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# **John Adams Bolen and the Pynchon House**

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# Contents

Introduction . . . . .	5
Background . . . . .	6
John Adams Bolen and Springfield . . . . .	6
Founding of Springfield . . . . .	6
The Gods of the Connecticut River Valley . . . . .	6
John Pynchon's Military Service . . . . .	10
The Pynchon House . . . . .	11
The Pynchon Bank . . . . .	14
1881 Pynchon House Medal - Mintage & Census . . . . .	16
1881 Pynchon House Medal - NGC Census . . . . .	16
1881 Pynchon House Medal - Silver - Condition Census . . . . .	17
1881 Pynchon House Medal - Copper - Condition Census . . . . .	17
1881 Pynchon House Medal - Brass - Condition Census . . . . .	17
1881 John A. Bolen Pynchon House Mule Medal - Copper - Condition Census . . . . .	17
1881 Pynchon House Medal - Silver - Notable Specimens . . . . .	18
1881 Pynchon House Medal - Silver - SH MS65 Raw - Musante-Hayden Specimen . . . . .	18
1881 Pynchon House Medal - Silver - SBG Choice MS Raw - Stack's Aug17 Specimen . . . . .	24
1881 Pynchon House Medal - Silver - NGC MS63 - South Specimen . . . . .	27
1881 Pynchon House Medal - Silver - SBG MS Hairlined Raw - Musante #2 Specimen . . . . .	33
1881 Pynchon House Medal - Silver - Ungraded Raw - Mhalliha Specimen . . . . .	36
1881 Pynchon House Medal - Copper - Notable Specimens . . . . .	37
1881 Pynchon House Medal - Copper - NGC MS66BN PL - Bowers-Gabriele Specimen . . . . .	37
1881 Pynchon House Medal - Copper - NGC MS65 RB - Edson Specimen . . . . .	42
1881 Pynchon House Medal - Copper - SBG MS Small Scratch Raw - Bolen-Musante Specimen . . . . .	47
1881 Pynchon House Medal - Copper - NGC MS64 BN - Newman Specimen . . . . .	50
1881 Pynchon House Medal - Copper - NGC MS63 RB - South-Gabriele Specimen . . . . .	53
1881 Pynchon House Medal - Copper - Choice MS - Bowers specimen . . . . .	58
1881 Pynchon House Medal - Copper?/Brass? - MS PL Hairlines - Hayden May 2019 specimen . . . . .	61

1881 Pynchon House Medal - Brass . . . . .	64
1881 Pynchon House Medal - Brass - Choice MS - Musante Specimen . . . . .	64
1881 Pynchon House Medal - Brass - MS - Bowers Specimen . . . . .	67
1881 Pynchon House Medal - Brass - Ungraded Raw - Mhalliha Specimen . . . . .	70
1881 Pynchon House Medal - Other . . . . .	71
1881 Pynchon House Medal - Die Pair - Unique . . . . .	71
1881 Pynchon House / J.A. Bolen Mule Medal - Unique . . . . .	75

## Introduction

I became interested in John Adams Bolen's Pynchon House medal and decided to put together this document to collect information on the limited number of specimens that exist for this token and the history of the Pynchon House which was famous for its role in early colonial America.

From a numismatics perspective, it has been enjoyable to collect information on various specimens and the provenances behind these pieces. These include collectors and dealers like the following. John Adams Bolen is included as a reference to pieces in his personal reference collection.

1. John Agre (Coin Rarities Online)
2. John Adams Bolen
3. Q. David Bowers
4. Ralph Adams Edson Jr.
5. Tim Gabriele
6. Steve Hayden
7. Charles Litman
8. Donald M. Miller
9. Neil E. Musante
10. Eric Pfeiffer Newman
11. Henry South

From a historical perspective, the history of the Pynchon's and their influence on America is a rich one. They left written records and some of the information has been collected from writings of their descendents in America.

Enjoy.

## Background

### John Adams Bolen and Springfield

John Adams Bolen (1826-1906) was a diesinker, copyist, and medalist. He was born in New York City on November 10, 1826. He moved to Springfield, Massachusetts in 1850 and was active in creating dies from 1861 to 1869.

He ran a business as a die sinker, jeweler and an agent for a sewing machine firm. His medallic work included colonial coin copies, patriotic medals, and storecards. He created a number of medals that were specific to his hometown, Springfield:

- 1861 Pioneer Springfield Baseball Club
- 1864 Soldiers' Fair
- 1874 Masonic Temple Dedication
- "1881" Pynchon House
- 1893 Masonic Building Dedication

The Pynchon House of Springfield is notable because of its connection to the founding of Springfield, being created by the son of the town's founder and being used as one of the few structures able to resist fire from an Indian attack.

John Adams Bolen died in Springfield, Massachusetts on March 14, 1906.

