

silence is



Members of the Deaf community have achieved success in many fields, as currency worldwide attests.

PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES/HOWLETTY ('SILENCE IS') & OLGA KURBATOVA (FINGERSPELLING), WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

ELISHA GALLAUDET, as many numismatists know, engraved the first United States coin, the Continental Currency dollar. Unsurprisingly, he’s been mentioned in several past editions of *The Numismatist*, most recently the March 2022 issue. However, the Gallaudet surname is also borne by someone who is not as well-known among numismatic circles but is universally recognized in the Deaf community—Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, a great nephew of Elisha.

Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet (1787-1851) co-founded the first permanent school for the deaf in the United States, the Connecticut Asylum for the Education and Instruction of Deaf and Dumb Persons in Hartford, Connecticut, on April 15, 1817. It was relocated to West Hartford in 1921 and is now known as the American School for the Deaf.

Since 1817, many schools for the Deaf have been

established in the United States, and in 1864 Gallaudet’s youngest son, Edward Miner Gallaudet, became the first president of what is now Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C., an institution known worldwide for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students. The Hartford Bank, in 1860-62, recognized Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet by placing his image on its \$5 and \$20 bank notes.

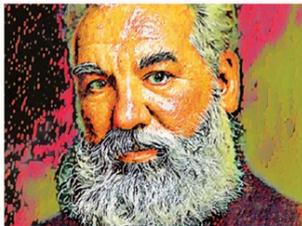
I am a proud graduate of Gallaudet University and an enthusiast of Deaf culture and history. Owing to these factors, I am heavily immersed in numismatics and philately related to the subject of Deafness.

In this article, I will share with you coins and bank notes that relate to Deafness in some way—be it an individual who you may or may not be aware of, including deaf engravers, hearing persons with connections to this topic, and deaf persons who were honored on coins and bank notes in their own right.

FAMOUS FIGURES ASSOCIATED WITH DEAFNESS WHO HAVE BEEN HONORED ON CURRENCY



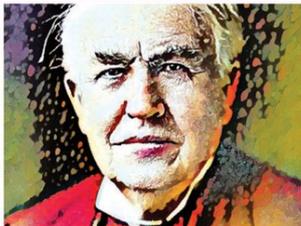
HELEN KELLER
Author, activist (deaf & blind)



ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL
Inventor, teacher of the deaf (deaf mother & wife)



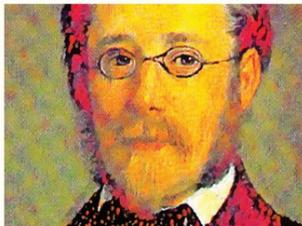
FRANCISCO GOYA
Artist (deaf)



THOMAS EDISON
Inventor (deaf in one ear)



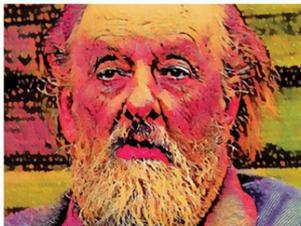
LUDWIG VON BEETHOVEN
Composer (deaf)



BEDŘICH SMETANA
Composer (deaf)



SAMUEL F.B. MORSE
Inventor, painter (deaf second wife)



KONSTANTIN TSIOLKOVSKY
“Father of rocket science” (deaf)

Jacob Rodrigues Pereira is considered one of the inventors of the manual alphabet.

Pinturicchio

Pinturicchio (1454-1513), née Bernardino di Betto, was an Italian Renaissance painter. His nickname (meaning “little painter”) is attributed to his short stature, and sometimes he is also referred to as Sordicchio because of his deafness. He was associated with several master painters around the Vatican, especially those who worked for Pope Alexander VI. His individual works were done in other churches around Rome and throughout Italy. Today, Pinturicchio’s paintings reside at several renowned art museums around the world. In 2013 San Marino minted a 2-euro bimetallic coin to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the artist’s death (Figure 1).

► **THIS \$20 Hartford Bank note features a portrait of Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet in the bottom-right corner.** Not Actual Size

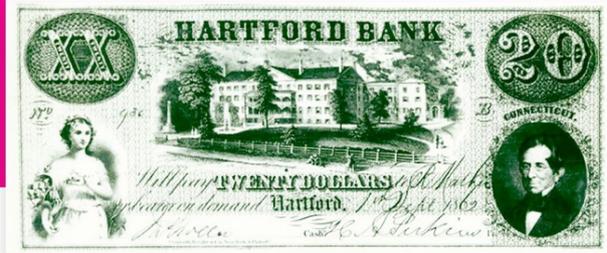


FIGURE 1
Actual Size: 26mm (coin)

per-nickel coin (Figure 2) issued by Portugal to commemorate 1981, proclaimed by the United Nations as the International Year of Disabled Persons (IYDP).

