

2025-2026



—
Looking back at youth impact in
numismatics & taking a glimpse
into the future of the hobby
—

The Young Numismatist

December & January — Issue VII



Abby Zechman Interview

Exclusive interview with the PCCS
Education Coordinator and the former YN
of the Year (2018), who shares valuable
advice for current YNs **p. 12**

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A Letter from the Editor-in-Chief

Hello readers,

“Since 2025” used to not have much of a ring to it. Now, as we enter the new year, those words are beginning to carry a lot more weight; the club, publication, and community have only continued to grow as time has progressed, with a year of success in the past.

In this issue, I feel it’s especially important to highlight some of the contributions of young numismatists, even more so than usual. This issue, in part, highlights such contributions, from YNs past and current: YNs’ experiences at shows, including one collector’s first; an interview with Abby Zechman, a former YN of the Year award winner; a literally award-winning piece (first nationally) on British colonial coinage; part two of the 1883 Railway Medals article, one of the most thoroughly researched I’ve encountered; and so much more.

I can not thank all the generous writers, presenters, and everyone else who have made all this possible. This issue also recognizes the new board members of the YNA and *TYN*, including Cam Scheirer and Clark Davis, who have officially assumed the roles of Research Editor and Graphics Editor, respectively. Their assistance has proven instrumental, and I hope, with training, they will be able to take over *TYN* and truly bring it to the next level. Congratulations to them and everyone else.

Of course, never hesitate to reach out with submissions, questions, or any interest in *TYN* at all — new or returning voices are always appreciated and make this possible. Together, as young numismatists, if we continue this dedication and collaboration, then maybe “since 2025” can retain a much more renowned, even historic ring.

Enjoy reading and happy holidays,

Nate Leonauskas

Editor-in-Chief

ynaeditor@money.org

• **The Young Numismatist** • **Issue VII** •
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A Letter from the Club President

Hello Members!

As the YNA wraps up a calendar year for the first time, I hope this message finds you well and still discovering new niches, stories, and passion in and for numismatics. One of my favorite things about December is spending some time slowing down (read: school break), enjoying time with family, and looking back on the past year.

The YNA has accomplished a lot in 2025: being founded in March, first set of elections in April, first *TYN* issue in June, world-class guest speakers, December Auction and Election, and I could go on. In short, the YNA has picked up some big time momentum, which I hope carries into the new year and beyond.

In 2026, look out for a printed issue of *The Young Numismatist*, an increased social media presence, and the same enthusiasm that our members have brought from the start, in addition to the normal monthly meetings and *TYN* issues, as well as the America 250 Parks Program. Have ideas for 2026? I'd love to hear them! You can email me at ynapresident@money.org.

As always, I encourage every member to remain curious and engaged. Share your passion, ask questions, and don't be afraid to ask questions and put yourself out there: you never know, it could land you a job or even a career in numismatics!

Thank you members, supporters, and the ANA for making 2025 a memorable year for YNA and *TYN*. I look forward to seeing all the articles about amazing stories and coins in the 2026 *TYN* issues. Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year! As always...

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 85 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.

— Board of Directors —

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

Nate Leonauskas *Editor-in-Chief*
with **Cam Scheirer** & **Clark Davis**

ynaeditor@money.org, natejleo@gmail.com.
Instagram: nate_coin.

Elliot Eng *President*

ynapresident@money.org, elliotdavideng@gmail.com

Adrian Perez *Vice President*

ynavicepresident@money.org.

Arlo Little *Secretary*

ynasecretary@money.org.

Gryffen Atkinson *Treasurer*

ynatreasurer@money.org.

Christian Strayhorn *ANA Education Director*

cstrayhorn@money.org.

— 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 not only to the club, but to 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 Biographies —

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

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.

Adrian Perez *Vice President*

You can contact Adrian at ynavicepresident@money.org.

Gryffen Atkinson *Secretary*

You can contact Gryffen at ynasecretary@money.org.

