History of Canadian Silver Dollar

Canada's First Silver Dollar - The Pattern of 1911

1935 Commemorative Dollar - Silver Jubilee

The obverse of the first Canadian silver dollar struck for circulation was used to commemorate the 25th Anniversary of the accession of George V: his Silver Jubilee. His Majesty's portrait was work of Percy Metcalfe, artist and sculptor. This design has been introduced a few years earlier on other Commonwealth coinage (Fiji, Southern Rhodesia, Australia, New Zealand).
The reverse was a very modern design for its time and was a work of eminent Canadian sculptor Emanuel Hahn. His initials EH appear in the water below the left end of canoe. Explorers and trappers with native aboriginal guides helped shape the country's beginning and few designs have been better able to depict the scene than the "Voyageur".
The design shows a voyageur (travelling agent for a fur trade company) and native aboriginal paddling a canoe with an islet bearing two wind-swept trees in the background. The Northern Lights (Aurora Borealis) are in the background. The canoe also carries several bundles of fur. On the front bundle are the incuse initials HB. This signifies Hudson's Bay Company, which played major role in Canada's early history. Since 1935, the "Voyageur" design has been used to form the regular, non-commemorative, reverse on Canada's silver dollars and later on, beginning in 1968 on nickel dollars.

Specification:

Obverse Design: Percy Metcalfe
Reverse Design: Emanuel Hahn
Obverse Legend: GEORGIVS V REX IMPERATOR ANNO REGNI XXV
Reverse Legend: CANADA DOLLAR 1935
Diameter: 36.00 mm
Weight: 23.327 grams
Composition: .800 silver, .200 copper
Edge: reeded
Mintage: 428,120

1936 Silver Dollar

REX ET IND: IMP:

1937 Silver Dollar - Reign of King George VI

Specification:

Obverse Design: T. Humphrey Paget
Reverse Design: Emanuel Hahn
Obverse Legend: GEORGIVS VI D: G: REX ET IND: IMP:
Reverse Legend: CANADA DOLLAR 1937
Diameter: 36.00 mm
Weight: 23.327 grams
Composition: .800 silver, .200 copper
Edge: reeded
Mintage: 207,400

1938 Silver Dollar - King George VI

Specification:

Obverse Design: T. Humphrey Paget
Reverse Design: Emanuel Hahn
Obverse Legend: GEORGIVS VI D: G: REX ET IND: IMP:

Reverse Legend: CANADA DOLLAR 1938
Diameter: 36.00 mm
Weight: 23.327 grams
Composition: .800 silver, .200 copper
Edge: reeded
Mintage: 89,990

1939 Silver Dollar - Commemorative - Royal Visit - Parliament Building

The year 1939 saw Canada's second commemorative dollar. This time the reverse was used as commemorative device for the Royal visit of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth to Canada in May and June of 1939. The design shows the Centre Block and the Peace Tower, the main building of the Canadian parliamentary complex on Parliament Hill, in Ottawa, Ontario. The Latin phrase on the reverse, "FIDE SVORVM REGNAT" is translated, "He reigns by the faith of his people". Although Hahn's initials EH flanked the building on the original model, they were removed by government direction and never appeared on the coins. The obverse remained unchanged from the previous years issues of king George VI.

Obverse Design: T. Humphrey Paget

Reverse Design: Emanuel Hahn
Obverse Legend: GEORGIVS VI D: G: REX ET IND: IMP:
Reverse Legend: FIDE SVORVM REGNAT / CANADA / 1939 / DOLLAR
Diameter: 36.00 mm
Weight: 23.327 grams
Composition: .800 silver, .200 copper
Edge: reeded
Mintage: 1,205,700

1945 Silver Dollar

The production of silver dollar coins was suspended during the World War II, there are no dollars issued from 1940 to 1944. Silver dollar production resumed in 1945 with the smallest mintage up to that time: only 38,390 pieces were struck. Silver dollars from 1945 are very hard to get in high flawless grade in which they command good premium.

Specification:

Obverse Design: T. Humphrey Paget
Reverse Design: Emanuel Hahn

Obverse Legend: GEORGIVS VI D: G: REX ET IND: IMP:
Reverse Legend: CANADA DOLLAR 1945
Diameter: 36.00 mm
Weight: 23.327 grams
Composition: .800 silver, .200 copper
Edge: reeded
Mintage: 38,390

1946 Silver Dollar

The obverse and reverse design for 1946 silver dollar remained unchanged from the previous year.