Liberian Coins

In 1983 the Republic of Liberia minted \$20 silver and \$200 gold coins showcasing the 1981 IYDP logo. On the reverse of the \$20 piece, a deaf person, shown on the far right, is portrayed cupping her ear (Figure 3), and on the \$200 coin, the woman to the immediate left of the middle nurse is also portrayed cupping her ear. Liberia paid tribute to Deaf culture again in 1999 with its issuance of a 1-ounce \$20 silver coin recognizing Y2K (year 2000), the start of the new millennium (Figure 4). To the left of the “Y2K,” a hand depicts the number “2” in sign language.

Jacob Rodrigues Pereira

The manual alphabet method of communication (aka fingerspelling) was developed by Catholic monasteries in medieval times. It was refined by Jacob Rodrigues Pereira (1715-80). Of Portuguese descent, Pereira was born in Spain, and he lived and died in France. He is considered one of the inventors of the manual alphabet because he formulated signs for numbers and punctuation and added more handshapes to the existing repertoire—established by Spanish priest Juan Pablo Bonet—that reflected sounds instead of a particular letter. Pereira also was a volunteer advocate for Portuguese Jews and worked to secure a rightful settlement for them in France. He was honored on a 100-escudo cop-



FIGURE 2
Actual Size: 34mm



FIGURE 3
Actual Size: 39mm

FIGURE 4
Actual Size: 41mm

PHOTOS: KENNETH S. ROTHSCCHILD/ROBERT B. KELLEY (1 MARKKA) & KENNETH S. ROTHSCCHILD

Spanish Engravers

Perhaps you're familiar with the expression, "Deaf people can do anything except hear." This is true, which is why you'll find deaf doctors, lawyers, dentists, computer experts, teachers, etc. Many careers do not require the sense of hearing, including numismatic professions, such as engraving.

In April 2021, I had the pleasure of having a Zoom chat in sign language with Enrique Paniagua Martínez, a Deaf engraver from Spain. Our English and Spanish language barrier was easily bridged by using meaningful basic signs, and we were assisted by a mutual Deaf friend in Spain who knew some English. Enrique related to me his career at Madrid's Fábrica Nacional de Moneda y Timbre—Real Casa de la Moneda (FNMT-RCM) from 1966 to 2003. He mentioned that he occasionally had worked with two other Deaf engravers at the mint—Jesus Terriza de Coca and José Manuel Mata Martín. Enrique told me that they did engrave Spanish bank notes but only in piecemeal fashion; for security reasons, each engraver was assigned only a section of the note to work on.

Scandinavian Engravers

My research uncovered two more Deaf engravers, one from Finland and one from Sweden. Pentti Matti Laurila (1922-2008) engraved portions of the 1963 1-markka bank note for the Bank of Finland (Figure 5). The son of famous Finnish General Matti Laurila, Pentti attended the deaf school in Oulu. The only reference about him that I found is a video of an interview with him conducted in Finnish Sign Language.



FIGURE 5
Not Actual Size

I was able to understand quite a bit of it because even though the vocabularies of European and American sign languages can be very different, much of their grammars are similar in their use of visual descriptions using iconic handshapes, space, movement, and facial expressions. Laurila recounted his education and work experience, and he showed the interviewer several of his nonmonetary engraved works.

In addition to his artistic talents, Laurila was also an accomplished marksman. He represented Finland at three World Games for the Deaf—at Washington, D.C., in 1965; Belgrade, Yugoslavia, in 1969; and Malmö, Sweden, in 1973.

Albert Jorpes (1913-2000) was born in Kökar, an island municipality of Åland, Finland. He attended the first school for the deaf in Porvoo, Finland, where classes were taught in Swedish. Later, he went to the Manilla School for the Deaf in Stockholm, Sweden. He was a graphic artist, illustrator, painter, sculptor, silversmith, and bank-note engraver. Jorpes started working for the Sveriges Riksbank bank-note printing house in 1939. He was trained by Olle Mirowsky as a portrait engraver, and he created the rendering of King Gustav V that appears on the 1948 5-kronor bank note honoring the ruler's 90th birthday (Figure 6). Jorpes later developed his own engraving technique and became Riksbank's only portrait engraver. In 1959 he assumed the master position when Mirowsky retired and occupied that role until his own retirement in 1980. Jorpes had a hand in the production of 10 Swedish bank notes between 1948 and 1976.