- Reference: <http://www.medalartists.com/bolen-john-adams.html>

### Founding of Springfield

Springfield was founded by William Pynchon, who arrived from England with John Winthrop and the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1630. William was a shareholder, patentee and eventually treasurer of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. ref He founded by Roxbury in 1630 and Springfield in 1636. Henry Smith wrote the agreement to create Springfield on May 14th, 1636. It was signed by 8 men: William Pynchon, Mathew Mitchell, Henry Smith, Jehu Burr, William Blake, Edmund Wood, Thomas Ufford, and John Cable. ref Springfield was originally in Connecticut but in 1637, William ran into disagreements with the local government over issues of taxation. He declared Springfield to belong to Massachusetts and by 1642 it was was officially taken by Massachusetts. ref

### The Gods of the Connecticut River Valley

William brought his son, John Pynchon, from England and John grew rich in the fur trade, purchasing land from and negotiating access to lands in Springfield. ref, ref William was the town magistrate and John became a town magistrate in 1652. ref The Indians referred to the settlers as "Pynchon's Men". ref

William and his son John, were the first of the Connecticut Valley's "River gods", a title given to wealthy and influential men whose vision and ambition shaped the country. Town records refer to John Pynchon as "The Worshipful Major Pynchon", and, later, "The Worshipful Colonel". ref

A description of the River Gods is available in the article "River Gods of the Connecticut River Valley Create A World of Their Own": ref

During the 150 years before the American Revolution, a series of aristocrats known as the River Gods ruled the Connecticut River Valley.

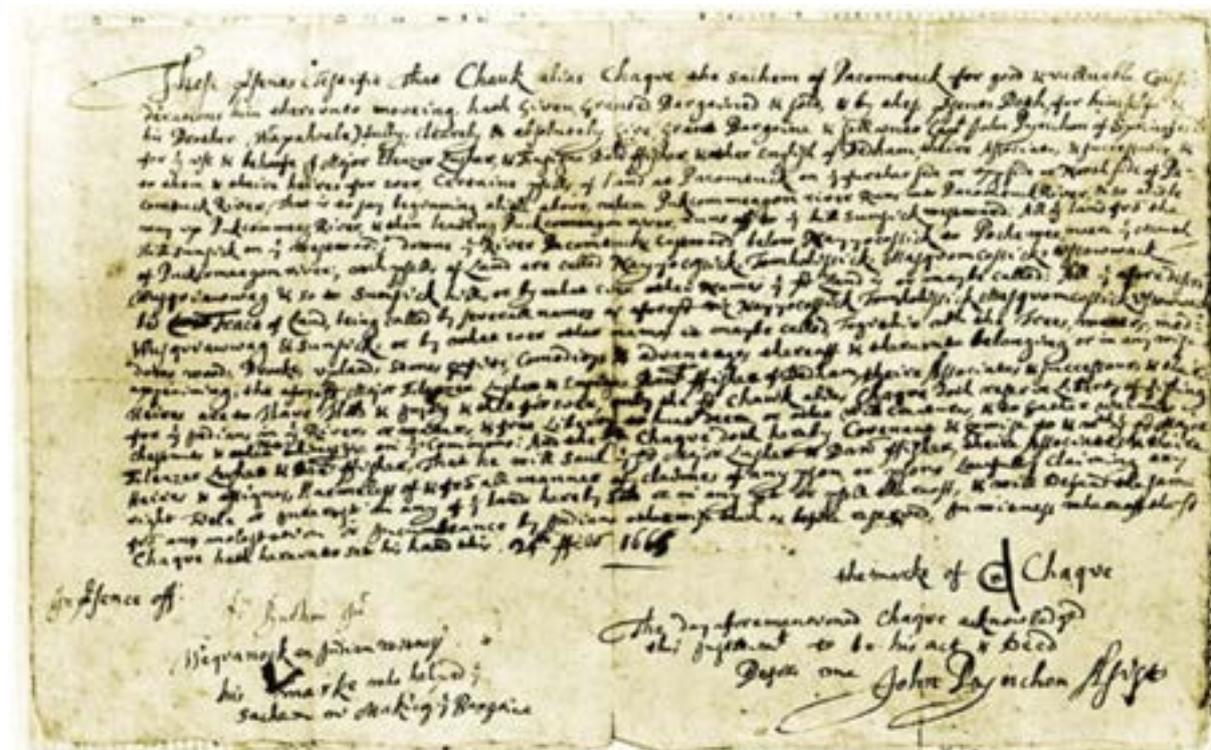
Their domain had its own economy and culture, which eventually resembled England more than settlements to the east or the west. The River Gods owned vast farms and shipyards, traded with the West Indies and fed the coastal cities with their produce and meat.

They supported a large class of artisans who fed their thirst for status by building large houses with elaborate doorways. The craftsmen filled the River Gods' houses with fine furniture, paintings, textiles and ceramics. When they died, elaborate headstones marked their graves to show their prominence in life.

Portrait of Pamela Patrick White and the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association (PVMA). ref



Here is a contract of John Pynchon purchasing land from the Pocumtuck Indians.



- Reference: <http://www.memorialhall.mass.edu/collection/itempage.jsp?itemid=5716>
- Reference: <https://www.geni.com/people/Col-John-Pynchon/600000003939180687>

Read more on the Pynchons in the book “Record of the Pynchon Family in England and America”, compiled by Dr. J. C. Pynchon and published in Springfield, Massachusetts by Weaver, Shipman and Company, Printers, in 1885. Ref

### **John Pynchon's Military Service**

John Pynchon had a military service record that lasted from 1653 to 1676, including King Philip's War of 1675. Much of his service involved dealing in matters concerning Indians with whom he had established good relations.

