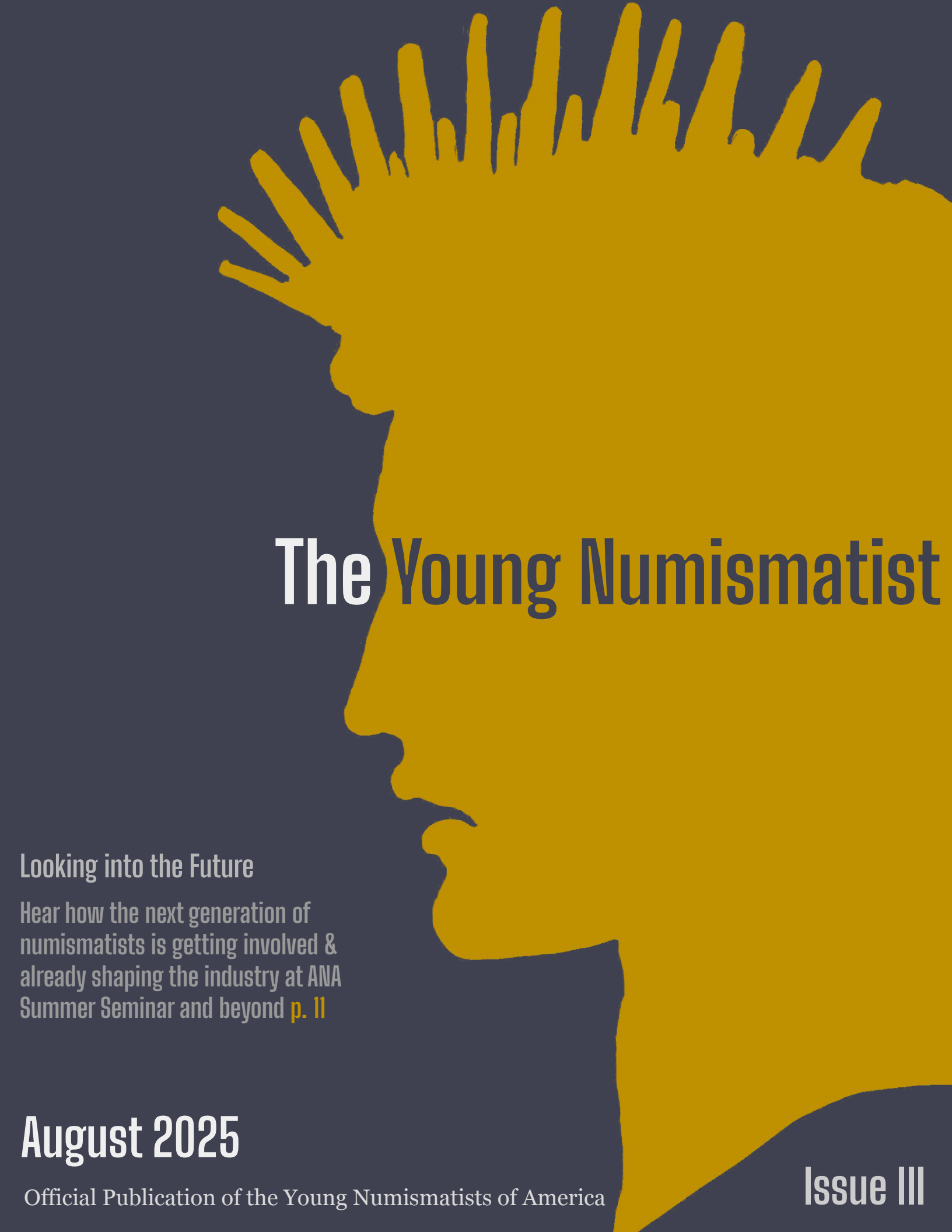




The Young Numismatist

Looking into the Future

Hear how the next generation of numismatists is getting involved & already shaping the industry at ANA Summer Seminar and beyond **p. 11**

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Issue III

Table of Contents

Letter from the Editor-in-Chief.....	3
Letter from the Club President.....	4
The Young Numismatists of America.....	5
About.....	5
Main Objectives.....	5
Join us.....	6
Submitting Articles.....	6
Board of Directors.....	7
Meeting Schedule.....	8
Meeting Summary.....	9
Numismatic Report.....	10
Summer Seminar: Cam Scheirer.....	11
Summer Seminar: Annie Davis.....	13
Spying Through Change.....	14
United States Numismatics.....	15
1857 Flying Eagle Cent Mule Die Clashes.....	17
The Modern U.S. Minting Process.....	19
U.S. Large Cents.....	21
Class I 1804 Dollars.....	23
Exonumia & Paper Money.....	26
Victor David Brenner's Lincoln Plaque And Medal.....	27
Coins of Micronations Part II.....	29
World & Ancient Numismatics.....	31
Coins of Catastrophe.....	32
Past the Piece of Eight Part III.....	33
Collectors' Challenges.....	36
Crossword.....	37
Trivia.....	38
Riddle.....	38
Survey.....	38
July's Survey Responses.....	39
Contributors.....	40

For young numismatists, by young numismatists

A Letter from the Editor-in-Chief

Hello readers,

With three back-to-back issues, an emerging ad campaign, and enthusiasm as high as ever, it's fair to say *The Young Numismatist* has launched. It seems *TYN* is helping grow a community of YNs—I've heard from new writers, new readers, new respondents, and more just this month. Increasing visibility and exposure (check Elliot's article in the ANA Reading Room) point to a strong future for the YNA and *TYN*.

This edition, more than others, has content to entertain everyone by intertwining numismatics with writers' other interests. The engineering behind the minting process, the adventure side of secret spy coins, the artistic design process of the Lincoln cent, micronations' coinage, our monthly crossword, and so much more to read about. Don't forget to check out the survey responses — there are some insightful replies.

This month, I thought it was especially important to highlight the recent accomplishments of YNs. Half a dozen YNA members received scholarships to attend the ANA's Summer Seminar. Congratulations to them for taking initiative and getting involved. Also, a massive thank you to the instructors, benefactors, ANA staff, and older collectors who have made programs like this accessible to YNs. I write this from Witter Coin U in San Francisco, where the theme of giving back is continually brought up. The instructors here are where they are today because of the vibrant numismatic community they were surrounded with as YNs. Now, they all wish to extend that welcoming legacy from when they entered coins. As Thomas J. Uram told us in June, "What you give will come back to you multiplied." Even as YNs, I feel it's essential for us to give back to the community, whether now—even through an article—or in our adult lives, and strengthen the same opportunities that have so generously been afforded to us.

Enjoy reading,

Nate Leonauskas



Editor-in-Chief

ynaeditor@money.org

A Letter from the Club President

Hello members!

I just recently finished attending the Stack's Bowers Galleries Professional Numismatist Program, where I spent five days sitting in classes led by industry experts, in addition to networking and building relationships with peers who are just as passionate about numismatics as I am. I would highly recommend the program to anyone who is eligible to attend. Despite being the youngest attendee, the amount of support and camaraderie I received from both staff and students was amazing. It left me incredibly grateful for the numismatic community — one that supports and uplifts its youth like few other hobbies do.

One of my biggest takeaways from the experience is this: the opportunities are out there, if you pursue them. For some it might be Summer Seminar, for others Witter Coin U—and for me, it was the PNP. What's remarkable is that many of these programs are offered at little or no cost to young numismatists. And if you're not able to travel or attend summer programs, don't worry — there are still plenty of ways to stay connected. Most cities have local coin clubs that are welcoming and eager to help new collectors. Attending monthly meetings, volunteering at local shows, or even participating in online communities can be just as impactful.

That's where the Young Numismatists of America really shines. The YNA is an incredible way to stay involved year-round virtually. Whether it's writing for this magazine, joining our monthly meetings, connecting with fellow YNs, or stepping into a leadership role, it provides a space to stay active, learn, and grow no matter the season.

Whether you're just starting out or ready for something new, there's always another step to take in this hobby. Get involved, contribute to your numismatic communities, and let your passion shine through. Until next time...

Happy collecting

Elliot Eng
YNA President
ynapresident@money.org

The Young Numismatists of America

Proudly affiliated with the American Numismatic Association

— About —

Founded in March 2025, the Young Numismatists of America (YNA) is a national coin club solely by and for young numismatists (YNs). At the inaugural meeting, over 20 numismatists aged 13 to 17 from across the United States met to launch their new national club, which now boasts more than 75 members. The YNA is facilitated by the American Numismatic Association and strengthened by the ANA's extensive network and programs for YNs. The YNA meets online monthly and hosts presentations, talks, and discussions led by YNs. Meetings also feature distinguished guest speakers from the numismatic world, raffles, and other engaging events.

The *Young Numismatist* is the official monthly publication of the Young Numismatists of America, dedicated solely to serving the young numismatist community. Embodying the club's motto, *For YNs, By YNs*, all articles are written entirely by passionate YNs from across the United States, with the general aim of reinvigorating youth involvement in the hobby and amplifying the voices of the coin industry's next generation of leaders. *The Young Numismatist* also serves as a platform for YNs to showcase their extensive numismatic knowledge, enhance their writing and research skills, build personal literary portfolios, and bolster connections with other numismatists.

— Main Objectives of the Young Numismatists of America —

E **ducation** for young numismatists. Knowledge is power, and the YNA is committed to extending members' breadth of knowledge of a wide range of numismatic topics. Presentations during monthly meetings, discussions, and articles intend to be highly informative and act as an opportunity for members to share about their numismatic specialties. The YNA also brings in older industry professionals for educational presentations and interviews.

E **ngagement** for young numismatists. The YNA hopes to dispel the notion that coin collecting is a hobby for older generations by boosting youth involvement and visibility. Participation from a wider range of age demographics greatly benefits the entire coin community, and the YNA seeks to be a catalyst for that wider involvement. The YNA also promotes youth-based programs beyond the club's scope to support its mission.

E **mpowerment** for young numismatists. Young collectors should never feel isolated in the numismatic world. Despite often limited budgets and comparatively limited expertise to older numismatics, the YNA hopes to embolden YNs to be pivotal community members and changemakers. The sooner YNs get started, the better. The YNA also supports other YN-led coin businesses, initiatives, & entrepreneurialism as young collectors enter the market together.

See online information at: money.org/yn-america.

— Join us —

Requirements:

- Must be an ANA Young Numismatist
- Must be at least 11 years old or in 6th grade
- Complete the parental permission form

For more information or to send in completed forms, contact ANA Education Director Christian Strayhorn at cstrayhorn@money.org.



— Submitting Articles —

Members can write articles on nearly any numismatic topic they are knowledgeable or passionate about. Articles should be at least 500–700 words in length, however, the more in-depth, the better. Original, research-based articles are encouraged. Submissionists are also recommended to include photographs of their own personal numismatic pieces.

