

Pictorial Love Token Types

By Carol Bastable

Pictorials are one of the favorite topics for love token collectors. There are both pictorial types and pictorial varieties. Varieties encompass the broad subject matter from landscapes to people, animals, and more. Type however is a reference to layout and framework of the design. There are six main types.

The **Minor Pictorial** is when the picture is an adjunct to either initials, names, or dates. In these types the text takes up most of the area and an image is used only as a decorative flourish. Most common are leaves or flowers placed under or around the text. Occasionally an engraved wreath of leaves may surround the text. The reverse designs of circulating cents and dimes were probably the inspiration.



Minor pictorials: wreath, daisy, and clovers.

The **Pictorial Frame** is an object used to house initials or names. This pictorial is basically a silhouette of an object and often has ornate engraving occurring around the object in what would be the background. The negative space or background is often more ornate than the picture that houses simple script or block letter names or initials. Banners, fans, stars,

and shields are the most common types but books, easels, flags, hearts, and others can also be found.



Pictorial frames made from easel, book, and flag.



Pictorial frames made from shield, banner, and heart.



Pictorial frames made with celestial themes.

The **Divided Pictorial** has a line of demarcation between the picture and the text. The text references the name or initials of the giver and can be quite decorative incorporating fancy borders to balance the adjacent picture. The pictorial image can take up anywhere from half to two thirds of the coin's surface. The line can run horizontally, vertically, diagonally, or in an arc. The diagonal ones create a more dynamic and interesting image.



Bird dividing 1/2 the coin & building covering 2/3 area (SGS).



Buildings dividing $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{2}{3}$ area.



Divided landscapes taking up two thirds of the areas.

The **50/50 Pictorial** has a picture and initials (or a name), and each element takes up half of the coin's surface. They may come with or without borders and the border is not figured in the equation. Some collectors might file these coins in with their initial or name collections and others might file them in with pictorials. Each has equal dominance on the coin and it may just come down to how unusual the subject is when placing the coin in a collection. The flower subject pictured here is more common and is less interesting than the duffle bag and stork image. The **Divided Pictorial** is often more ornate than the **50/50 pictorial**.



50/50 images of flowers, duffle bag, heron, & arrows.

The **One-sided Pictorial** is when only one side of the coin is engraved. Most often the one-sided types incorporate text, having a name or initials within the picture. Some use the text as part of the picture through banners or in love notes in the beaks of birds, while others position the letters in a non-descript and non-attention getting manner. It is uncommon to have a one-sided engraving with no text but they do occur. Possibly they are remnants of a larger piece of jewelry that was broken up through the years. The giver may have been referenced on the larger whole.



Pictorials: Deer, horse/rider, chick/egg, & dog. Note the tiny script letters below the horse's head.



Pictorials: fan/waterscape, bird, banner/boater, & horse.

The **Minor Pictorial**, **Pictorial Frame**, **Divided Pictorial**, and the **50/50** are also engraved on one side but have stylistic differences to the previously mentioned type. **The One-sided Pictorial** as a type has a picture taking up no less than and often more than two thirds of the coin's surface and that image is the predominant subject.

Pictorials may also occur in other categories such as overlay, enamel, jeweled, and cut-down coins (visit the *Categories for Collecting* article, Dec. 2000 *Love Letter* or on www.lovetokensociety.com under the NEWS header). If desired a seventh type heading can be used for those, **Embellished Pictorials**. Otherwise these types can defer to their original categories.



Jeweled pictorial owl, enameled flag, silver and gold overlay hearts, and cutout heart with "EVE" in overlay.



The **Two-sided Engraving/Pictorial** is a love token having both sides engraved. One side is used for the picture and the reverse is used for the giver's name, initials, or a date. Once in a rare while, one might find a double sided coin with a picture on both sides. Invariably one of the pictures will incorporate some text to represent the giver.



Double-sided pictorial, flowers on both sides.



Engraved on two sides: "A.D." and landscape.



Engraved on two sides: Skate and "HSB".

There are some collectors that dislike two-sided engravings because the host coin cannot be determined. Others accept them as long as they have a reeded edge, indicating a dime rather than a plain silver planchet. A pictorial collector should however become accustomed to two-sided love tokens or they will severely limit their collections. After all, these coins were intended as sentimental reminders of the giver and will in most cases contain the mark of such giver.