FIGURE 6
Not Actual Size

Slava Raškaj

Slava Raškaj (1877-1906), a Deaf Croatian painter, practiced watercolor and gouache techniques. She was born deaf, and at the age of 8, she was sent to the school for the deaf in Vienna, Austria, where she learned to draw. Later, after attending a deaf school in Zagreb, Croatia, she returned to her hometown of Ozalj. Several art instructors recognized her talent, and she was referred to and subsequently mentored by Bela Čikoš Sesija. While under Sesija's mentorship,

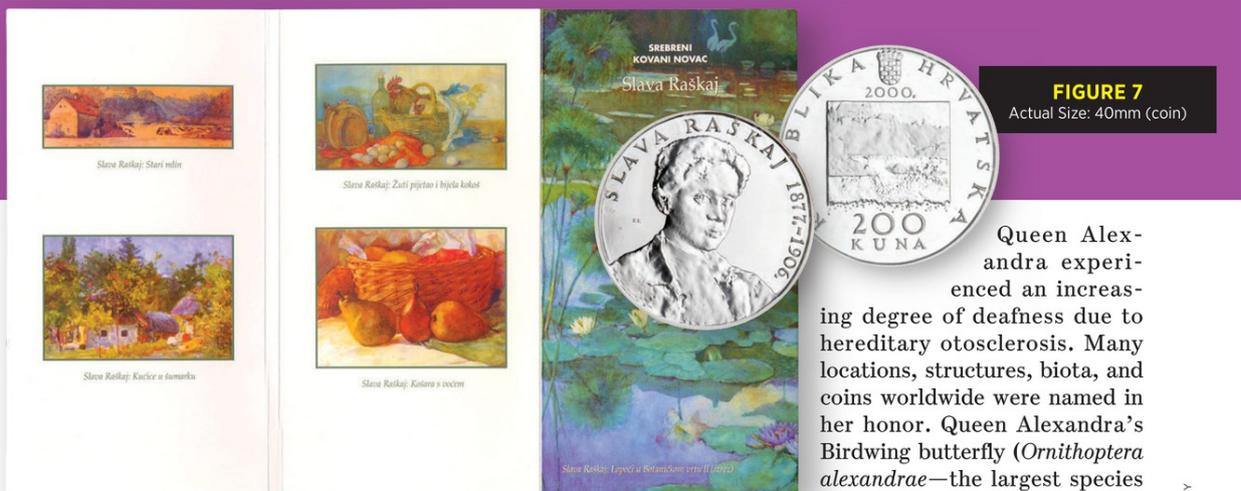


FIGURE 7
Actual Size: 40mm (coin)

Raškaj resided at the State Institute for Deaf-Mute Children in Zagreb.

She showed signs of depression in 1900 and was hospitalized. Raškaj was released to home care, but her condition deteriorated, and she was admitted to an institution. She stopped painting in 1902 and died from tuberculosis four years later. In 2000 the Croatian National Bank, as part of their Famous Croatian Women Series, issued a 200-kuna silver commemorative coin recognizing Raškaj (Figure 7).

Queen Alexandra

In 1860, at the age of 16, Alexandra of Denmark (1844-1925) was chosen to be the future wife of Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, the oldest son of Great Britain's Queen Victoria. The wedding took place in 1863, and with this happy occasion, Alexandra assumed the royal title of Princess of Wales. Upon Queen Victoria's death in 1901, Albert Edward became King Edward VII, and with his accession, Alexandra became queen.

In her later years,

Queen Alexandra experienced an increasing degree of deafness due to hereditary otosclerosis. Many locations, structures, biota, and coins worldwide were named in her honor. Queen Alexandra's Birdwing butterfly (*Ornithoptera alexandrae*—the largest species of butterfly in the world) was discovered in 1906 in Papua New Guinea by Albert S. Meek, naturalist to Walter Rothschild (no relation to me). Rothschild named the species after the monarch, and the butterfly is depicted on various precious-metal coins of Papua New Guinea.