The Young Numismatist is always in need of more passionate and talented young writers. Any YNA member is free to submit articles and become a published author in doing so. Writing submissions are greatly appreciated, and they prove highly beneficial for not just the club, but for the hobby as a whole. *For young numismatists, by young numismatists:* as a club and publication, we are committed to revitalizing youth involvement in the numismatic world, and being a writer would help considerably with that mission.

Article submissions also give members the chance to receive coins directly from the ANA and earn YN dollars, which can be used to bid on items in ANA YN auctions.

For more information or to submit articles, contact Nate Leonauskas at ynaeditor@money.org.



— Board of Directors —

The team of four elected young numismatists and ANA supervisor who lead the Young Numismatists of America and publish The Young Numismatist.

Nate Leonauskas *Editor-in-Chief*

Nate has been collecting coins ever since becoming enthralled with a wheat penny at the age of five. Now, as a seasoned seventeen-year-old numismatist and small-scale coin dealer based in Chicago, Nate champions the YNA's core principles of education, engagement, and empowerment for youth in the numismatic world. As Editor-in-Chief, he aims to promote those values while leading a longstanding publication that amplifies youth visibility in the hobby. Through articles, he loves contributing to numismatic research while sharing his knowledge and passion. In 2025, one of his pieces earned the Q. David Bowers Literary Award for third place. In the past, Nate has enjoyed attending shows like the NYINC and the ANA World's Fair of Money, where he earned first place in the 2024 NGC Numismatic Triathlon in the young numismatist category. He also frequently contributes to the Numista catalog to bolster free educational resources, and he won the website's 2022 Most Popular Coin Contest. Additionally, is a graduate of Witter Coin University's Class of 2025. Nate specializes in crown-sized world coins from the sixteenth to early nineteenth centuries, particularly thalers and 8 reales.

You can contact Nate at ynaeditor@money.org or natejleo@gmail.com. Instagram: [nate_coin](#).

Elliot Eng *President*

Since diving headlong into numismatics in 2021, Elliot has benefited immensely from the ANA's educational programs and is giving back: he has been YNA President since March 2025, scheduling speakers, presiding over meetings, appointing committees, fundraising, and constantly promoting YN involvement in the hobby via print and social media. Now a 16 year old from Anaheim, California, Elliot is a Summer Seminar alum and admitted to Stacks Bower's Professional Numismatist Program. He enjoys tying his love of history and numismatics together through writing research articles for publications, including *Errorscope*, *The California Numismatist*, the ANA's *Reading Room*, and the YNA's very own publication, *TYN*. He enjoys collecting numismatic literature, Lincoln cents, and errors.

You can contact Elliot at ynapresident@money.org.

Joshua Verley *Vice President*

Joshua Verley is a 15-year-old numismatist from Minnesota. He is a freshman in high school and has written articles for many different publications including ANA's *The Numismatist* and *Reading Room*. He enjoys collecting error and variety coins, 19th- to 21st-century U.S. type coins, and copper coins. Some of his other interests are model rocketry, recreational drone flying, and soccer, and he takes pride in being an overly enthusiastic Minnesota Vikings fan.

You can contact Joshua at ynavicepresident@money.org.

Annie Davis *Secretary*

Annie has enjoyed collecting coins for five years. Her collection started with nickels: Jefferson, Buffalo, Liberty, and Shield designs. She has since expanded her collection to include dimes, paper money, and world bills. Exhibiting at the FUN Show was an enjoyable learning experience for Annie. There, she took 2nd place for a Hobo Nickel carving exhibit, a skill that she learned at the ANA's Summer Seminar. While at the FUN Show, Annie was able to work as a page, where she loved helping the dealers and getting to visit with others from all over the country. She has attended Summer Seminar the past two summers and is excited to go again this year. She loves meeting other numismatists and learning from them.

You can contact Annie at ynasecretary@money.org.

Christian Strayhorn *ANA Education Director*

Christian Strayhorn is the Director of Education at the American Numismatic Association (ANA), where she spearheads the development and implementation of engaging educational programs, including the innovative eLearning Academy. With over 15 years of experience in education, both domestically and internationally, Christian brings a wealth of expertise to her role. She holds a Bachelor's in History from North Carolina State University and a Master's in History from the University of Nebraska at Kearney. A published author and TEDx speaker, Christian is passionate about sharing knowledge and inspiring learning within the numismatic community and beyond.

— Meeting Schedule —

Meetings are typically the first Friday of each month at 5:00pm MT.

August 1, 2025

Jeff Garrett: American Treasure Hoards

September 5, 2025

Doug Mudd: The ANA's Edward C. Rochette Money Museum - An Overview

October 3, 2025

Jeff Howard: PCGS Coin Grading

November 5, 2025

Payton Lindeman: Ancient Coins

December 7, 2025

Holiday Fun & Games

View up to date information at: money.org/yn-america

— Meeting Summary — July 11, 2025

Nate Leonauskas

After greetings were shared and members settled in, Elliot started the membership report. The numbers were encouraging; the YNA had reached 60 members, an excellent improvement. There are still YN Challenge Coins available, so members were encouraged to claim theirs if they had not done so already.

In the Editor's Report, it was announced answering riddles in *TYN*'s Collectors' Challenges column was a new way to earn YN dollars. The patriot July issue of *TYN* was revealed, and it boasted more than 15,000 words on 43 pages. Exonumia & Paper Money, was a new column announced, featuring three articles. Cam Scheirer was selected as the columnist. Nate summarized other parts of the issue, including the interview with ANA President Thomas J. Uram and the Collectors' Challenges games. Additionally, new writing resources were posted to the Google Classroom for any members to freely access. A grant proposal for an end-of-year issue of *TYN* with the top articles of 2025 was revealed. Though the grant for nearly \$2,700 was sent in, the club is awaiting word on the status of the request. There is no guarantee that it will occur.

Next, the website, now up at money.org/yn-america, was shown to all members. Pete Gentzler, the ANA webmaster who put the site together, and YNA members who gave advice along the development process were thanked for their work. Furthermore, an upcoming social media campaign was announced, and Elliot reiterated the need for volunteers. Luckily, many members were eager to assist in creating future posts. Club news, member spotlights, announcements, informational/educational tidbits were listed as possible types of posts. Elliot's last few remarks about the state of the club included the focus on finances and social media in coming months. Also, Elliot published an article on the YNA in one of the July/August issue of *ERRORSCOPE* and another on the ANA's Reading Room as well: readingroom.money.org/ana-launches-young-numismatists-of-america



The amendment to combine order of meeting items 3–9 and re-number subsequent items, which was proposed last meeting and had begun to be voted on, passed with overwhelming (>90%) support. The bylaws document has been adjusted and published to our website.

Regarding finances, Elliot recalled the \$200 donation from Thomas Uram and \$2500 from CVS (thanks Jeff Swindling for submitting the grant request!) for a total of \$2700 in the YNA Treasury. Additional money must come from outside sources, not member dues. Spending is still at the President's discretion but must be approved and administered by the ANA Director. Though there are currently no expenditures and nobody assigned to track the YNA finances, potential expenditures may include a print issue of *TYN* and making Mini-Mint medallions.

A new officer position was announced: the Treasurer of the YNA. Members were free to apply, and the Treasurer would be chosen by the discretion of Elliot and Christian. Due to the monetary nature and responsibilities, nominees were required to be fourteen years old and submit a campaign message to the Board. They are to manage the YNA finances with precision, clarity, and integrity, and if needed, develop budgets for the year and/or individual projects. The Treasurer will periodically report to the rest of the Board.

There were two raffle lots; one had paper money and notgeld, and the other had Vietnamese coins and a replica bill. Seth Chandler, owner of Witter Coin and chancellor of Witter Coin U, was expected to attend the meeting. However, he was traveling Europe and could not join because of a timezone mishap. In lieu of his presentation, Christian presented about an interest of hers before she was a numismatist: collecting Smurfs. She discussed places they were produced, how to identify counterfeits, and rare types. There are certainly some parallels to coins!

Afterward, there was a roundtable discussion. Several new YNA members introduced themselves. Welcome! Summer Seminar highlights, ongoing numismatic projects, and new purchases were some of the topics discussed.

Numismatic Report

The Young Numismatist • August 2025



ANA Summer Seminar 2025

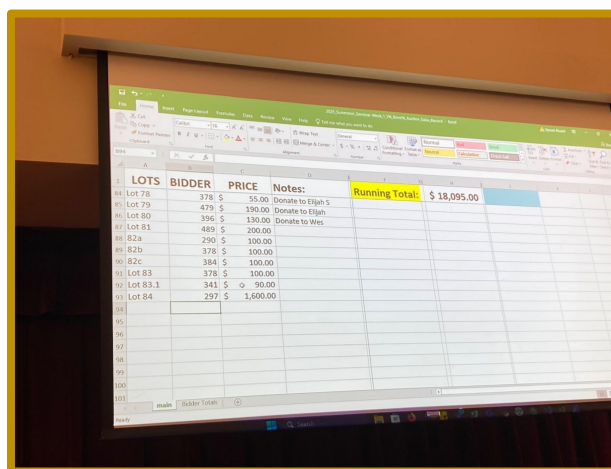
The YNA was represented at Summer Seminar! Hear **Cam Scheirer**'s timeline & overview and **Annie Davis**'s thoughts on the events she attended.



Cam Scheirer: From 21 June to 3 July, six YNA members attended the American Numismatic Association's (ANA) Summer Seminar, some attending both week-long sessions. The first session began on 21 June, where, after taking a 30-minute shuttle from the tiny Colorado Springs Airport to the campus of Colorado College, attendees partook of a lunch buffet and explored the campus.

The opening ceremonies began at 6:00 p.m. and included speeches from Kim Kiick (ANA Executive Director), Doug Mudd (ANA Money Museum Curator), Akio Lis (ANA Head Librarian), and others. The night's featured event was the ANA Library book sale. During the day, attendees were given random tickets to the sale with numbers corresponding to places in line. At the ceremonies, Mr. Lis auctioned the "first place in line" ticket for \$600, which also came with two minutes to explore the book sale alone. But it wasn't just Mr. Lis selling places in line; I remember observing some business-minded YNs selling their tickets for \$5 each (\$10 for numbers under 40).

The next day was when the classes began. They took place in a large brick building across the campus from the YN dorm. The morning sessions lasted from 9:00 to 11:45 a.m., and the afternoon sessions began at 1:15 and ended at 4:00 p.m. In the evenings, YNs attended mini-seminars, dropped into bull sessions, and most importantly, worked on the YN benefit auction. At Week One, most YNs attended on a scholarship, either from the ANA or another organization. The auction's proceeds, which totaled over \$19,000 in Week 1, all went to funding ANA scholarships for future years. The auction was called by Allie Byers, a professional auctioneer at Centennial Auctions, who impressed everyone in the room with the speed at which she sold the lots. The auction was led by YN Hayden Howard (not a YNA member), who organized YNs into groups cataloging the lots, running lot donation and viewing, and running the lots to the winners. That evening, the YNs were led on a walk to the nearby 7-Eleven, where they were given \$10 to spend on snacks.