Specification:

Obverse Design: T. Humphrey Paget
Reverse Design: Emanuel Hahn
Obverse Legend: GEORGIVS VI D: G: REX ET IND: IMP:
Reverse Legend: CANADA DOLLAR 1946
Diameter: 36.00 mm
Weight: 23.327 grams
Composition: .800 silver, .200 copper

Edge: reeded
Mintage: 93,000

1947 Silver Dollar (regular issue)

Obverse Design: T. Humphrey Paget
Reverse Design: Emanuel Hahn
Obverse Legend: GEORGIVS VI DEI GRATIA REX
Reverse Legend: CANADA DOLLAR 1948
Diameter: 36.00 mm
Weight: 23.327 grams
Composition: .800 silver, .200 copper
Edge: reeded

Mintage: 65,600

1947 Silver Dollar (Maple Leaf issue)

Obverse Design: T. Humphrey Paget
Reverse Design: Emanuel Hahn
Obverse Legend: GEORGIVS VI DEI GRATIA REX
Reverse Legend: CANADA DOLLAR 1948
Diameter: 36.00 mm
Weight: 23.327 grams
Composition: .800 silver, .200 copper
Edge: reeded
Mintage: 21,135 (produced and issued in 1948)

1948 Silver Dollar

The obverse design for 1948 silver dollar changed from the previous year to offset the change of official title of George VI as Emperor of India. Following India's independence in 1947 King George VI ceased being its Emperor and his title on the coins had to be changed accordingly. For Canadian coinage, the deletion of "ET IND: IMP:" (AND EMPEROR OF INDIA) from the obverse legend was to occur in 1948. Reverse design remained unchanged.

Specification:

Obverse Design: T. Humphrey Paget
Reverse Design: Emanuel Hahn
Obverse Legend: GEORGIVS VI DEI GRATIA REX
Reverse Legend: CANADA DOLLAR 1948
Diameter: 36.00 mm
Weight: 23.327 grams
Composition: .800 silver, .200 copper
Edge: reeded
Mintage: 18,780

1949 Silver Dollar - Commemorative - Entry of Newfoundland into the Confederation

The 1949 issue is considered by many to be the most beautiful of all Canadian silver dollars.It was issued as the third commemorative in the silver dollars series and was issued to mark the entry of Newfoundland into the Confederation. The reverse shows "Matthew", the ship in which John Cabot is thought to have discovered the island in 1497.

Specification:

Obverse Design: T. Humphrey Paget
Reverse Design: Thomas Shingles
Obverse Legend: GEORGIVS VI DEI GRATIA REX
Reverse Legend: CANADA / FLOREAT TERRA NOVA / 1949 / DOLLAR
Diameter: 36.00 mm
Weight: 23.327 grams
Composition: .800 silver, .200 copper
Edge: reeded
Mintage: 627,000

1950 Silver Dollar

1950 saw a return of standard Voyageur design reverse.

Specification:

Obverse Design: T. Humphrey Paget
Reverse Design: Emanuel Hahn
Obverse Legend: GEORGIVS VI DEI GRATIA REX
Reverse Legend: CANADA DOLLAR 1950
Diameter: 36.00 mm
Weight: 23.327 grams
Composition: .800 silver, .200 copper
Edge: reeded
Mintage: 261,000

1951 Silver Dollar

Design for 1951 was standard Voyageur design reverse.

Specification:

Obverse Design: T. Humphrey Paget
Reverse Design: Emanuel Hahn
Obverse Legend: GEORGIVS VI DEI GRATIA REX
Reverse Legend: CANADA DOLLAR 1951
Diameter: 36.00 mm
Weight: 23.327 grams
Composition: .800 silver, .200 copper
Edge: reeded
Mintage: 416,395

1952 Silver Dollar

Design for 1952 was standard Voyageur design reverse.

Specification:

Obverse Design: T. Humphrey Paget
Reverse Design: Emanuel Hahn
Obverse Legend: GEORGIVS VI DEI GRATIA REX
Reverse Legend: CANADA DOLLAR 1952
Diameter: 36.00 mm
Weight: 23.327 grams
Composition: .800 silver, .200 copper
Edge: reeded
Mintage: 406,148

1953 Silver Dollar - Reign of Queen Elizabeth II

Design for 1953 was standard Voyageur design reverse.

Specification:

Obverse Design: Mrs. Mary Gillick
Reverse Design: Emanuel Hahn
Obverse Legend: ELIZABETH II DEI GRATIA REGINA
Reverse Legend: CANADA DOLLAR 1953
Diameter: 36.00 mm
Weight: 23.327 grams
Composition: .800 silver, .200 copper
Edge: reeded
Mintage: 1,074,578

1954 Silver Dollar

Design for 1954 was standard Voyageur design reverse.

Specification:

Obverse Design: Mrs. Mary Gillick
Reverse Design: Emanuel Hahn
Obverse Legend: ELIZABETH II DEI GRATIA REGINA
Reverse Legend: CANADA DOLLAR 1954
Diameter: 36.00 mm
Weight: 23.327 grams
Composition: .800 silver, .200 copper
Edge: reeded
Mintage: 246,606

1955 Silver Dollar

Design for 1955 was standard Voyageur design reverse.