Also named after the queen, the Alexandra Club was established in 1903, when the Commonwealth of Australia was just two years old and Melbourne was still the national capital. The organization was founded as a private social club for women and remains in operation today. During World War I, members made care packages for soldiers, a practice that is commemorated on coinage. Between 2014 and 2018, Australia produced the ANZAC (Australian and New Zealand Army Corps) Spirit 100th Anniversary coin series. As part of this series, the Perth Mint issued a 3-coin silver proof



FIGURE 8
Not Actual Size

set of 50-cent pieces in 2015 to commemorate the centennial of the Battle of Gallipoli. The reverse of one of the coins portrays a woman from the Alexandra Club giving a billy tin (a metal cooking pot with a lid and wire handle) to an Australian soldier (Figure 8). The pot displays the Alexandra Club's Christmas billy-tin design, which features a kangaroo on the Gallipoli peninsula.

Henry Lawson

Henry Lawson (1867-1922) is often considered Australia's greatest short-story writer and bush poet. When he was 2 years old, he suffered an ear infection that left him with partial deafness. By the age of 14, he was completely deaf. His classroom learning was stymied, so he turned to reading novels and poetry as an alternative learning tool.



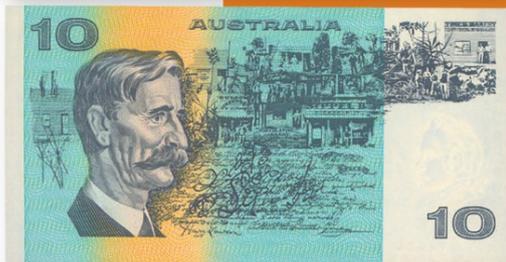
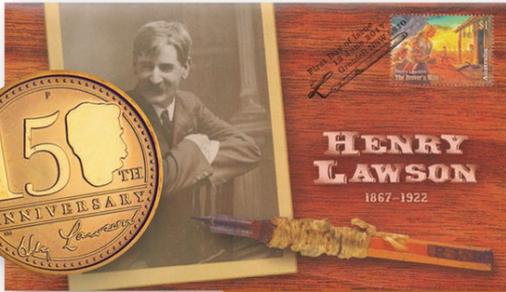
▼ THIS 1978 gold 100-kina coin depicts a Birdwing butterfly, one of the many namesakes of Queen Alexandra. Not Actual Size



PHOTOS: CANADIAN COIN & CURRENCY (50 CENTS); STACK'S BOWERS GALLERIES (100 KINA); WIKIMEDIA COMMONS (ALEXANDRA); GETTY IMAGES/VACI (BUTTERFLY); HANNAMARIAH (FRAME); HAKKARSLAN (BACKGROUND); KENNETH S. ROTHSCHILD/ROBERT B. KELLEY

Cecilia Grierson is lauded not only as the first woman doctor in Argentina but also as a pioneer for the education of the blind and the deaf.

PHOTOS: HERITAGE AUCTIONS (1,000 PESETAS GUINEANAS), WIKIMEDIA COMMONS (GRIERSON), GETTY IMAGES/HANNAMARIAH (FRAME) & KENNETH S. ROTHSCCHILD/ROBERT B. KELLEY



Francisco Macías Nguema

Francisco Macías Nguema (1924-79), a hard-of-hearing politician, served as the first president of Equatorial Guinea when the country became independent from Spain in 1968. During his dictatorial tenure, he became progressively deaf. He was one of the most brutal dictators in history, and his presidential decrees gradually destroyed Equatorial Guinea's economic, civil, political, and social systems. Nguema was overthrown in 1979, and after being found guilty at a subsequent trial, he was sentenced to death immediately. Owing to his authoritarian rule, Nguema was portrayed on various Equatorial Guinea bank notes and coins during his totalitarian presidency, such as the 1969-dated 1,000 *pesetas guineanas* shown here (Figure 9).