This screen hung down for the entire auction. The bidders donated certain items to YNs, as you can see in the "notes" section.

The ANA, as well as outside donors and organizations, provide generous scholarships for YNs to be able to attend Summer Seminar. If you are interested, then make sure to apply at: www.money.org/ana-summer-seminar-scholarships/

On the final evening (Wednesday) was the banquet which featured many speeches and awards; Hayden was chosen as YN of the year. David Lange and Ken Hallenback (a roving instructor that year) were inducted into the ANA's Hall of Fame. All attendees were given a brass banquet token, inspired by a Hard Times Token issued by Smith's Clock Establishment.



This represents about ¼ of the entire dining room at the Summer Seminar Week 1 banquet hall.

A few personal highlights not related to the classes: meeting Ken Bressett (who is very nice); exploring the ANA Money Museum, especially the new Silk Road exhibit; participating in and winning the Week One Dwight N. Manley Numismatic Library trivia contest, which involved using ANA digital resources to identify items in its collection; and making a short snorter out of a YN\$20 bill Christian gave me for hugging Ernie. Those are just a few highlights; the list goes on.

This is the certificate I received for winning the Week One Dwight N. Manley Numismatic Library contest. Next year, I'll redeem it to get the second place in line. I'm not sure what the picture represents either.



Summer Seminar certainly proved the adage “time flies when you’re having fun.” Summer Seminar was a great experience, and many of us will be sure to return next year.

Annie Davis: This year, before Summer Seminar, I was reluctant about attending, but I am so glad that I made the long drive to attend. I enjoyed talking with numismatists that I knew from previous years at Summer Seminar and from coin shows I have attended. I had fun helping with the YN Auction with many different things, and I liked learning from my classes about paper money.

The first week, I took the class *The Wonderful World of Paper Money*. I learned about counterfeits, how to tell the types of counterfeits apart, how different counterfeiting protections are made. I was able to inspect paper money with a microscope and a black light to examine what was being taught. It was really fun! The second week, I took *World Banknotes: 1950 to Date*, where. I learned about the different security features on the banknotes, some of which are easy to spot, while others are not. In both, I learned about different resources to study more about my banknotes.

At Summer Seminar, there is an annual auction of donated coins, notes, and numismatic items to help fund future YN scholarships. I helped with receiving the lots donated by many generous numismatists for this auction. As we collected donations, I talked with other YNs and numismatists I had met before. I was glad to discuss what I had been learning, and they were happy to talk with me. The relationships created are a really fun part of numismatics for me.

All the YNs had to work together to create an auction catalog with the donated lots. To help with cataloging, I was able to use some things I learned in my class to find information about a paper money lot. After we printed and distributed the catalog, people came to view the auction lots. At the lot viewing, I showed people the lots they wanted to study before bidding. During the auction, I brought the winner a little piece of paper with what lot they won and how much they paid. When the auction was over, I helped give people the lots they had won. Because of many extremely generous bidders, the auctions raised quite a bit of money for YN scholarships. Some auction winners even re-donated their lot so that it could be auctioned again, or donated it to a YN!

Between sessions, I snuck off for an enchanting drive to the top of Pike's Peak with my family before returning for the intersession events. During the intersession, all of the YNs who stayed for both weeks strolled over to the Colorado Springs Coin Show. I searched for items that I needed for my collection there, talked to some of the dealers, and learned about their coins. We also played some games outside on the grass, including soccer and frisbee. I also attended an excellent new ANA Museum exhibit about coins on the Silk Road. At the exhibit's grand opening, I met some of the people who helped set it up, learned about the money used on the Silk Road, and ate some food representing the different cultures along it.

I also went to the ANA library book sale. At the sale, I looked for books about what I was interested in collecting. I wandered around the museum a couple of times, exploring the exhibits. I enjoyed the "History of Money" exhibit, where I learned about the ways money has changed.

I'm glad that I attended Summer Seminar, rekindled friendships there, and made new friends. I enjoyed helping with the YN auction and learning from my classes too. I hope to attend next year!

Spying Through Change

by Lucas Lee

Many complex spy gadgets were invented during the Cold War to record or conceal items. Some of those tools included matchbox cameras, shoe transmitters, and microdot cameras. But few of the gadgets were as ordinary and deceptive as spy coins: hollowed-out coins used to conceal microfilm, coded communications, or even poison.

A Discovery in Brooklyn

The most famous case of spy coin usage happened in 1953, in Brooklyn, New York, when a teenage paperboy, Jimmy Bozart, dropped a nickel that split open, revealing a hidden piece of microfilm. This event led to a four-year investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The microfilm contained a series of five-digit codes, which led the FBI to many dead ends when trying to decode it.

Decoding the Microfilm

A breakthrough came in 1957, when Reino Häyhänen, a Soviet agent operating under Eugene Maki, offered knowledge about Soviet intelligence to the U.S. Embassy in Paris. He revealed that the hollow nickel had been intended for him, but it had been accidentally spent before he received it. Through Häyhänen's information, the FBI was able to decode the message. It read:

"1. WE CONGRATULATE YOU ON A SAFE ARRIVAL. WE CONFIRM THE RECEIPT OF YOUR LETTER TO THE ADDRESS `V REPEAT V' AND THE READING OF LETTER NUMBER 1."

"2. FOR ORGANIZATION OF COVER, WE GAVE INSTRUCTIONS TO TRANSMIT TO YOU THREE THOUSAND IN LOCAL (CURRENCY). CONSULT WITH US PRIOR TO INVESTING IT IN ANY KIND OF BUSINESS, ADVISING THE CHARACTER OF THIS BUSINESS."

"3. ACCORDING TO YOUR REQUEST, WE WILL TRANSMIT THE FORMULA FOR THE PREPARATION OF SOFT FILM AND NEWS SEPARATELY, TOGETHER WITH (YOUR) MOTHER'S LETTER."

"4. IT IS TOO EARLY TO SEND YOU THE GAMMAS. ENCIPHER SHORT LETTERS, BUT THE LONGER ONES MAKE WITH INSERTIONS. ALL THE DATA ABOUT YOURSELF, PLACE OF WORK, ADDRESS, ETC., MUST NOT BE TRANSMITTED IN ONE CIPHER MESSAGE. TRANSMIT INSERTIONS SEPARATELY."

"5. THE PACKAGE WAS DELIVERED TO YOUR WIFE PERSONALLY. EVERYTHING IS ALL RIGHT WITH THE FAMILY. WE WISH YOU SUCCESS. GREETINGS FROM THE COMRADES. NUMBER 1, 3RD OF DECEMBER."

The FBI identified William Fisher, known as Rudolf Abel, as the Soviet spy that created the spy coin.

The Arrest

Rudolf Abel was arrested on June 21, 1957, by FBI agents in New York City, four years after the coin was discovered. A search of Abel's room revealed complex spy equipment, including cipher tools, shortwave radios, and more hollowed-out items. His arrest was one of the biggest counterintelligence victories during the Cold War. In 1962, Abel was exchanged for Francis Powers, the American pilot whose U-2 reconnaissance aircraft had been shot down over Soviet territory.

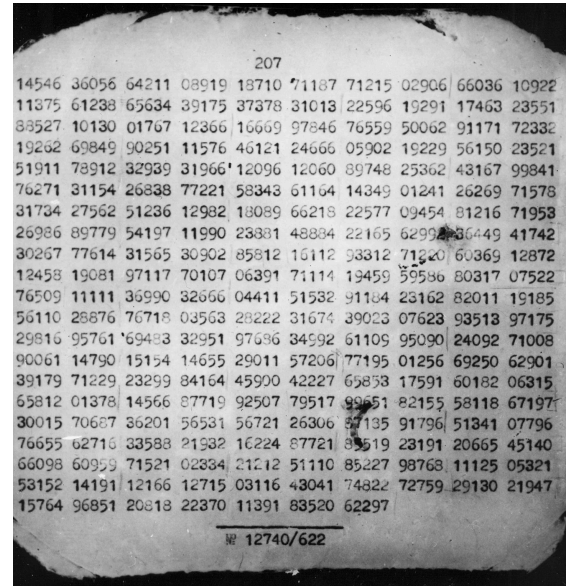
Engineering of the Coin

The spy coin was a simple gadget, created by hollowing and merging the obverse of a 1948 Jefferson nickel with a reverse from a wartime issue minted between 1942 and 1945. A small hole drilled into the letter “R” in the word “TRUST” allowed the coin to be opened using the head of a pin. The simplicity of the design allowed it to go unnoticed in everyday transactions.

Today, original examples of spy coins can be found in museums and private collections.



The hollow nickel the paperboy dropped



The coded message hidden in the nickel

All images from the FBI

Sources

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"Bridge Of Spies Espionage Case Rudolf Abel 'THE HOLLOW COIN' FBI 88374." *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/88374-the-hollow-coin.

"Hollow Nickel/Rudolf Abel." *Federal Bureau of Investigation*, www.fbi.gov/history/famous-cases/hollow-nickel-rudolph-abel.

"The Hollow Nickel That Led to Soviet Spy Abel's Arrest." *ClearanceJobs*, news.clearancejobs.com/2024/06/22/wooden-nickel.



Be sure to receive your **free** YN Challenge Coin

YNA members are eligible to receive a coin from the ANA. It is first come first serve, one per person. If you have not done so already, email **Christian Strayhorn** at cstrayhorn@money.org to claim your reward.

Only 100 were ever minted—less than 20 are left. Feel free to share this promotion with other numismatists. And of course, be sure to receive yours right away!

*The YN Challenge Coin is **not** a spy coin. Use as such is highly discouraged.*

United States Numismatics

The Young Numismatist • August 2025



1857 Flying Eagle Cent Mule Die Clashes

by Caleb Meier

Among the most unique varieties in the United States Mint's history are the 1857 Flying Eagle cent mule die clashes. Rising from a cloud of mystery and intrigue, these coins are some of the very few that feature multiple denominations on one coin. Their controversial background, amazing eye appeal, and rarity make them prized possessions to collectors. Flying Eagle cent mule die clashes are treasures to behold!

Background

Clashed dies occur when two dies strike each other repeatedly due to planchets failing to be fed into the press. This strike can cause the design of one side of the coin to be imprinted on the die for the other side of the coin. When a planchet is struck with these dies, the result is a coin that has evidence of design elements from the other side of the coin. This almost only happens between the obverse and reverse dies of the same coin, but in a few very rare instances, clashing has occurred between dies of different denominations. These clashes are called mule die clashes. Only seven mule die clashes have been discovered in the history of United States coinage, and four of them involve the 1857 Flying Eagle cent. This has led to a couple of different theories as to how these 1857 clashes occurred.