In 1657, he was promoted to Captain of the company, in 1671 to Sergeant Major of the cavalry company, and eventually "commander of all the military forces in western Massachusetts":

In 1671, John was promoted to Sergeant Major of the cavalry company. Before long, he became commander of all the military forces in western Massachusetts. As the principal military officer on the ground, he directed the defense of the new communities against incursions by enemy Indians and the French. This involved, as Colonel of the 1st Regiment of Hampshire County, active service during King Philip's War (1675) and the first of the French & Indian wars. He was noted for his skill in the management of the Indians, by whom he was greatly beloved.

ref

He retired in 1676 after the burning of Springfield with his house, but not much else, of the town surviving after the burning of the town on October 5 and 16, 1675. ref

Almost all of Springfield was burned out, many losing all they had. Few in New England, however, lost more heavily in buildings, rents, and goods during King Philip's War than John Pynchon, and recovery would take a long time. In 1676, he gave up command of the forces of western Massachusetts, principally for family and personal reasons.

## The Pynchon House

The following excerpt describes the house which was constructed in 1660: ref

On January 12, 1659, he placed an order for 50,000 bricks to be burned at Northampton for his new mansion, the bricks to be completed by the 12th of December.

His new mansion would be the first brick home in the Connecticut Valley. The house was built to connect with the older wooden house of his father, which became a wing of the new brick one. The carpenters and masons were from Windsor. The building was 42 feet long, and 21 feet wide. The walls, thick and solid, rose about 22 feet from the ground to the eaves. The roof was very steep, and the ridge was about 22 feet in perpendicular height above the garret-floor.

The house was intended to be a fortified house and was known as the "Old Fort". During King Philip's War, John was in Hadley with his troops on October 16th, 1675, when the Indians attacked and burned the town. The Pynchon "fort" became a refuge during the attack and subsequent burning of the town.

The mansion was used by the Pynchon family until it was moved in 1831, to make room for a more modern house. In 1831, it was removed to Cross Street, where it served as a house and laundry. It was again altered in 1883, at which time there were still marks of antiquity about it.



More discussion on the house “The Old Pynchon Fort and its Builders”. ref

### The Pynchon Bank

The Pynchons influence was such that a national bank was formed in their name in Springfield, the Pynchon National Bank.

Of note, one of the 2 dollar bills they issued had an image of the Pynchon House.



- Photo courtesy of Stack's Bowers

Another note of interest from Pynchon National Bank has impressions of 2 coins, including one that looks like an Arrows and Rays dollar.



- Photo courtesy of Jonathan Cabaniss

Here is a photo of the Pynchon National Bank building in Springfield, Massachusetts. The top of the building has the dates 1852/1892.



- Photo courtesy of Springfield-History.com

### 1881 Pynchon House Medal - Mintage & Census

J.A. Bolen recorded the following mintages

10 - silver 45 - brass 95 - copper

Of note, Rulau shows similar mintages but only 5 in silver.

### 1881 Pynchon House Medal - NGC Census

The NGC census has 2 silver specimens, 6 copper specimens and 1 brass specimen as of May 26, 2019.

1. Silver MS (1)
2. Silver MS PL (1)
3. Copper BN (3)
4. Copper BN PL (1)
5. Copper RB (2)
6. Brass MS (1)

Year/Mint	Denom	Desig	Total	VG	F	VF	40	45	50	52	55	58	60	61	62	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	
c.1881 BOLEN JAB-39 THE PYNCHON HOUSE	AR	MS	1																1				
c.1881 BOLEN JAB-39 THE PYNCHON HOUSE	AR	MSPL	1																1				
c.1881 BOLEN JAB-39 THE PYNCHON HOUSE	CU	MSBN	3																1	1	1		
c.1881 BOLEN JAB-39 THE PYNCHON HOUSE	CU	MSBNP	1																	1			
c.1881 BOLEN JAB-39 THE PYNCHON HOUSE	CU	MSRB	2																1	1			
c.1881 BOLEN JAB-39 THE PYNCHON HOUSE	BRASS	MS	1																	1			

**1881 Pynchon House Medal - Silver - Condition Census**

There are 10 silver strikes as recorded by Bolen. The following 4 strikes are known:

1. SH MS65 Raw - Neil Musante; Stack's Bowers Feb 2014 \$282.00; Steve Hayden Nov 2017 \$1,200.00.
2. SBG Choice MS Raw - Stack's Bowers Aug 2017 \$1,762.50.
3. NGC MS63 1967048-034 - Henry South; Coin Rarities Online
4. SBG MS, Hairlined Raw - Neil Musante; Stack's Bowers Feb 2014 \$211.50.
5. Ungraded Raw - Mhalliha

**1881 Pynchon House Medal - Copper - Condition Census**

1. NGC MS66 BN PL 2010804-041 - Q. David Bowers; Tim Gabriele; Stack's Bowers Nov 2017 Baltimore \$384.00.
2. NGC MS65 RB 3725388-011 - Ralph Adams Edson Jr.; Stack's Bowers March 2019 \$1,080.
3. SBG MS65 - John Adams Bolen personal reference collection; Neil Musante; Stack's Bowers Feb 2014 \$188.00.
4. NGC MS64 BN 4251643-014 - Eric Pfeiffer Newman specimen: Heritage June 2016 \$258.50.
5. NGC MS63 RB 1967048-033 - Henry South; Tim Gabriele; Stack's Bowers November 2017 Baltimore \$240.00.
6. Choice MS - Q. David Bowers; Charles Litman; Donald M. Miller; Stack's Bowers January 2011 \$253.
7. MS PL, Hairlines - Steve Hayden Auctions May 20, 2019 \$212.50. Possibly brass.