SHORT-STORY WRITER

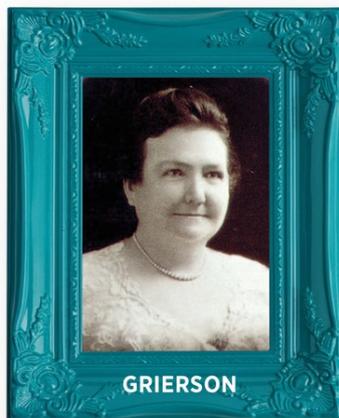
Henry Lawson is honored on the reverse of this 2017 \$1 celebrating the 150th anniversary of his birth and the back of this \$10 note, issued from 1966 to 1993. Not Actual Size



FIGURE 9
Not Actual Size

As an adult, he wrote a multitude of articles that inspired many subsequent stories, mostly about Australian bush life. "The Drover's Wife" is viewed as his most outstanding work. Even though he was famous throughout Australia, Lawson's deafness was one factor that led to his depression and poverty. He was married for three years, during which time he was an alcoholic and abused his wife. Royalty deals with publishers went sour, and he was jailed for drunkenness, wife desertion, child desertion, and failure to pay child support.

When Lawson died in 1922 from a cerebral hemorrhage, his status as a "distinguished citizen" enabled him to become the first Australian writer to be given a state funeral that the prime minister and ministers of both federal and state governments attended. Lawson is featured on the first Australian \$10 bank note arising from the decimalization of Australian currency in 1966; the 1996 \$5 silver coin; and the 2017 \$1 aluminum-bronze and \$8 silver coins commemorating the 150th anniversary of Lawson's birth.



Cecilia Grierson

The name Cecilia Grierson (1859-1934) may seem familiar to you, as she was featured on the controversial 2020 5,000-*peso* bank note from Argentina. (It is not her portrait that caused the controversy, but that of the other person

featured on the note—Ramón Carrillo—because of his alleged connection with Nazism.) Grierson is lauded not only as the first woman doctor in Argentina but also as a pioneer for the education of the blind and the deaf. The harassment Grierson endured as a medical student and afterward helped make her a militant advocate for women's rights in Argentina. She became one of a relatively small number of Argentine women in academia or from high society who supported feminism and the women's emancipation movement.

General Sam Houston depended on intelligence from Erastus “Deaf” Smith to help him determine the fate of the Alamo defenders.



FIGURE 10
Not Actual Size

Laurie Koss

Born in 1962, Canadian Laurie Koss—who has a profound unilateral hearing loss—has been drawing since she was 7 years old. Her mother was an artist and nurtured Koss’s creative interests. In college, Koss studied commercial art, photography, and acrylic painting. Her preferred subject matter is the natural world, particularly flowers. It is a testament to her skill that she was contacted by both Canada Post and the Royal Canadian Mint for permission to use her floral artworks. Besides the two 2015 Flower Series stamps that she created for Canada Post, she designed the black-eyed Susan reverse for the 2015 \$20 silver coin of the mint’s 2011-15 Swarovski Crystal Dew Drop series (Figure 10). Her initials appear to the right of the flower.

Erastus “Deaf” Smith

Erastus “Deaf” Smith (1787-1837) was born in Dutchess County, New York. He earned his nickname after he lost his hearing due to a childhood disease. His family moved to Mississippi in 1798. In 1817 he went to Tejas, a province in New Spain, before returning home. He went back to Texas for good in 1821 and

settled in San Antonio de Bexar.

Smith married a Tejana, and the couple had four children. He was familiar with the Anglo and Hispanic Tejanos cultures and learned Mexican and Spanish customs to the point where he served as a guide. He joined the Texian army as a private, scout, and spy and participated in the Grass Fight battle in the autumn of 1835.

Before the Siege of Bexar ended in December of that year, the family moved safely to Columbia, Texas. General Sam Houston depended on intelligence from Smith to help him determine the fate of the Alamo defenders. It was Smith who met survivor Susannah Dickerson and her baby and brought the family to General Houston. After the pivotal Battle of San Jacinto, Smith led a company of Texas Rangers until April 1837. The front of the 1840 Republic of Texas \$5 bank note bears a portrait of Smith to the right (Figure 11).

North Carolina Notes

The outbreak of the American Civil War in 1861 put pressure on Confederate states to base their currency on gold and silver. As a result, the Confederate treasury had at least 70 types of bank notes. North Carolina, like other Southern states, printed its own state bank notes. The \$1 and \$2 notes were printed at the Raleigh-based North Carolina School for the Deaf and Dumb. The imprint “N.C.