The first theory involves Theodore Eckfeldt, also known as the "Midnight Minter." Eckfeldt was a night watchman at the U.S. Mint, and he is known for having created several controversial coins to sell for a profit, such as the 1804 Class II silver dollar. This theory suggests that Eckfeldt intentionally made mule coins, including a Flying Eagle cent on one side, and a different denomination, such as a quarter, half dollar, or double eagle, on the other. His intention would have been to sell these unique mule coins for a large profit, but he likely never got the confidence to do so, as he may have been arrested. It is thought that in the process of striking these coins, the dies accidentally clashed together too many times, resulting in designs from two different denominations appearing on one die. When circulating coins were struck with these dies, they displayed outlines of designs from completely different coins. However, the fact that no actual mule coins have been discovered yet causes many to believe that this story may not be true.

The next theory developed after more modern research was conducted and is now the most widely accepted theory. Many experts now believe that these varieties were created through regular production. Due to high demand for the new Flying Eagle cents, the Mint replaced presses producing larger denomination coins with cent dies, which would have required the collar to also be removed. This would allow for dies of different denominations to clash together in the scenario that the press went through a cycle to check if the distance between the dies was correct before the second die was replaced. This theory is further supported by the facts that all the clashes display either obverse-obverse or reverse-reverse combinations and that the designs are aligned rather than rotated 180 degrees compared to each other.

Clash with \$20 Double Eagle

The first coin that an 1857 Flying Eagle cent is known to have clashed with is a \$20 Liberty Head double eagle. This is the rarest such variety and is also very dramatic. It is recognized as the Snow-7 variety, and it is listed as the FS-403 in the Cherrypicker's Guide. The outline of Liberty's face can be seen throughout "AMERICA," as well as in front of the eagle's face. Specific features of the \$20 design can be made out, such as the nose, lips, and chin. It is estimated that fewer than 60 examples exist in all grades, and it is still unknown in mint state. Given this rarity and the coin's great popularity, this is by far the most valuable of the three mule clashes, and it headlines most conversations about these coins.



All left side images (overlays) are from Mad Die Clashes, all right side images are from PCGS

Clash with Seated Liberty Half Dollar

An 1857 Flying Eagle cent die is also known to have clashed with a Seated Liberty half dollar. This variety, also known as the Snow-9 or FS-402, is the most common mule clash in the series and also the least dramatic. A clash mark from seated Liberty's

arm is most helpful in the identification of this variety, as it can be clearly seen through the letters of "AMERICA." Other elements of the half dollar design can be seen throughout the cent, but they are often weak, making it difficult to envision the half dollar design. Still, this variety commands a strong premium in the marketplace and is popular with collectors due to the unique and dramatic circumstances that occurred to create it.



Clash with Seated Liberty Quarter

The last coin that an 1857 Flying Eagle cent die clashed with is the Seated Liberty quarter.

Unlike the other two varieties in the series, this one features clashing between two reverse dies. Therefore, the outline of an eagle from the quarter reverse can clearly be seen above and through "ONE" on the reverse of the cent. This variety, known as the Snow-8 and FS-901, is very dramatic, as it is easy to envision the design elements of both denominations. It is also quite a rare variety, with estimates ranging from 50 existing examples to several hundred. As time passes, the upper end of these estimates seems more likely. This variety is viewed as being not quite as rare as the double eagle clash, but certainly much rarer than the half dollar clash.

What makes this specific variety unique is that a corresponding 1857 quarter variety is known to have clash marks from a Flying Eagle cent. While not a super dramatic variety, design elements from the reverse of a cent can be seen on the quarter reverse. Known as the FS-901, examples are very rare. These coins are also very popular, as they are collected by both cent and quarter collectors. The fact that coins are known from both denominations of the clash adds to the intrigue of this variety.



Conclusion

Clearly, 1857 Flying Eagle cent mule die clashes are among the most unique U.S. coin varieties ever. Their dramatic eye appeal, suspicious creation, and rarity make them very popular with collectors. They are treasures that would be cherished in any collection.

The Modern U.S. Minting Process

by Annie Davis

Imagine if you went to the Denver Mint to take a tour. Would you want to take the standard 45-minute visitor tour, or would you like an all-access special tour reserved for distinguished guests where you actually walk out on the floor among the machines? Even though most of us will never get the all-access tour of the Mint, it is possible to understand the minting process and know more about what goes on inside than most of the visitors do. Come with me as I try to teach you about the minting process!

First, the Mint purchases 1,500-foot-long rolls of the metal they need to make the coins. The rolls for the dimes, quarters, and half dollars are made of clad copper and nickel. The rolls for the nickels are not clad, but made of copper and nickel. Nickels have a higher nickel composition than the other coins. Dollar coins are clad also, but with different metals. Cents come to the Mint already made as planchets. Mint employees get the roll unwound and flattened out and sent to the blanking press.

The blanking press can press about 14,000 blanks per minute. That's 6,720,000 blanks if it ran for a full eight-hour shift! Blanks are what you call a coin before it gets the rim and is stamped. At the blanking press, the press cuts out blanks from the roll of metal. The blanking press is arranged in a way so that the Mint can get the most coins possible from one roll of metal. The cutters on the press are arranged like a beehive, each row slightly offset from the row before to get more blanks from each row. The metal that is leftover after the blanks are cut out of the metal roll is called webbing. The webbing is then sent back to the factory to be melted down.

After the blanks come out of the blanking press, they go to the annealing furnace. Annealing heats the coins to make the coin blanks softer and able to bend more without breaking. At the annealing furnace, the blanks get heated to about 1,600°F. No oxygen is present in the annealing furnace. When the blanks get hot enough, they are taken out and quickly cooled down by being dropped into a large tank filled with a mix of water, citric acid powder, and lubricants that keep the blanks from sticking together. The blanks are washed and dried to restore them to their original color. The cleaning solution is a mix of cleaning and anti-tarnish agents. After the blanks are washed, they get steam-dried. When the blanks are dry, they are sent to the upsetting mill.

The upsetting mill puts the rims on the blanks. The rim helps to keep each coin from breaking when it gets stamped. After the blanks come out of the upsetting mill, they are called planchets. The planchets are one step away from becoming a coin! The next step is going to be very exciting! After the upsetting mill, the planchets will go to the striking press.

At the striking press, the coin is finally made. To press the design onto the surface, the planchets get struck between two dies with about 35 to 100 metric tons of pressure, depending on the coin. Remember that in the annealing furnace, the metal becomes incredibly hot in order to make it more malleable and stronger. If the coins were not annealed, it would be a lot more difficult for the designs to be struck on the coins. The reeded edge of dimes, quarters, and half dollars is put on when the coin is struck. Circulating coins get struck once per coin. Each striking press can strike up to 750 coins per minute. That's up to 45,000 coins per hour or 360,000 coins in one shift! That's a lot of money! The Denver Mint alone has 54 presses.

Now that the coins have been struck, they still have further processing before they are released. Newly struck coins intended for circulation go into a big bin until it becomes time to go to the inspector. The inspector pulls a sampling of coins from each bin to see if there are any mistakes. If there are any mistakes, the coins in that

batch are sent to a machine called the “waffler.” At the waffler, the coins are pressed into wavy lines like Ruffle potato chips. The waffled coins are then sent to be melted to make more metal.

Bins that the inspector passes are sent to be weighed and counted. As the coins are counted, they drop into a big storage bag. The storage bag is then weighed and sent to one of the 12 Federal Reserve Banks to be distributed to the public.

Not all coins are sent to the Federal Reserve Banks. The U.S. Mint makes some rolls of uncirculated and proof coins to sell to coin collectors. Proof coins follow mostly the same process as the coins intended for circulation, but with some differences. The first difference is that after they get made into planchets, they are cleaned in a special metal drum with a lot of small metal pellets and a cleaning agent to smooth and polish the surface of the planchets. After they are taken out of the drum, a Mint employee rinses them and then hand-dries the planchets with towels. The next thing that is done differently is the striking. At the striking press, the proof coins are struck at least twice. The dies that are used for proof coins are specially polished to make them extra shiny. Most of the proof coins are struck at the San Francisco Mint. The proof coins are then put into special rolls or cases to be sold to collectors.

It takes many people with a lot of different skill sets to create the coins we use. Now that we have reviewed the process to make coins, you probably will appreciate the coins that you have in your pocket a little bit more.



Denver Mint (Image from usmint.gov)

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U.S. Large Cents

by Adhitri Sethuraghavan

This article is about one of the important coins in U.S. coin collecting: the large cent. A "large cent" in numismatics refers to a large, pure copper coin minted by the United States from 1793 to 1857. These coins are highly sought after by collectors due to their historical significance and diverse design variations across different eras. This coin was minted every year from 1793 to 1857, except 1815. Interestingly, large cents are around the size of modern day half dollars.

Flowing Hair Cents

The 1793 cent had three main design experiments: Chain, Wreath, and Liberty Cap variations. The initial "chain" design was disliked because of the chain symbol, interpreted to represent slavery. This led to a redesign to the widely accepted "wreath" design. The "Liberty Cap" design was also produced concurrently for a period, with all three being minted in 1793.

The first two (out of the three) designs for 1793 cents feature an obverse design depicting Liberty with flowing hair without a cap, while the third does have a cap. To make things more interesting, they featured two different reverse designs: the chain reverse and wreath reverse. The chain reverse had 13 interlocking links representing the unity of the 13 colonies at that time. Chain cents in uncirculated condition are very rare and quite valuable. The total mintage is only 36,103; hence, there is always demand for these coins.

Liberty Cap Cents

The Liberty Cap cent design was minted from 1793–1796. The design featured Lady Liberty with flowing hair, meant to symbolize freedom and the youthful spirit of the new nation. Liberty's hair is more detailed, and a cap was added as a symbol of freedom. The reverse design continued to have a wreath.

There are several variations in the Liberty Cap cent design as follows. 1793: The first year of the Liberty Cap cent and the most desirable. The 1793 cent features a high relief portrait by Joseph Wright and beaded borders. 1794: The cent has a variety of portrait styles, including the Head of 1793, 1794, and 1795 types. The 1794 cent is also known for the Apple Cheek variety (Sheldon 24), where the engraver deeply cut Liberty's cheek. The 1794 Starred Reverse cent is a remarkable variety. Dr. Sheldon described it as follows: "The famous reverse with the circle of ninety-four minute five-pointed stars seen just inside the border and between the points of the denticles. The stars are not quite equally spaced; the denticles partially cover some of them. They are put in with light punch, and since they are far too light to have been intended as a border, it is perhaps more likely that they are the result of the whim of an idle hour at the Mint" 1795: The 1795 cent has less variety in portraiture, but has other distinctions to collect, such as thick and thin planchets, lettered and plain edges, and the rare reeded edge Sheldon-79. 1796: The 1796 cent is the last year of the Liberty Cap cent, and has six different obverses and 11 total die marriages.