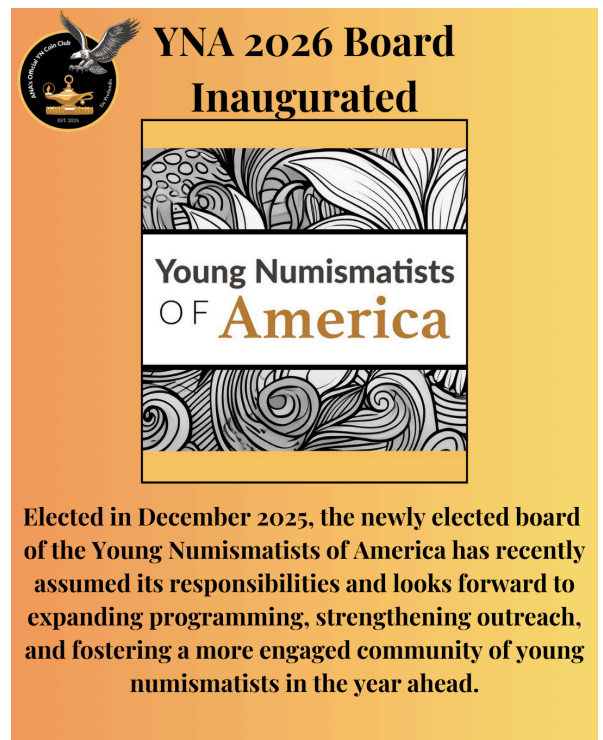
Arlo Little *Treasurer*

Arlo is a 15 year old from Nebraska. He started collecting coins in 2018 after finding a 2009 Lincoln Memorial cent in his change. Ever since, he has always been learning as much as possible about the hobby. Arlo collects just about anything under the designation of "numismatic." He attended the 2025 ANA Summer Seminar where he was introduced to many new, interesting numismatic pieces and topics. Outside of numismatics, Arlo is a member of his high school's orchestra, student council, and cross country team. He also has a passion for football, strongly rooting for the Huskers.

You can contact Arlo at ynatreasurer@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.



— Editorial Board —

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](https://www.instagram.com/nate_coin).

Cam Scheirer *Research Editor*

Cam Scheirer is a 13 year-old currently in eighth grade (He will be in the high school graduating class of 2030), who lives in the San Francisco Bay Area. While he has been collecting for five years, he has greatly increased his numismatic involvement recently both locally and nationally through his writing recently. He currently serves as Youth President for the Cupertino Coin Club, as well as editor of their monthly publication. He writes a monthly column for *The Young Numismatist* (Exonomia & Paper Money), and quarterly columns for the *ILNA* (Illinois Numismatic Association) *Digest* (YN Information) and for the California Numismatic Association's *The California Numismatist* (Paper Money, co-written with his father). He presented numismatic programs regularly at Cupertino Coin Club meetings, and has spoken to the public at the local library and a nearby retirement community. Recently, he attended the ANA's Summer Seminar on a scholarship, taking a class on Roman Republican Coinage. Outside of numismatics, he enjoys learning about Egyptology, visiting museums, and learning Chinese.

You can contact Cam at ynaeditor@money.org or camoftheshire@gmail.com.

Clark Davis *Graphics Editor*

Clark Davis is a 14 year old (Class of 2030) resident of Utah and an avid Numismatist. He loves learning about numismatics and sharing my passion for this hobby in many ways, and to prove it, he has given many presentations on numismatics. He has also written many high-quality articles for places such as The Numismatist and The Reading Room. As for why he should be the editor: he is currently a columnist for The Reading Room, where he has written articles including a research paper of mine. He has experience creating high quality pieces of graphic design using professional software. He is also the current assistant editor of BoTales, which means he gets to work designing each issue. He has also created an ad for the YNA which appeared in Fun Topics.

You can contact Clark at ynaeditor@money.org or clarkdaviscoins@gmail.com.

— Meeting Schedule —

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

January 2, 2026

Russ Bega: Numismatic Research and Writing

February 6, 2026

Seth Chandler: Witter Coin U

March 6, 2026

Various presentations & roundtable discussion

April 3, 2026

Pamela Herrick

May 1, 2026

June 5, 2026

August 7, 2026

September 4, 2026

October 2, 2026

November 6, 2026

December 4, 2026

Holiday Games & Election



**No July 2026 Meeting*

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

— Meeting Summaries —

November 7, 2025

Elliot Eng, YNA President

The YNA held its November meeting on Friday, November 7, 2025, at 5:00 PM Mountain Time via Google Meet. Members from across the country participated.

YNA President Elliot Eng delivered a full-length presentation titled “The Carmel Dollars,” covering the historical background and numismatic significance of these coins, followed by a Q&A with attendees.