**1881 Pynchon House Medal - Brass - Condition Census**

1. SBG Choice MS Raw - Neil Musante; Stack's Bowers Feb 2014 \$141.00.
2. SBG MS Raw - Q. David Bowers; Charles Litman; Donald M. Miller; Stack's Bowers Jan 2011 \$149.50.
3. Ungraded Raw - Mhalliha

**1881 John A. Bolen Pynchon House Mule Medal - Copper - Condition Census**

- SBG Choice MS - John Adams Bolen personal reference collection; Neil Musante; Stack's Bowers Feb 2014 \$705.00.

## 1881 Pynchon House Medal - Silver - Notable Specimens

### 1881 Pynchon House Medal - Silver - SH MS65 Raw - Musante-Hayden Specimen

In 2014 Neil Musante sold 2 silver specimens via Stack's Bowers. This is the higher graded piece, at "Choice Mint State". The other piece was graded "Mint State, Hairlined". In 2017, Steve Hayden sold this specimen and graded it raw MS65.



- Photos courtesy of Steve Hayden, 2017



- Photos courtesy of Stack's Bowers, 2014

There are two auction recordings for this specimen.

- Price: \$1,200.00 in December 2017 by Steve Hayden
- Price: \$282.00 in February 2014 by Stack's Bowers, Lot 154.
- Provenance: Neil Musante, Steve Hayden

Description by Steve Hayden - November 2017:

**Bolen JAB-39 CU Raw MS65 Pynchon House Springfiled Massachusetts**

Bolen JAB-39 CU Raw MS65 Proof Like with nice toning. The Pynchon House Springfield Mass struck in Silver 25mm. One of just 10 struck in this composition. (1500-2000)

Description by Stack's Bowers - February 2014

**Undated (1881) Pynchon House. Silver. 25.5 mm. 10.6 grams. Musante JAB-39. Choice Mint State.**

A beautiful little medal, with deeply reflective mirror fields that nicely accentuate the interesting architectural type. Deeply toned, with highlights of so blue-green, gold and silver over the otherwise dark silver. Nicely struck and exhibiting only minor handling marks. One of just 10 examples reported struck in silver, and rarity as such.

*From the Neil Musante Collection. Paper envelope with attribution notation included.*

Obverse: 2017 Hayden



- Photo courtesy of Steve Hayden

Reverse: 2017 Hayden



- Photo courtesy of Steve Hayden

Obverse: 2014 Stack's Bowers



- Photo courtesy of Stack's Bowers

Reverse: 2014 Stack's Bowers



- Photo courtesy of Stack's Bowers

**1881 Pynchon House Medal - Silver - SBG Choice MS Raw - Stack's Aug17 Specimen**

- Grade: Choice Mint State (SBG)
- Auction: \$1,762.50 - Stack's Bowers August 2017 Lot 65

**Undated (1881) Pynchon House Medalet. Silver. 25.3 mm. 10.6 grams. Musante JAB-39. Choice Mint State.**

A beautiful little medal, with deeply reflective mirror fields that nicely accentuate the interesting architectural type. Deeply toned, with highlights of soft blue-green, gold and fuchsia over the otherwise dark silver. Boldly struck and free of any significant flaws. One of just 10 examples reported struck in silver, and rarity as such.





**1881 Pynchon House Medal - Silver - NGC MS63 - South Specimen**



The Henry South specimen is the top rated NGC coin.

- Pop: NGC pop 1/0
- Sale: Coin Rarities Online
- Provenance: Henry South, John Agre for Coin Rarities Online
- Certification: <https://www.ngccoin.com/certlookup/1967048-034/63/>

Description by Coin Rarities Online:

1881 Pynchon House Token Bolen JAB-39, Silver MS63 [NGC]

Bolen JAB-39 variety, one of just 10 examples struck in Silver to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the demolition of the Pynchon House in West Springfield, Massachusetts.

And this is a lovely, old toned though admittedly hard to photograph example of this very rare and desirable token.

SOLD

This coin is from the CRO archives and is not currently available for sale.











**1881 Pynchon House Medal - Silver - SBG MS Hairlined Raw - Musante #2 Specimen**

This is the second silver specimen from Neil Musante sold in the Stack's February 2014 auction.

- Grade: Raw MS60 Hairlined (Stack's Bowers)
- Sale: \$211.50 Stack's Bowers Feb 2014

Stack's Bowers February 2014 Lot 146 Description:

Undated (1881) Pynchon House. Silver. 25.5 mm. 10.6 grams. Musante JAB-39. Mint State, Hairlined.