Draped Bust Cents

The Draped Bust cent was designed by Robert Scot in 1796 as a replacement for the Liberty Cap design. They have a diameter of 29 mm and a weight of 10.88 grams. Lady Liberty has a ribbon in her flowing hair, and the date is below. This design of the cent coin was used until 1807.

For Draped Bust cents, the two key dates considered to be the most valuable and rare are 1799 and 1804. Two obverse dies are known for the 1799 coins. There are two varieties, the normal date (Sheldon 189) and the

overdate, 1799/8 (Sheldon 188). Both exhibit the tip of Liberty's curl pointing between BE of LIBERTY. The overdate variety is slightly rarer than the 1799 true date and represents a fraction of the 1799 issuance.

Classic Head Cents

The Classic Head cent was designed by John Reich. The name of the coin is derived from the round band worn around the head and over the hair of Lady Liberty. It has the word "LIBERTY" on the band. These coins were made of high-quality copper since the U.S. Mint acquired its planchets from the British firm of Boulton & Watt. These coins were minted from 1808 to 1814. There are no 1815 Classic Head cents because the U.S. Mint did not produce any cents at all in that year. This is due to the mint running out of a supply of copper cent planchets. This means any "1815" cent you might see is a fake created by altering another coin.

Coronet Head Cents

There are two types of Coronet cents: the Matron Head and the Braided Hair. The Matron Head design was minted from 1816 to 1839 and was modified in 1835 to make Liberty appear younger. The Modified Matron Head cents from 1837–1839 have a number of obverse styles, but they all have some commonalities: Liberty's head faces left, her hair is tied in a bun, some hair hangs down to her neck, and the word "LIBERTY" is on the coronet.

The Braided Hair design with a younger and slimmer Lady Liberty was minted from 1839 to 1857. The most obvious difference is the braiding of Liberty's hair from her ear to her forehead. The reverse side shows a wreath tied with a ribbon and the words "ONE CENT" and "UNITED STATES OF AMERICA" around the border. All Braided Hair cents were minted in Philadelphia, so they don't have a mintmark. Braided Hair cents are also about the size of a modern half dollar, measuring between 27 and 29 millimeters in diameter.

Small Cents

By 1857, large cents were replaced by small cents. In 1856 (officially 1857), the cent's diameter was modified to the dimensions we are used to seeing in the modern day. The main reason for reducing the size of the cents is that the price of copper became more than the coin's face value.

This smaller size was introduced by the Small Cent Act of 1857, which authorized the production of the Flying Eagle cent design. An "1857 small cent" refers to a Flying Eagle cent, which was considered a "small cent" because it was a significantly smaller size compared to the large copper cents that were previously in circulation.

Large cents were beautiful in design and continue to be sought-after collectables today. Although these coins were not easy to carry around in your pocket, they were used for more than 50 years.

Happy Collecting and happy learning!

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Class I 1804 Dollars

by Elliot Eng, YNA President

The 1804 Silver Dollar has long been considered the “King of American Coins,” but the reasons behind its mintage is not only representative of United States coinage, it also accurately represents coins globally. Although three classes of 1804 Silver Dollars exist, the Class I 1804 Silver Dollars best explain the allure of collecting coins.

In the early nineteenth century, the young United States faced an economic problem. While the United States was trying to establish itself as a legitimate country on the international stage, it was also facing a national coinage crisis. Newly-minted dollars were being shipped as silver bullion to China without circulating in the U.S. After being tipped off by politicians, Mint Director Elias Boudinot ceased silver dollar production in March, 1804, while Secretary of State James Madison officially stopped production of silver dollars two years later. Because of a small financial budget, during the previous three months that dollars were minted, the mint in 1804 reused the dies from 1803 to strike 19,570 silver dollars. These silver dollars were listed in Boudinot’s mint report, which would later prove key to the legendary 1804 dollars’ existence.

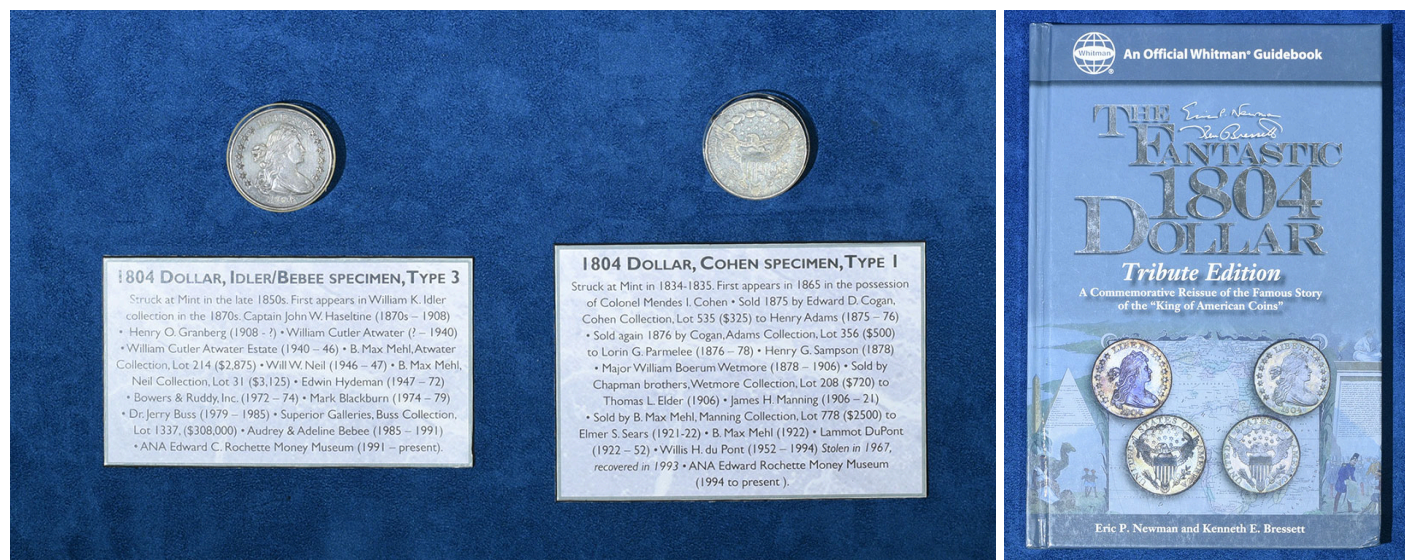
By 1834, United States’ silver dollars had long since been a thing of the past, only circulating in pockets of the western territories. That fall, the young United States of America was finalizing treaties with major Asian trading powers, including Siam (modern day Thailand) and Muscat (Oman). The ambassador, Edmund Roberts, feared that the diplomatic gifts he had procured would be inadequate, thus insulting the rulers of the trading powers. In a letter dated October 8, 1834, to the Department of State, Roberts expressed his unrest and stated that he felt a Morocco leather case with all of the U.S. coinage would be presentable to most Asian rulers.

On November 11, 1834, Secretary of State John Forsythe, on behalf of President Andrew Jackson, asked Mint Director Samuel Moore to mint two complete sets of current U.S. coinage in a Morocco leather case. The letter was rather vague regarding which coins to include in the set, so Samuel Moore consulted Adam Eckfeldt, the chief coiner of the U.S. Mint and an accomplished collector. The ban on silver dollar production had been lifted in 1831, but none had officially been minted since then. After concluding that silver dollars were “current” coinage and should be included in the presentation sets, Eckfeldt consulted the United States Mint archives. He found former Mint Director Boudinot’s reports for the first quarter of 1804 and found that 19,570 dollars had been minted in the early part of the year. Eckfeldt, not wanting to enrage the increasing number of collectors by making a new “key” date, advised Moore to strike the dollars with the 1804 date. If he had researched further he would have found others’ observations that there were no 1804 dated dollars, such as the German Duke Bernhard’s book, *Travels Through North America, During the Years 1825 and 1826*, which clearly stated that no 1804 dated dollars existed.

Four 1804 dollars were minted for inclusion in Robert’s presentation sets, while eight specimens of the die pairing are known in total. Eckfeldt ordered a new pair of dies for the coins, as, if there had been dies dated 1804, they would have been cracked and rusted. The Draped Bust, Heraldic Eagle reverse design was utilized. The coins’ edge was hand-lettered with the value, “HUNDRED CENTS ONE DOLLAR OR UNIT.” Four of the eight dollars were put in their sets and delivered to the Roberts’ ship on April 27, 1835. Tragically, Roberts died on June 12, 1836 after presenting the first two sets to the King of Siam and the Sultan of Muscat; his other gifts were returned to the Department of State. The presentation sets were returned to the mint. Virtually nobody but a few mint workers and high ranking officials knew about the coins. That was about to change.

The subject of dollars struck in 1804 had become contentious in the numismatic community soon after their alleged striking in 1804, but there weren't any known specimens by the early 1840's. However, in 1842, two former mint workers published a book, *A Manual of Gold and Silver Coins of All Nations*. The book contained a pantograph reproduction of a Class I 1804 Dollar. This incited rumors that were confirmed when Matthew Stickney, an accomplished collector, traded a unique gold Immune Columbia piece for the first of the six remaining dollars on May 9, 1843. One piece was assayed and then placed in the Mint Cabinet Collection, while the others were quickly sold to prominent collectors. Class I Silver Dollars are truly a large piece of American history, but the principles on which they were struck applies to much more than American coins.

Class I 1804 Dollars can easily represent numismatics as a whole. Coins can be used as currency, as represented by the well-worn Cohen 1804 Dollar, or as high-profile gifts, such as the nearly-perfect Siam example. Coins can represent liberty, as does the obverse of 1804 Dollars, but coins can also enslave people to their love of numismatics, as the lucrative auction records might suggest. Class I 1804 Silver Dollars are truly the "King of American Coins" through their mission, mintage, and myth.



Left: Two of the fifteen known 1804 dollars donated to the ANA. Right: *The Fantastic 1804 Dollar*.
Images from the ANA Money Museum

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Exonumia & Paper Money

The Young Numismatist • August 2025



Victor David Brenner's Lincoln Plaque And Medal

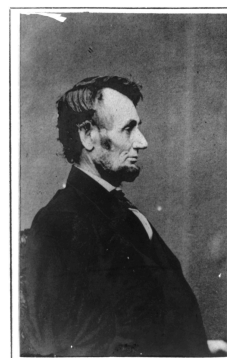
by Cam Scheirer, Exonomia & Paper Money Columnist

"Art... has two ends; the first, to imprint upon the spectator's brain the faithful representation of any object; the second, to guide the spectator to the object most worthy of contemplation, and convey to him the thoughts and feelings with which the subject was regarded by the artist himself."