ANA Education Director Christian Strayhorn provided an update on the **America 250 Parks Program**, which celebrates the U.S. 250th anniversary through educational resources, youth engagement, and numismatic activities.

During the State of the Club update, members learned that YNA is nearing 100 members. The upcoming December holiday meeting will include the annual election and a members-only auction. Members were encouraged to submit articles for the *Best of 2025* issue of *The Young Numismatist* and to participate in member spotlight and social media initiatives.

Editor Nate Leonauskas delivered the November Editor’s Report, issuing a final call for submissions for the printed November issue and summarizing the Publications Committee’s ongoing work, including preparing the end-of-year issue, reaching out to writers, promoting engagement through Collectors’ Challenges, strengthening *TYN*’s social media presence, and improving resources for contributors.

The meeting concluded with Show & Tell presentations and a roundtable discussion on how rising precious-metal prices are affecting collecting habits.

The next YNA meeting will be on December 5, 2025, from 5:00–6:30 PM Mountain Time. It will feature live elections, a holiday auction, and a celebration of the YNA’s 2025 accomplishments.

December 5, 2025

To begin the meeting, Elliot Eng announced that the YNA had finally surpassed one hundred members, and then he discussed the club’s 2026 vision to educate members through world-class speakers and presentations, empower youth in the hobby, and showcase YN’s achievements.

Nate Leonauskas followed by giving the Editor’s Report. He summarized the most recent November issue, which included election campaign messages, as well as providing updates on the grant for a printed issue.

Later, elections were held. Elliot Eng was re-elected as President (running against Hugo Kastle). Adrian Perez was elected as the Vice President. Arlo Little, the former Treasurer, became the YNA Secretary. Gryffen Atkinson replaced him as Treasurer, running unopposed. Nate Leonauskas ran on a ticket with Cam Scheirer and Clark Davis for the editorial team.

An auction was then held with lots generously donated by various sources. Using designated “St. Eligius dollars,” each member was able to get an item. Congratulations to all those who won.

Lastly, there were two show & tell presentations: Nathaniel Bayer Hafran on a 1854 \$2.5 eagle he submitted. Graded PCGS AG03, it’s the lowest at any grading service. Elliot Eng then presented about a 1794 Warwickshire Condor Token.



The graphic is a vertical rectangle with a green-to-red gradient background. At the top left is the YNA logo featuring an eagle and the text 'YNA's Official YN Coin Club'. To its right is the title 'December YNA Meeting Recap' in white serif font. Further right is a small image of a silver coin. Below the title is a painting of three people in historical attire. To the right of the painting is the text 'YNA Elections Completed' in white serif font. Below this is a small image of a gold coin. At the bottom is the text 'St. Eligius Dollar Holiday Auction for YNs' in white serif font. To the right of this text is a small image of a silver coin.

Numismatic – Report –

The Young Numismatist

December 2025 & January 2026



**Interview: PCGS Education
Coordinator Abby Zechman**

2025 PAN Coin Show

**My First Coin Show: San
Diego Coinorama Show**

Detecting Coin Counterfeiting

**Young Numismatists
OF America**

Interview: PCGS Education Coordinator Abby Zechman

by Elliot Eng, YNA President

Recently, I had the opportunity to conduct an interview with a poster child of the ANA YN Program, Abby Zechman. Abby won the prestigious YN of the Year in 2018 and has gone on to be influential in the world of numismatics, including contributing to *The Numismatist's* YN Perspective column and a seat on the Board of Governors for the Florida United Numismatists. She is currently the Education Coordinator for PCGS and an adult advisor to the YNA, volunteering her time to sit in on meetings, advise the board, and find resources to educate members. Without further ado (and with much thanks to Abby), here is the interview.

What were you like as a child? Did you collect anything besides coins? “I didn’t collect anything as a kid, but I was always a huge art and history buff, so when I found numismatics, it was a natural obsession.”

How did you get into collecting? “I didn’t collect anything as a kid, but I was always a huge art and history buff, so when I found numismatics, it was a natural obsession. I was a Girl Scout when I was younger, and in 2012, my troop went to the winter FUN show for our Fun With Money patches. My mom saw that they had a YN program in the morning, so we decided to make a day of it and see what a coin show was all about. As a huge history buff, the second I walked onto the bourse floor and saw all the history behind the coins, I was hooked. I haven’t missed a FUN show since, and my interest only grew from there.”