Light graphite across the surfaces with areas of lighter silver nicely blended. Deeply reflective fields and nice eye appeal in hand. Remarkably, a second example of this rarity in silver, one of just 10 believed struck.

*Provenance: From the Neil Musante Collection. Paper envelope with attribution notation included.*

Obverse:



- Photo courtesy of Stack's Bowers, 2014

Reverse:



- Photo courtesy of Stack's Bowers, 2014

**1881 Pynchon House Medal - Silver - Ungraded Raw - Mhalliha Specimen**



- Photos courtesy of Mhalliha

This silver specimen is from the Mhalliha Collection posted on Medals4Trade.com:

<http://www.medals4trade.com/displayimage.php?album=1143&pid=7778>

## 1881 Pynchon House Medal - Copper - Notable Specimens

### 1881 Pynchon House Medal - Copper - NGC MS66BN PL - Bowers-Gabriele Specimen



NGC currently has a single copper PL and a single silver PL on the census. The copper PL is graded NGC MS66BN PL and is pedigreed to Tim Gabriele and previously Q. David Bowers.

It was sold in November 2017 at Baltimore by Stack's Bowers as being in the Tim Gabriele collection.

- Certification: NGC MS66 BN PL 2010804-041
- Sale: \$384 - November 2017 - Baltimore - Stack's Bowers - Lot 251

**(C. 1881) Pynchon House medal by J.A. Bolen. Copper. 25mm. Musante JAB-39. MS-66BN PL (NGC).**

An exceptionally attractive medal with intense blended sea foam green, pale blue and gold iridescence blended across the surfaces. Boldly prooflike fields nicely showcase Bolen's depiction of the old house, which he cut into steel fifty years after it had been razed. The device is crisp in execution and frosty. The reverse legends are bold and even. A distinctive architectural type. It is reported that 95 were struck in copper. From the Q. David Bowers Collection, though it did not appear in our January 2011 sale.

*Provenance: From the Tim Gabriele Collection. Earlier ex Q. David Bowers.*

**1881 Pynchon House Medal - Copper - NGC MS66BN PL - Bowers-Gabriele Specimen**

Obverse:



- Photo courtesy of Stack's Bowers, November 2017

**1881 Pynchon House Medal - Copper - NGC MS66BN PL - Bowers-Gabriele Specimen**

Reverse:



- Photo courtesy of Stack's Bowers, November 2017

Obverse:



- Photo courtesy of Stack's Bowers, November 2017

Reverse:



- Photo courtesy of Stack's Bowers, November 2017

**1881 Pynchon House Medal - Copper - NGC MS65 RB - Edson Specimen**

- Pop: NGC pop 1/1
- Price: \$1,080 in March 2019 by Stack's Bowers at Baltimore
- Provenance: Ralph Adams Edson Jr.
- Certification: <https://www.ngccoin.com/certlookup/3725388-011/65/>
- Auction: <https://auctions.stacksbowers.com/lots/view/3-GQ1PQ>
- Article: [https://www.coinbooks.org/v22/esylum\\_v22n09a18.html](https://www.coinbooks.org/v22/esylum_v22n09a18.html)

## Description by Stack's Bowers:

"1831" (ca. 1881) Pynchon House. Copper. 25 mm. Musante JAB-39. MS-65 RB (NGC).

Provenance: From the Ralph A. Edson Collection.

## Description by Wayne Homren - March 2019:

- [https://www.coinbooks.org/v22/esylum\\_v22n09a18.html](https://www.coinbooks.org/v22/esylum_v22n09a18.html)

Like the Major Andre medal above, this one depicts an historical building. It's no architectural masterpiece, but this is a nice way to memorialize a lost landmark. -Editor









**1881 Pynchon House Medal - Copper - SBG MS Small Scratch Raw - Bolen-Musante Specimen**

- Grade: Raw Mint State, Small Scratch (SB)
- Provenance: John Adams Bolen personal reference collection; Neil Musante; Stack's Bowers Feb 2014 \$188.00.
- Auction: <https://auctions.stacksbowers.com/lots/view/1-1QH4G/>

**Undated (1881) Pynchon House. Copper. 25.5 mm. 8.4 grams. Musante JAB-39. Copper. Mint State, Small Scratch.**

Lovely blue-green and gold on the obverse, with bold violet accents on the reverse. Highly reflective fields and nice aesthetic appeal. A small obverse scratch is noted for accuracy, but is barely noticed with the unaided eye and is more than made up for by the fact that this was Bolen's personal reference collection example. It is marked with his "B" on the edge. As an aside, the ANS Collection contains a silver example from the Bolen Estate, also marked with the "B." One of 95 reported struck in copper, but with this pedigree, certainly one of the best!