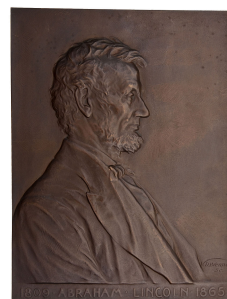
—Victor David Brenner (Wexler and Flynn)

Lincoln cents are perhaps the most ubiquitous of United States coins—everyone's collected them, and, for many of us, they were what led us into numismatics in the first place. The cent has inspired countless works of art made by both amateurs and professionals, and its longevity stands out among United States coins. In short, the Lincoln cent has become an important part of both our numismatic culture and wider popular culture. That's why it feels so difficult to let them go. As it stands today (July 2025), the mint ordered its final batch of blanks in May, estimating that it will run out by early 2026. This article will explore the beginnings of the Lincoln cent, including its origins as exonomia, specifically a plaque and medal by Victor David Brenner.

The story begins with Mathew Brady (c. 1823–1896), the Civil War photographer and “father of photojournalism.” As a child, Brady was mentored by Samuel F. B. Morse, the inventor of the telegraph and an early advocate of photography. As an adult, Brady grew famous for his photographs, for which he received awards from the American Institute in the 1840s. Later, Brady opened an office in Washington, D.C., where he and his assistants took the portraits of politicians, in particular Abraham Lincoln (although in most cases Brady was credited for his assistants' work). In 1864, one of Brady's assistants, Anthony Berger, took a profile portrait of Lincoln facing right (*image on the right, public domain image*).



Forty years later, in the years leading up to the centennial of Lincoln's birth in 1909, Lincoln memorabilia was more popular than ever. To capitalize on this, Victor David Brenner (1871–1924) took inspiration from Berger's portrait in 1907 when creating a plaque commemorating the anniversary. Brenner, a Lithuanian emigrant, was a sculptor all his life, first on gems and seals, and later on coins and medals, for which he was especially famous.



The plaques proved to be very popular (as, indeed, most of Brenner's plaques were at the time); Q. David Bowers estimates that Brenner sold several hundred copies. Heritage Auctions records indicate that the plaques were made in two sizes: 180 by 240 mm and 290 by 375 mm. In 1908, the plaque design was adapted into a medal, perhaps because the plaques sold so well. It appears, however, that Brenner suffered a disappointment; by February 1909, Brenner had sold only 35 of the 110 he had made. One interesting, yet minor, difference between the plaque and the obverse of the medal is that Lincoln is depicted with wavy hair on the plaque (more like Berger's portrait, where Lincoln's hair is straight) and curly on the medal.

In 1908, Theodore Roosevelt saw an example of the Lincoln medal at Brenner's studio during a sitting session for another medal Brenner was creating to commemorate Panama Canal workers. Roosevelt (who was given a copy of the Lincoln medal by Brenner) and Brenner later discussed the prospect of using the medal as a basis for a redesigned cent. Previously, Roosevelt had started a campaign to redesign America's coins, which he famously believed were “artistically of atrocious hideousness” (Burdette). In 1905, Roosevelt had enlisted the sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens to design the cent, eagle (\$10), and double eagle coins. When Saint-Gaudens died in 1907 before completing his cent design (which depicted Lady Liberty), Roosevelt chose Brenner, a

supporter of coinage reform himself, to continue the work. Roosevelt, who, as Brenner explained, “like[d the medal] very much,” urged Brenner to replicate it when designing the new cent (Burdette). The end result was an obverse design closely modeled off the medal (including the curly hair)—one that, as Brenner put it, “show[ed] the sunshine as well as the goodness of [Lincoln’s] life” (Burdette). The obverse of Brenner’s cent is now known as the most reproduced piece of art in history.

In contrast, the plaque has been reproduced only on two occasions. The first was in 1971 by the Medallic Art Company, to commemorate the centennial of Brenner’s birth. The Company’s Sales Promotion and Research Director at the time, D. Wayne Johnson, also assembled a display for Chase Bank commemorating the same anniversary. It is possible that the silver restrike plaquettes were sold at the Chase exhibition. While the obverse of the plaquettes (48 by 64 mm) featured Brenner’s plaque design, the reverse was completely original; it featured Brenner’s profile and his birth and death dates. Brenner’s original plaque was reproduced again in 2009 to celebrate another birth anniversary: this time, the bicentennial of Lincoln’s birth. These struck-bronze plaquettes measure 120 by 90 mm (half the size of the originals), and feature a reverse by former U.S. mint engraver Don Everhart. Everhart portrays Brenner sitting at his worktable, presumably sculpting the cent design, while Lincoln stands in the background. The inscription (between two ears of wheat like those on the reverse of the cent) reads: “My mind was full of Lincoln,” as Brenner put it when he explained his state of mind when designing the cent.



Obverse of Brenner’s Lincoln medal. Notice how Lincoln’s curly hair contrasts with the wavy hair of the plaque and Berger’s portrait. Image from the public domain.

Valuations

Today, both the originals and the restrikes command high prices. Heritage has sold 42 examples of the medals, with prices ranging from \$312 to \$7,170 (including buyer’s premium). Heritage has also sold three of the 1971 restrikes from the Neil Armstrong Family Collection and graded by Numismatic Guaranty Company: one for \$437.50 (MS 67), another for \$500 (MS 68), and a third for \$2,500 (MS 67), although the Armstrong pedigree likely increased the value. The 2009 plaque originally sold for \$229, but Heritage has not sold any.



Imaged by Heritage Auctions, HA.com

Reverse of the 1971 silver reproduction plaque. This NGC MS 68 example sold for \$500, and it has provenance from the Armstrong family. **Image from Heritage Auctions.**

Conclusion

The design, which began with a photographic portrait by Anthony Berger, was adapted into a plaque and medal by Brenner, then into an iconic coin, which itself is now the subject of political debate. As the Lincoln cent ends its 114-year span as America's lowest denomination coin, it's important to acknowledge the design's beginnings as exonomia.

Acknowledgments

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Coins of Micronations | Part II

by Miles Tichner, Collectors' Challenges Columnist

In the first part of this article, we investigated the coins of the Kingdom of Lundy, Principality of Sealand, and the Commonwealth of Austenasia. These are all micronations: small, unrecognized states that act and function as real countries. The difference between micronations and microstates, such as Andorra and Vatican City, is that microstates are recognized by members of the U.N., while micronations aren't (although quite a few claim to be).

Due to the challenges and expense of minting coins, only a few micronations have minted coins, and even then, mintages are only a few hundred. These coin's rarity and their countries' colorful backgrounds make them a very interesting area to collect. At first I planned to write this article about Westarctica, Seborga, and Molosia, but after doing some research on Westarctica, I decided to make this an in-depth article about the coins of Westarctica. I hope you find Westarctica as interesting as I did!

History of Westarctica

The Grand Duchy of Westarctica was founded by Travis McHenry in 2001 after learning that Marie Byrd Land had not been claimed by any country. Marie Byrd Land is a large portion of land in Western Antarctica explored by Richard E. Byrd in 1928. A year earlier, Byrd became the second person to complete a non-stop transatlantic flight. Byrd was attempting to win the Orteig prize for the first crossing, and he narrowly lost when his plane crashed just before his departure. While Byrd's plane was being repaired, Charles Lindbergh went on to the history books a month later.



Image from Encyclopedia Westarctica

The Antarctic Treaty System, of which Marie Byrd Land is a part of, was an agreement signed in 1959 between 12 countries that prohibited, among other things, nuclear weapons testing and territorial claims, although the treaty allowed several countries to claim portions of Antarctica. Essentially, having a claim instead of a territorial claim means that the land is under the Antarctic Treaty System's authority. Since none of the nations involved in the treaty were interested in claiming Marie Byrd Land (named after Richard Byrd's wife), it became the largest unclaimed territory in the world.

At first, Westarctica was named The Achaean Territory of Antarctica, but in 2004, McHenry renamed it the Grand Duchy of Westarctica, with him ruling as Duke. Westarctica's claims included Marie Byrd Land, Peter I Island, and the Balleny Islands. McHenry, who worked for the U.S. Navy, was forced to step down from his position after his superiors threatened to remove his security clearance unless he abandoned the project. McHenry complied and appointed Grand Duke Philip in his place. Without the founder's involvement, interest in Westarctica gradually faded after a few months. Later, in 2008, the Duke of Moulton-Berlin, Jon-Lawrence, convinced Grand Duke Philip to give him the throne. During Philip's reign, many other micronations had claimed Marie Byrd land, including the Grand Duchy of Flandrinsis, which had gained more public attention than Westarctica. After a year of negotiations, Grand Duke Jon-Lawrence gave up, and Westarctica again fell into a state of inactivity.

Then, in May 2010, McHenry seized power from Jon-Lawrence and declared himself Duke. In 2014, in order to more effectively accomplish Westarctica's original goals, including preserving the West Antarctica Ice Sheet and establishing a research station, McHenry made Westarctica a nonprofit organization. This would allow Westarctica to receive federal grants for scientific exploration and research. Another big step was in 2015, when Westarctica received permission from the Russian Antarctic Expedition to use their abandoned Russkaya station on Westarctica's coast. However, Russia plans to recommission the station in a few years, so Westarctica better move quickly if it wishes to secure the station.

Coinage

The currency of Westarctica since 2018 is the Ice Mark, and from 2005–2018 it was the Westarctican dollar. All of the coins issued by Westarctica have been denominated in WA\$, and all of the paper currency has been denominated in Ice Marks. The first coins issued was the 2005 \$1 Balleny Islands coin. They were issued following Westarctica's annexation of the islands, despite the fact that they were claimed by New Zealand. A total of 150 proof coins were issued, with some issued in bronze and an unknown amount in silver. The next coins issued were a set of three wooden \$1 coins struck in 2005. The coins commemorated the emperor penguin, the 75th anniversary of Robert E. Byrd's expedition, and the Constitution of Westarctica. 200 of each design was struck.



Images from Encyclopedia Westarctica

Over the years, Westarctica has struck a variety of coins, many commemorating islands within the Duchy, and several feature innovative designs. Though the coins eventually became corroded and damaged after years of circulation, the 2005 \$10 Duke Travis I coin solved this problem by coating the coin with a malleable, transparent plastic. Duke Travis remarked:

“Metal can rust away in a few hundred years or less, but plastic can take a thousand years to break down. Considering the fact that this coin is metal encased in plastic, thousands of years from now, some future archaeologist could find this coin in a landfill somewhere and they would still be able to make out my portrait and the name of Westarctica. This single coin ensures our nation and the dream that created it will echo into eternity.”