Specification:

Obverse Design: Mrs. Mary Gillick
Reverse Design: Emanuel Hahn
Obverse Legend: ELIZABETH II DEI GRATIA REGINA
Reverse Legend: CANADA DOLLAR 1955
Diameter: 36.00 mm
Weight: 23.327 grams
Composition: .800 silver, .200 copper
Edge: reeded

Mintage: 268,105

1956 Silver Dollar

Design for 1956 was standard Voyageur design reverse.

Specification:

Obverse Design: Mrs. Mary Gillick
Reverse Design: Emanuel Hahn
Obverse Legend: ELIZABETH II DEI GRATIA REGINA
Reverse Legend: CANADA DOLLAR 1956
Diameter: 36.00 mm
Weight: 23.327 grams
Composition: .800 silver, .200 copper

Edge: reeded
Mintage: 209,092

1957 Silver Dollar

Design for 1957 was standard Voyageur design reverse.

Specification:

Obverse Design: Mrs. Mary Gillick
Reverse Design: Emanuel Hahn
Obverse Legend: ELIZABETH II DEI GRATIA REGINA
Reverse Legend: CANADA DOLLAR 1957
Diameter: 36.00 mm
Weight: 23.327 grams

Composition: .800 silver, .200 copper
Edge: reeded
Mintage: 496,389

1958 Silver Dollar - British Columbia Commemorative

In commemoration of the gold rush centenary and the establishment of British Columbia as a British Crown colony, a special reverse design was employed for year 1958. The reverse design depicts a Native American totem pole with the mountains of British Columbia in the background.

Because the totem pole contained an element which signified death the 1958 British Columbia dollar proved unpopular with the Coastal Natives.

Specification:

Obverse Design: Mrs. Mary Gillick
Reverse Design: Stephen Trenka
Obverse Legend: ELIZABETH II DEI GRATIA REGINA
Reverse Legend: CANADA BRITISH COLUMBIA DOLLAR 1858 1958
Diameter: 36.00 mm
Weight: 23.327 grams
Composition: .800 silver, .200 copper
Edge: reeded
Mintage: 3,039,630

1959 Silver Dollar

Design for 1959 was standard Voyageur design reverse.

Specification:

Obverse Design: Mrs. Mary Gillick
Reverse Design: Emanuel Hahn
Obverse Legend: ELIZABETH II DEI GRATIA REGINA
Reverse Legend: CANADA DOLLAR 1959
Diameter: 36.00 mm
Weight: 23.327 grams
Composition: .800 silver, .200 copper
Edge: reeded
Mintage: 1,443,502

1960-1963 Silver Dollars

Design and specification for silver dollars issued from 1960 - 1963 remained unchanged with standard Voyageur design reverse.

Mintages:

1960: 1,420,486
1961: 1,262,231
1962: 1,884,789
1963: 4,179,981

1964 Commemorative Silver Dollar - Confederation Meetings

1965 Silver Dollar

Design for 1965 was standard Voyageur design reverse, but with the new portrait of the Queen Elizabeth II.

Specification:

Obverse Design: Arnold Machin
Reverse Design: Emanuel Hahn
Obverse Legend: ELIZABETH II D. G. REGINA
Reverse Legend: CANADA DOLLAR 1965
Diameter: 36.00 mm
Weight: 23.327 grams
Composition: .800 silver, .200 copper
Edge: reeded
Mintage: 10,768,569

1966 Silver Dollar

Design for 1966 was standard Voyageur design reverse.

Specification:

Obverse Design: Arnold Machin
Reverse Design: Emanuel Hahn
Obverse Legend: ELIZABETH II D. G. REGINA
Reverse Legend: CANADA DOLLAR 1966
Diameter: 36.00 mm
Weight: 23.327 grams
Composition: .800 silver, .200 copper
Edge: reeded
Mintage: 9,470,107

1967 Commemorative Silver Dollar - 1867-1967 Confederation Centennial

To mark the 100th anniversary of the Confederation it was decided that all denominations for 1967 would bear commemorative reverses. Circulating coins designed by famous Canadian artist Alex Colville were issued depicting various animals common to Canada, with a flying Canada goose on these silver dollar coins.

Specification:

Obverse Design: Arnold Machin
Reverse Design: Alex Colville
Obverse Legend: ELIZABETH II D. G. REGINA
Reverse Legend: DOLLAR CANADA 1867-1967
Diameter: 36.00 mm
Weight: 23.327 grams
Composition: .800 silver, .200 copper
Edge: reeded
Mintage: 7,048,299

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