*From the Neil Musante Collection. Earlier, from John Adams Bolen's personal reference collection. Paper envelope with attribution and pedigree notes included.*

**1881 Pynchon House Medal - Copper - Bolen-Musante Specimen**

Obverse:



**1881 Pynchon House Medal - Copper - Bolen-Musante Specimen**

Reverse:



**1881 Pynchon House Medal - Copper - NGC MS64 BN - Newman Specimen**

- Pop: NGC pop 1/3
- Sale: June 2016: \$258.50 by Heritage at Long Beach
  
- Provenance: Eric Pfeiffer Newman
- Certification: <https://www.ngccoin.com/certlookup/4251643-014/64/>
- Auction: <https://coins.ha.com/itm/u.s.-trade-tokens-1866-1889-/tokens-and-medals/-1867-ja-bolen-pynchon-house-musante-jab-39-ms64-brown-ngc/a/1235-99379.s>

## Description by Heritage - June 2016:

(1867) J.A. Bolen, Pynchon House, Musante JAB-39, MS64 Brown NGC. Copper. Lovely light brown surfaces exhibit full cartwheel luster with hints of gold toning. Original orange mint color lights the windows of the historical Pynchon House.

Ex: Eric P. Newman Numismatic Education Society.

Obverse:



Imaged by Heritage Auctions, HA.com

Reverse:



Imaged by Heritage Auctions, HA.com

**1881 Pynchon House Medal - Copper - NGC MS63 RB - South-Gabriele Specimen**

- NGC Population: 1/5
- Auction: <https://auctions.stacksbowers.com/lots/view/3-809F6/>
- Certification: <https://www.ngccoin.com/certlookup/1967048-033/63/>

**(C. 1881) Pynchon House medal by J.A. Bolen. Copper. 25mm. Musante JAB-39. MS-63RB (NGC).**

A second example of this interesting historical type. Generous faded red remains over both sides, accented by mottled blue and violet. Strong prooflike character in the fields and rather nice eye appeal. A very thin scratch in the house roof is easily overlooked, but the few obverse spots are a bit more obvious. Still, the eye appeal is quite nice. One of 95 reported struck in copper.

*Provenance: From the Tim Gabriele Collection. Earlier ex Henry South.*

**1881 Pynchon House Medal - Copper - NGC MS63 RB - South-Gabriele Specimen**

Obverse:



**1881 Pynchon House Medal - Copper - NGC MS63 RB - South-Gabriele Specimen**

Reverse:



**1881 Pynchon House Medal - Copper - NGC MS63 RB - South-Gabriele Specimen**

Obverse:



**1881 Pynchon House Medal - Copper - NGC MS63 RB - South-Gabriele Specimen**

Obverse:



**1881 Pynchon House Medal - Copper - Choice MS - Bowers specimen**

- Grade: Choice Mint State Raw SBG
- Provenance: Q. David Bowers; Charles Litman; Donald M. Miller; Stack's Bowers Jan 2011 \$253.00.
- Auction: <https://auctions.stacksbowers.com/lots/view/3-B6SD2/>
- Photos courtesy of Stack's Bowers

Description from Stack's Bowers New York 2011 Americana Sale:

**(1881) Pynchon House token. Copper, 24.2mm, 7.2 grams. Musante JAB-39. Choice Mint State.**

Obv. Pynchon house at center, tiny BOLEN signature within at the base. Rev. 9-line descriptive inscription, THE PYNCHON HOUSE / CALLED / THE OLD FORT. / BUILT BY / JOHN PYNCHON, / IN 1660. / TAKEN DOWN / IN 1831. / SPRINGFIELD, MASS. Prooflike and reflective. Mostly violet and blue over rosy orange copper, the reverse being rather more red. Faint die polishing lines on both sides. Bolen reported 95 struck in copper, and as he retained the dies it is clear that no restrikes were produced. This is useful, as this piece and the one to follow are both thin planchet pieces.

*Provenance: From the Q. David Bowers Collection; Charles Litman Collection; Donald M. Miller Collection.*

**1881 Pyncheon House Medal - Copper - Bowers specimen**

Obverse:



- Photo courtesy of Stack's Bowers

**1881 Pynchon House Medal - Copper - Bowers specimen**

Reverse:



- Photo courtesy of Stack's Bowers

**1881 Pynchon House Medal - Copper?/Brass? - MS PL Hairlines - Hayden May 2019 specimen**



- Grade: MS PL, Hairlines Raw Steve Hayden
- Price: Steve Hayden Auctions May 20, 2019 \$212.50.

Steve Hayden Description:

**1881 Springfield Massachusetts Merchant Token Pynchon House John Bolen JAB-39**

Post Civil War 1881 token Miller / Rulau MA Sp 56a UNC Details with light hairlines, proof like. The Pynchon House Called The Old Fort Built By John Pynchon, In 1660 Taken Down In 1881 Springfield, Mass.

I believe this is Copper and not Brass.