Another innovative design was released in 2008. The triangular 25 cent series features four different designs, and when the four coins are combined, they form a square \$1 coin (similar to how the Spanish 8 reales were cut to make small change). These are one of the few coins that can have two different official denominations. A total of 200 of the “quartered dollar” coins were minted.



Image from JFV Coins (jfvcoins.com)

Conclusion

To conclude, Westarctica's rich history and novel coin designs make this a fascinating area of numismatics. Each coin is directly related to Antarctica's ecosystem, geography, or exploration. Despite very low mintages (most under 300), Westarctica's coins are readily available for \$30 or less. This series is affordable, has interesting designs, significant history, and to top it all off, is from the southernmost country in the world! What more can you ask from a coin series?

World & Ancient Numismatics

The Young Numismatist • August 2025



Coins of Catastrophe

by Joshua Verley, YNA Vice President, World & Ancient Numismatics Columnist

Coins made during times of upheaval and disaster shed light on historical events and provide profound insight into these desperate times. The desperate times in this article will focus on the fall of the Byzantine Empire and coinage during the Black Death.

On April 6, 1453, a young 21-year-old general of the Ottoman Army began a siege that would go down in the history books. The general was laying siege to Constantinople, arguably the most advanced city of the time. Constantinople was a thriving city, a major trading hub, advanced in both sciences and arts, and at the forefront of civilization. After a 55-day siege, the city fell. This event signaled the collapse of the Roman Empire, a turning point in history. During this time, many coins were minted by both sides, showing us the situation.

The Byzantine silver *stavrata* is a good example of a Byzantine piece from that time. The *stavrata* was designed to replace the previous highest denomination coin of the Byzantine Empire, the Hyperpyron. The Hyperpyron was a gold-based coin, and the minting of gold Byzantine coinage had ended by that time. This resulted in the *stavrata* being the heaviest silver European coin of its time. To reduce the size and weight of the coin, the *Stavrata* was minted in high-purity silver. Overall, these coins are rare due to their high denomination and limited mintage. A famous hoard, the “Constantine XI Hoard,” which was discovered in 1989 in Istanbul (formerly Constantinople), contained some 92 of these *stavrata* and half *stavrata* coins. Based on the quality of these pieces, some are presumed to have been struck as coronation issues of a much finer quality. Much cruder pieces were found in the hoard, too. Presumably, these pieces were minted during the siege or around that time period. Likely, these pieces were made from melted-down church treasures to fund the army. The quality of the latter type of pieces reflects the dire economic state that the empire had fallen into.

On the other side of the conflict, the Ottomans also struck multiple coins during and after the siege. Perhaps the most symbolic of these coins is the silver *akces*. These pieces were struck after the fall of Constantinople when the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II relocated his capital to Constantinople. These pieces were meant to symbolize the Ottoman dominance over Western culture by including Islamic inscriptions and imagery directly in contrast with Byzantine Christian imagery and icons. These pieces were also used to stabilize the economy. The *akces* could also have been used as propaganda, especially for solidifying Mehmed’s claim as “Caesar of Rome” and his desire to succeed the Roman Empire with the Ottoman Empire.

Around 50–100 years earlier, Europe was plagued with disaster. The plague, now known as the Black Death, killed between a third to half of the population. To put that in modern terms, roughly 0.086% and 0.26% of the world population died to COVID. This caused catastrophe all over the continent. Many nations faced economic turmoil, social upheavals, and entire villages vanishing.

A good example that can offer a glimpse into the past was unearthed in 2019. Near Reepham, Norfolk, a 23 karat gold *leopard* coin (florin, 1344) and a gold *noble* coin were found. Both coins were minted in England during the reign of Edward III (1327–1377). The leopard was a part of an attempt to reintroduce gold into the English economy since silver pennies had dominated circulation for centuries. The leopard was minted for several months in 1344. However, it was deemed a failure because of high manufacturing costs and limited widespread use.

The gold noble’s story begins right after the leopard. Due to the failure of the leopard, a new type of gold coin was minted as a replacement. The gold noble was born. The gold noble later went on to be the first widely used gold coin throughout England. However, the main point is that both coins were together. This gold noble was minted years later. Its discovery alongside the leopard suggests that the leopard remained in circulation much longer than it was intended, likely due to the chaos and upheaval of the Black Death, which caused economic turmoil and coin shortages. The government, also in turmoil, was unable to significantly help through coinage.

Troubling times like these can reveal a lot to anyone who digs deeper. These coins all revealed the impacts of these major catastrophes. Archeologists also use coins to uncover many facts about the past. Coins can contain a treasure trove of information to those who examine them carefully.

— Past the Piece of Eight: A Preview into the — 8 Reales & Post-Independence Crowns of Latin America

by Nate Leonauskas, Editor-in-Chief

Introduction

No other series of coins better encapsulates a blossoming of democracy, an age of optimism, and the persistent dedication of millions of people spread across two entire continents as do the crowns of 1810-30s Latin America. In a stark—often overnight—shift, the mints of former Spanish colonies began to forgo the laureate bust of a despot in favor of visages of Lady Liberty, of republicanism, of democracy, and of new beginnings. The Spanish Empire's 8 reales' (peso's) centuries-long grasp on trade significantly shaped the world and modern currency as we know it. This article aims to examine Spanish monetary economics through a numismatic lens, contextualize the rise and decline of their empire, and showcase some beautiful crown-sized coins with deeply symbolic iconography.

Mexico (Part III) | *See the first and second parts in the June and July issues, respectively. Sources available there.*

In the Viceroyalty of New Spain, the Mexican War of Independence was sparked by the priest Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla on September 16, 1810. Now considered the father of the Mexican nation, Hidalgo rebelled against ineffective Spanish governance. The Mexican War of Independence is quite complex and is characterized as a series of revolts, civil wars, and political turmoil between various social and economic factions. Eventually, after the defeat of Royalist forces, Mexico declared independence on September 28, 1821. Initially the First Mexican Empire, former military leader Agustín I was soon deposed and executed. In 1824, the nation transitioned into the First Mexican Republic.

Mexico City was the most prolific Spanish colonial mint by the time of Mexico's independence. 8 reales with an improvised bust of Fernando VII were minted from 1808–11. The very last of Fernando VII's 8 reales, with an official bust since 1811, were minted in 1821. Branch mints also produced lots of crude coinage, suggestive of the troubled situation rife with intense political chaos and guerrilla warfare. Some of these coins were even cast. This by itself is a fascinating branch of Mexican numismatics. Upon independence, the 8 reales depicted the Emperor on the obverse and by 1823, a Phrygian cap surrounded by rays. The reverse holds a unique symbol of a golden eagle devouring a rattlesnake upon a prickly pear cactus. This connects to the legend of the Aztec people building their city of Tenochtitlan, later Mexico City, where they saw this symbol. Still representative of the spirit and history of Mexico, this is their modern coat of arms and on their flag. In some form or another, the 'cap and rays' 8 reales were minted at various Mexican mints from 1823–97.



Mexico. 1826 $\overset{\circ}{M}$ JM 8 Reales. NGC MS62. **Image from Heritage Auctions**

United Provinces of Central America

The Mexican Empire's territory extended much further than the modern-day nation. It lost a large chunk of its northern land (the Mexican Cession) to the United States during the Mexican-American (1846–8). Additionally, in 1823, Mexico's Central American holdings of Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica declared independence. The five constituent nations held relative autonomy, though civil war eventually broke out and this federation ceased to exist in 1839/41.

The Central American Republic minted 8 reales in Nueva Guatemala from 1824–47 (yes, after the country's dissolution). Additionally, Costa Rica produced these in 1831. The beautiful design depicts Central America's natural beauty with the sun and rays behind five picturesque mountains. On the reverse is a tree surrounded by the lettering "LIBRE CRESCA FECUNDO," meaning "free grows fertile."



Central American Republic. 1837 NG BA 8 Reales. NGC MS66★

Image from Heritage Auctions

Bolivia

Bolivia had since 1776 belonged to the Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata. The region of Upper Peru or Charcas was one of the last remnants of Spanish control in mainland South America. While the Bolivian War of Independence began in 1809 with the La Paz Revolution, it did not become independent until 1825. Potosí and other significant cities went back and forth between pro-independence and Royalist forces. Simón Bolívar and Antonio José de Sucre led the nation to complete independence by August 6th, 1825.

The very last 8 reales of Fernando VII from the New World were minted in Potosí in 1825. Afterward, the new nation of Bolivia was named in honor of the liberator Simón Bolívar. The crown-sized 8 soles coins exhibit his likeness—very different from the portrait of an absolute monarch. On the reverse, alpacas rest underneath a tree and stars. The edge lettering features a tribute to Sucre's victory. Some gold coins even have Cerro Rico.

Left: 1833 PTS LM 8 Soles. NGC MS65.

Image from Heritage Auctions.



Peru

The Viceroyalty of Peru throughout the Latin American wars of independence was firmly the center of Royalist control in South America. The area first experienced rebellion in 1809. By 1820, José de San Martín's Liberating Expedition of Peru had conquered much of the country, including Lima by 1821, though it was soon reoccupied by Spain. The Republic of Peru declared independence on July 28, 1821, and secured its independence in the Battle of Ayacucho in late 1824. The Spanish Royalists had retreated to Cuzco, high up in the Andes. This city and the rest of Spain's holdings were all conquered by 1826. Peru was Spain's last vestige of control in the mainland Americas.

Due to Lima's geographic isolation, the first 8 reales of Fernando VII from 1808–11 feature an improvised 'indigenous' bust. From 1811–21, Lima minted 8 reales with the official bust design. Minting briefly resumed in Lima from 1823–4, sometimes overstriking Republican Provisional 8 reales (seen below). Cuzco also minted 8 reales with the image of the King in 1824 once Royalist forces were expelled from Lima. The provisional 8 reales from 1822–3 feature a complex reverse design of an eagle, alpaca, shield with mountains, and a tree in place of a crown, all surrounded by flags. "PERU LIBRE" surrounds this image. The obverse depicts two figures beside a pillar, one holding a balance, a symbol of justice. These coins can be found counterstamped with a crown and the year 1824 by Royalists.

From 1825–1857, a new 8 reales design was adopted. These were minted in Lima, Cuzco, Arequipa, and Pasco and include many different varieties. The obverse has an allegorical figure of Lady Liberty, similar to what was frequently on American and Haitian coinage of the time. She holds a spear with a Phrygian cap and a shield with "LIBERTAD" engraved. The reverse coat of arms includes agricultural symbols and an alpaca, crowned with a wreath, instead of, you know, a crown.



Top: Peru 1822 LIMA 8 Reales. NGC MS64.

Bottom: Peru 1833 LIMA 8 Reales. NGC AU50. A crowned countermark of Fernando VII repurposed these and other crowns as coinage in the Philippines, still under colonial rule.

