SC-9
1846 R-2

W.W. Wilbur
Auction & Commission Merchant
Charleston, SC

- MINT STATE -



Above: SC-9, Obverse Type-3 (Period), Reverse Type-B (Bushy Tree), Brass.
Chibbaro SC-1305-CZ, Rarity R-2 (200-499 specimens known)



Above: SC-9A, Obverse Type-3 (Period), Reverse Type-B (Bushy Tree), Silvered Brass.
Chibbaro SC-1305-DD, Rarity R-9 (3-4 specimens known)



Above: SC-10, Obverse Type-3 (Period), Reverse Type-B (Bushy Tree), Copper.
Chibbaro SC-1305-DA Rarity R-4 (50-99 specimens known)

Aaron Packard 

Notes and Sources

†. Rarities are listed using the Chibbaro Rarity Scale. See Numismatic FAQs for more information.

1. Standard Catalog of United States Tokens 1700-1900 Fourth Edition, Russell Rulau, Krause Publications, ©2004, pg.403
2. The Charleston Mercury Newspaper Archives
3. Correspondence with Tony Chibbaro, South Carolina Numismatist and Historian
4. 'The Tokens of W.W. Wilbur of Charleston S.C.,' Tony Chibbaro, South Carolina Numismatist and Historian
5. A Guide Book of United States Tokens and Medals, Katherine Jaeger, Whitman, ©2008

6. The Library of Congress Digital Archives

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