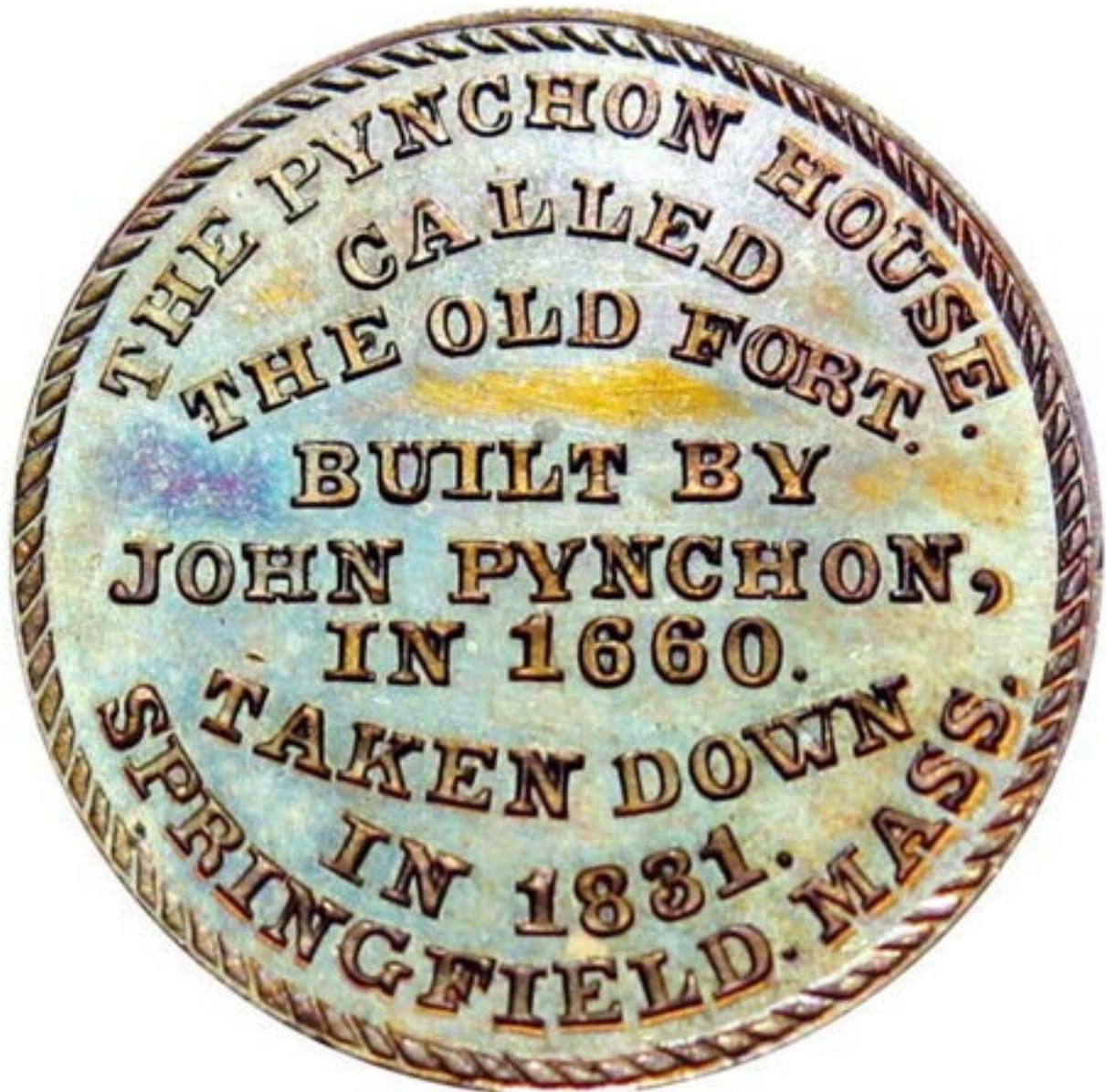
**Copper?/Brass? - Hayden May 2019 specimen**

Obverse:



**Copper?/Brass? - Hayden May 2019 specimen**

Reverse:



## 1881 Pynchon House Medal - Brass

### 1881 Pynchon House Medal - Brass - Choice MS - Musante Specimen



- Grade: Choice Mint State (SB)
- Pedigree: Neil Musante; Stack's Bowers Feb 2014 \$141.00.
- Auction: <https://auctions.stacksbowers.com/lots/view/1-1QH4M/>

**Undated (1881) Pynchon House. Brass. 25.5 mm. 8.6 grams. Musante JAB-39. Choice Mint State.**

A lovely brass example. Evenly struck with attractive reflectivity in the fields, though not as dramatic as seen on the silver and copper examples above, suggesting this might be among the later of those struck. Light olive and gold with traces of mottled iridescence. Very pleasing and scarce, one of just 45 reported struck in brass.

*From the Neil Musante Collection. Paper envelope with attribution notation included.*

**1881 Pynchon House Medal - Brass - Musante Specimen**

Obverse:



**1881 Pynchon House Medal - Brass - Musante Specimen**

Reverse:



**1881 Pynchon House Medal - Brass - MS - Bowers Specimen**

- Grade: Mint State (SB)
- Pedigree: Q. David Bowers; Charles Litman; Donald M. Miller; Stack's Bowers Jan 26, 2011 \$149.50.
- Auction: <https://auctions.stacksbowers.com/lots/view/3-B6SD8/>

**(1881) Pynchon House token. Brass, 25.2mm, 6.5 grams. Musante JAB-39. Mint State.**

Obv. Pynchon house at center, tiny BOLEN signature within at the base. Rev. 9-line descriptive inscription, THE PYNCHON HOUSE / CALLED / THE OLD FORT. / BUILT BY / JOHN PYNCHON, / IN 1660. / TAKEN DOWN / IN 1831. / SPRINGFIELD, MASS. Bright yellow brass with light russet and violet toning, mostly on the reverse. Prooflike and attractive. One of 45 reported struck by Bolen.