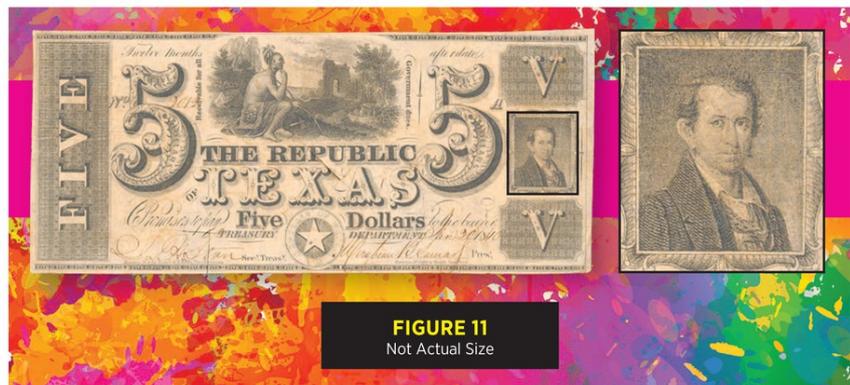


FIGURE 11
Not Actual Size

PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES/JILL LANG (BLACK-EYED SUSANS) & HAYK MARSLAN (BACKGROUND); KENNETH S. ROTHSCHILD/ROBERT B. KELLEY

In 1902 Grace Anna Goodhue started working at Clarke School as a lip-reading and speech teacher. She met Calvin Coolidge in 1904, and they married the following year.

Inst, Deaf & Dumb, Print.” is evident in the lower-left corner of many examples. According to Hugh Shull’s *A Guide Book of Southern States Currency: History, Rarity, and Values*, published in 2007, the notes were created in multiple formats—with and without the school’s imprint—and have various valuations.



The 2014 First Spouse \$10 gold coin features a portrait of Grace Coolidge on the obverse (Figure 12). The reverse shows three hands fingerspelling “USA” with the White House in the background. It’s ironic that the U.S. Mint came up with a manual fingerspelling approach to honor the legacy of oral-minded Grace Coolidge.

Conclusion

Gold coins and other currency intersect with the silent world of deaf people in numismatics, exemplifying the idea that “silence is golden.” Indeed, the Deaf populace’s potential to excel in everyday life is unlimited. A spectrum of hearing loss exists within the Deaf community, from those who can speak well to those who rely heavily on sign language, and as this article shows, all are capable of doing anything except hear. The general populace should strive to understand and communicate with those who have

much to contribute to society regardless of their inability to hear. Numismatic pieces like those shown here and pop culture media, such as the 2022 Oscar-winning film *CODA*, continue to encourage these important connections.

◀ **DURING THE Civil War, the North Carolina School for the Deaf and Dumb printed North Carolina state bank notes.**
Not Actual Size

Grace Coolidge

Clarke School for the Deaf, located in Northampton, Massachusetts, has an illustrious history. It was founded in 1867 by Gardiner Greene Hubbard and John Clarke because Hubbard wanted his deaf daughter, Mabel, to have an oral-speaking education. Alexander (Alec) Graham Bell began teaching at Clarke in 1871 and taught Mabel. In 1877, when Mabel was almost 20 years old, she married Bell.

In 1902 Grace Anna Goodhue (1879-1957) started working at Clarke School as a lip-reading and speech teacher. She met Calvin Coolidge in 1904, and they married the following year. As the 30th First Lady of the United States (1923-29), she advocated for education for deaf children and continued to serve on the board for Clarke School.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my partner in crime, Albert J. Hlibok, for his input; Steve Baldwin for providing information about Deaf Smith; Arancha Díez Abella for setting up the interview with Enrique Paniagua Martínez; Laurie Koss for her companionable correspondence; Peter Niemelä for sharing his knowledge of Scandinavian Deaf history; and Curtis Robbins for providing information about Henry Lawson.

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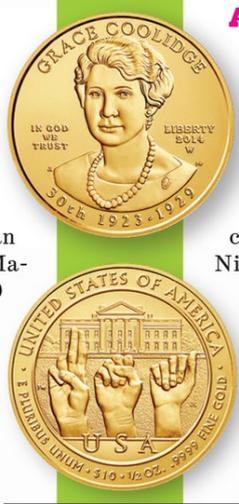


FIGURE 12
Actual Size: 26.49mm

PHOTOS: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS/GOVERNMENT & HERITAGE LIBRARY, STATE LIBRARY OF NORTH CAROLINA (SCHOOL); KENNETH S. ROTHSCHILD/ROBERT B. KELLEY