Images from Heritage Auctions

Ultimately, with their newfound independence, the Latin American Republics replaced the stuffy coat of arms of the antiquated Spanish Bourbon dynasty with less authoritarian imagery. All of these coins and others unmentioned have untold levels of detail and histories that I just could not get into. Even today, the 8 reales' influence remains omnipresent. Eight countries use the peso as their currency and numerous currencies, including the United States dollar, are based on the Spanish legal silver standard. I encourage readers to delve even deeper into this fascinating historical area of history and numismatics.



Collectors' Challenges

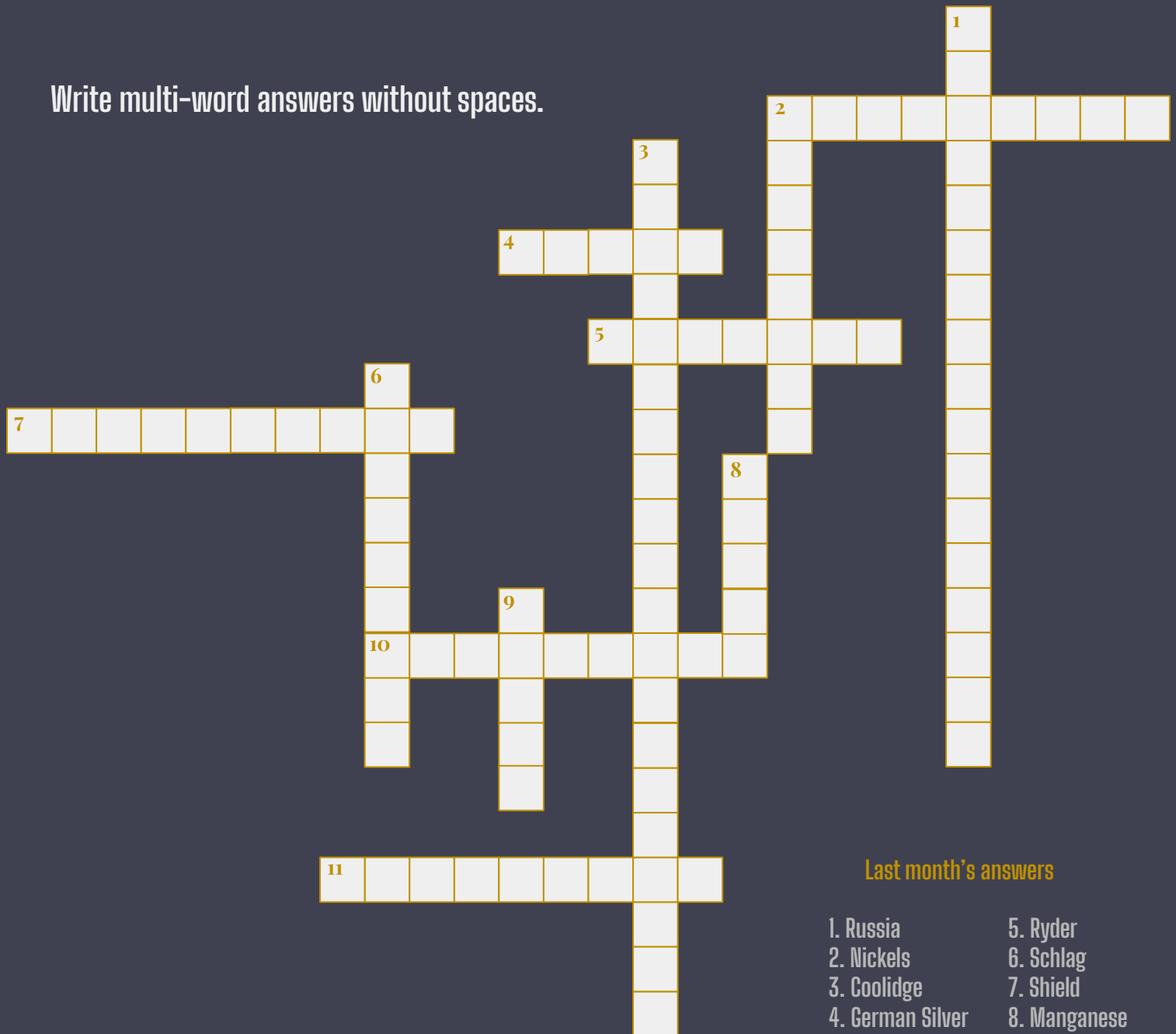
The Young Numismatist • August 2025



— Numismatic Crossword —

by Miles Tichner, Collectors' Challenges Columnist

Write multi-word answers without spaces.



Last month's answers

- | | |
|------------------|--------------|
| 1. Russia | 5. Ryder |
| 2. Nickels | 6. Schlag |
| 3. Coolidge | 7. Shield |
| 4. German Silver | 8. Manganese |

Across

- This 1955 half dollar variety is named after this cartoon character.
- This gold dollar was struck entirely by the Confederates.
- Also known as this, these tokens were made for use in Alaska by the ARRC in 1935.
- Believed to have struck the 1795 Jefferson Head cents.
- This 1952 proof quarter variety has an "S" mintmark on the eagle's chest.
- This is the lowest mintage regular-issue coin struck by the U.S.

Down

- The Liberty Cap design was inspired by this medal.
- This family struck numerous gold coins in Rutherford Co, NC.
- This coin was the first U.S. coin to have a privy mark.
- The first U.S. coin to feature a musical instrument commemorated this state.
- This nickel is the lowest mintage since 1959.
- Founder of the ANA.

— Trivia —

- ❖ Although it is often said that no proofs were struck after 1916 until the start of modern proofs in 1936, several coins were minted during this gap, including proof Morgan and Peace dollars, as well as proof double eagles were struck in 1921-22, and matte proof 1928 Hawaii commemorative half dollars!
- ❖ The first coin wrapping machine was invented in 1901 by James Rice, although the coins still had to be hand-counted. In 1911, the first fully automatic coin wrapper was invented, and was soon adopted by the Federal Reserve in 1913.
- ❖ When the first Philadelphia Mint was razed in 1911, many blank planchets were found around the site, including a 1793 Half Cent planchet with a lettered and raised edge, making this the earliest mint error!
- ❖ Beads made from shells were widely used by Native Americans as currency, including the Chumash people in California. Chumash translates to “shell bead money maker”.
- ❖ The Republic of Molossia’s currency is pegged to the value of Pillsbury cookie dough.

— Riddle —

The first to send in the correct answer will receive 30 YN Dollars; subsequent respondents will receive 10.

I am called many things, of which I am very few. I am called a dollar, yet that is two bits short; I am called a souvenir, though you can spend me; a token, though many merchants have left their mark: only the Referendum really knows what I am. What am I?

Last month’s answer: 1909-S VDB Lincoln Cent

— Survey —

1. What got you started collecting? What was your first coin purchase?
2. Do you collect raw or certified coins? Or both? Why or why not?

Email your answers to Miles Tichner at migatic2020@gmail.com and Nate Leonauskas at ynaeditor@money.org.

Column is by Miles Tichner. Survey responses and answers to the crossword and riddle will be available in the September issue. Discuss until then.

— July's Survey —

What is the oldest coin you have found in circulation?

Nate Leonauskas: 1883 Indian Head cent from coin roll hunting. Found in October 2019.

Hugo Kastle: 1884 Indian Head cent. I love coin roll hunting, so for my birthday, my little sister got me a \$25 box of pennies from our local bank. While searching through the coin rolls later that evening, I found not only one, but two Indian Head cents! The first one I found was dated 1907, briefly my oldest circulation find—until a few rolls later, I discovered the 1884 cent. That coin has held the record for my oldest circulation find ever since.

Lucas Lee: 1903 Indian Head cent

Cam Scheirer: 1903 Indian Head cent from a roll. "It was 90% encrusted with dirt, but the date was visible (barely)."

Clark Davis: 1911 Lincoln cent. "It was a really low grade, but I was ecstatic when I found it!"

Caleb Meier: 1911 Lincoln Cent

In your opinion, which coin has the most interesting history or story?

Cam Scheirer: EID MAR Denarius. Its story goes back to the Roman Civil War (49–45 CE), where, with his enemies defeated for the time, Gaius Julius Caesar proclaimed himself dictator for life and began striking coins with his portrait on them. This was scandalous; since its founding, one of Rome's defining principles was that the state was more important than any one individual, a belief reflected in its coinage, which often depicted the allegorical figure Roma (representing Rome). So, when Caesar replaced Roma with himself on Roman coinage, he was violating that belief, a fact not lost by his enemies. Caesar was famously killed on the Ides of March in 44 BCE in a plot led by Marcus Junius Brutus due to this and other acts that threatened the Republic. Brutus, not realizing how popular Caesar was among the lower classes, fled from Rome to escape their wrath. While occupying part of the Eastern Republic with his army, Brutus set up a military mint. The most famous design from the mint featured a bust of Brutus (!) on the obverse, ironically, or course, the very act deemed dictatorial by Brutus, implying that Brutus didn't have a problem with dictators; it was just that he wanted to be king. The reverse features a liberty cap (like those given to freed slaves), symbolizing Rome's freedom from Caesar, alongside two daggers, presumably those used to kill Caesar. Below is the inscription EID MAR or "Ides of March."

Hugo Kastle: I think the coin with the most interesting history and story is the 1942 glass cent pattern. During WWII, the price of copper rose, so the U.S. Mint started experimenting with alternative materials including (but not limited to) zinc-coated steel (which ultimately led to the creation of the 1943 steel cent), aluminum, lead, plastic in various colors, hard rubber, red fiber, and even glass. What makes the glass cent especially interesting is how far it shows the Mint was willing to push beyond conventional thinking during the war. The fact that it is made of glass just adds significantly to its appeal. To mint it, both the glass and the dies had to be heated to just below the glass's melting temperature, then cooled quickly to preserve the detail of the design. That minting method alone is fascinating. In my opinion, it was simply an extraordinarily creative idea. To make a coin out of glass is an inconceivable concept that I would never have even thought possible. In the end, it was deemed impractical due to its fragility and the complexity and difficulty of the minting process, but the fact that it was even attempted, in my view, makes it one of the most remarkable coinage experiments in U.S. history. **Image from PCGS.**



Clark Davis: In my opinion, the most interesting numismatic story I have come across is that of the Connecticut/Vermont/Machin's Mills Coppers. It is a really long and winding story. I think I will write an article about it for a future issue of *The Young Numismatist*!

Caleb Meier: Trade Dollars

— Contributors —

Thank you so much to the wonderful work of all who contributed, especially the writers. *The Young Numismatist* would simply not be possible without the joint collaboration of so many young collectors.

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For young numismatists, by young numismatists