*Provenance: From the Q. David Bowers Collection; Charles Litman Collection; Donald M. Miller Collection.*

**1881 Pynchon House - Brass - Bowers Specimen**

Obverse:



**1881 Pynchon House - Brass - Bowers Specimen**

Reverse:



**1881 Pyncheon House Medal - Brass - Ungraded Raw - Mhalliha Specimen**



- Photos courtesy of Mhalliha

This brass specimen is from the Mhalliha Collection posted on Medals4Trade.com:

<http://www.medals4trade.com/displayimage.php?album=1143&pid=7780>

## 1881 Pynchon House Medal - Other

### 1881 Pynchon House Medal - Die Pair - Unique



This was offered by Stack's in 2019, 2014, and 2011. The lot was passed in 2011 and 2014.

- Price: Passed in Feb 2014 Stack's Bowers Lot 149
- Auction <https://auctions.stacksbowers.com/lots/view/3-IAYH6>

#### Description by Stack's Bowers - May 2019

1881 Steel Dies for J.A. Bolen's Pynchon House Token. Musante JAB-39. Nearly As Made.

Obverse Die: Pynchon house at center, tiny BOLEN signature within at the base, die face 25.2 mm, shank 31.6 mm, total height 31.6 mm, small J.A. BOLEN punched on the side of the shank, the face is polished and bright. Reverse Die: Nine-line descriptive inscription, THE PYNCHON HOUSE / CALLED / THE OLD FORT. / BUILT BY / JOHN PYNCHON, / IN 1660. / TAKEN DOWN / IN 1881. / SPRINGFIELD, MASS, die face 25.2 mm, shank 32.5 mm, total height 36.3 mm, small J.A. BOLEN punched on the side of the shank, as with the obverse, the face is highly polished, seemingly near strike-ready.

According to Bolen's own records, these dies struck 150 pieces in three compositions – silver, copper and brass. They held up nicely and, according to Musante, were retained by Bolen, left to the care of his son upon the father's death. They were sold out of the family in 1940. A superb pair of dies, and though other Bolen dies are known to exist, this superbly preserved matched pair is a prize for the Bolen specialist.

King's Handbook of Springfield, Massachusetts, 1884, included this:

In 1660 was built the first brick building ever erected in Springfield. It was the dwelling-house of John Pynchon, who is called in the records 'The Worshipful Major Pynchon' and, later, 'The Worshipful Colonel.' The bricks used in its construction were made at Northampton. The carpenters and masons were from Windsor. The building was 42 feet long, and 21 feet wide. The walls were very thick and solid, rising about 22 feet from the ground to the eaves. The roof was very steep, and the ridge was about 22 feet in perpendicular height above the garret-floor. It was designed to be a fortified house, and was actually used as such during the Indian War. This building remained in the occupation of the Pynchons until it was demolished, in 1831, to make room for a modern house. It was long known as the 'old fort.' John Pynchon was engaged in a very large business as a merchant. He purchased furs very extensively of the Indians and others. These were sent down the river to his warehouse, at what is now known as Warehouse Point in East Windsor, and thence to Hartford; from which place they were shipped to Boston and England. He was an owner, or part owner, of several vessels.

A unique numismatic opportunity! (Total: 2 dies)

Provenance: From the Q. David Bowers Collection. Earlier from our Americana Sale of February 2014, lot 149.

**1881 Pynchon House Medal - Original Obverse Die**



**1881 Pynchon House Medal - Original Reverse Die**



**1881 Pynchon House / J.A. Bolen Mule Medal - Unique**

- Price: \$705.00 Stack's February 2014 Lot 154
- Provenance: John Adams Bolen, Neil Musante, Stack's Bowers Feb 2014 \$705.00

Stack's Bowers February 2014 Americana Description:

**Unique Bolen / Pynchon House Muling**

**1869 J.A. Bolen / Pynchon House Muling. Copper. 25.2 mm. 8.9 grams. Musante JAB M-15. Choice Mint State.**

Medium reddish tan with lovely blue and violet overtones. Slightly reflective qualities in the fields. Some minor handling, but nothing visible without magnification. Reported by Bolen himself as the only one struck, in any metal, this one is believed the unique example from this die pair and is the Musante plate coin. Indeed, Bolen's "B" mark is seen on the edge, identifying this as his own reference specimen. An exceptional offering for the Bolen Medal collector, and not likely to be offered again for many years to come.

*Provenance: From the Neil Musante Collection. Earlier from John Adams Bolen's personal reference collection. Paper envelope with attribution and pedigree notes included.*

- Reference: <https://auctions.stacksbowers.com/lots/view/1-1QH5A/>

**1881 Pynchon House / J.A. Bolen Mule Medal**

Obverse:



- Photo courtesy of Stack's Bowers

**1881 Pynchon House / J.A. Bolen Mule Medal**

Reverse:



- Photo courtesy of Stack's Bowers