What role did the ANA play in your collecting journey? “From the moment I started collecting, I was incredibly active in my local numismatic community. I was fortunate to have FUN as one of my local shows, because during my time there, I connected with many dealers from all over the country, many of whom became incredible mentors I am still close with today. But for a while, numismatics was still just a hobby for me. When I attended my first Summer Seminar, I met so many collectors my age, building a whole new community and falling in love with numismatics even more. Summer Seminar and the community I made there played a big part in helping me realize that I wanted to work professionally in numismatics. The ANA also helped me start building my numismatic resume.”

“When I learned about the YN of the Year award, I decided I wanted to win it one day, so I really amped up my involvement. I started exhibiting again, gave talks at coin shows and coin clubs, wrote articles, and took every opportunity that came my way. Without



that initial push to get involved in bigger ways, I may not have found my passion for numismatic education.”

How have the ANA’s YN programs changed since you started? “The ANA’s YN programs are much more accessible now than when I was a YN. For a while, most programs required some form of in-person participation, like attending Summer Seminar or an ANA show. That wasn’t a possibility for many YNs. Now that everything offers digital participation, the ANA’s YN programs are much more accessible.”

What motivated you to go into numismatic education? “Once I realized that numismatic education could be a career path for me, I knew it was what I wanted to do. It was something that combined two of my passions, coins and teaching. From the time I was 14 or 15, I knew I wanted to work professionally in numismatics, I just didn’t know what specifically I wanted to do. The only career opportunities in the field that were frequently advertised were dealing and grading, neither of which appealed to me. Then one day, I was talking with Sam Gelberd, the then-Numis-

matic Educator at the ANA, and I realized I wanted to do what he did. I have always been passionate about getting more kids involved in numismatics, and I really wanted a career that allowed me to give back to the industry that had given so much to me. Numismatic education allows me to teach others about coins, foster a love for numismatics in new collectors, and help YNs find opportunities to grow and thrive in the industry.”

What role did your parents play in your collecting journey? What were their thoughts on you working in the field? “My parents have been incredibly supportive of my entire collecting journey. I am the only one in my family who collects, but my mom took me to every local coin show for however long I wanted to go, and my dad used to take me to coin club meetings. They encouraged me every step of the way and have always been there to help when I need someone to proofread an article, remind me to slow down during a presentation, or to put the finishing touches on an exhibit when I inevitably leave it to the last minute. When I decided I wanted to be a numismatic educator, the ANA was the only place that offered that type of position. There were literally only 1–2 job opportunities in the country for my chosen field. However, instead of encouraging me to pursue a career that was a little easier to enter, they became my biggest cheerleaders. I wouldn’t be where I am today if it weren’t for them believing in me and offering unwavering support.”

What was it like to win the YN of the Year? What was the process? “I had been actively working toward winning YN of the Year for two years by the time I won in 2018, so it was definitely a massive honor and a huge sense of accomplishment. I was legitimately shocked when my name was announced as the 2018 recipient, because my good friend, current governor Kenny Sammut, and I had been kind of competing to get YNOTY. We had a feeling one of us would get it in 2018 and the other in 2019, and I was fully convinced he had me beat for 2018. It is still one of the highest honors of my numismatic career because it meant a lot to me that my dedication and love for this hobby were recognized and appreciated.”

“To win YNOTY, you have to be nominated, so I just tried to be as active in the community as I could. I started exhibiting more, giving presentations at coin shows and coin clubs, writing more articles, attending more coin shows, I was the week two YN Auction head at the 2018 Summer Seminar, and just tried to be the best ambassador to the hobby I could be.”

What motivated you to stay involved in the ANA YN program via the YNA? “I would not be where I am today if it weren’t for the incredible mentors I have been lucky enough to have on my numismatic journey. There are so many people who have given me their time, knowledge, and advice, making a huge impact on my life. Now that I am a more established professional numismatist myself, I want to give back to the current YNs the same way so many others gave back to me. I want to have a similar impact, helping guide, support, and encourage the next generation of numismatists.”

What would be your biggest advice to YNs when it comes to collecting and being involved in the numismatic community? “Don’t be afraid to talk to professional numismatists and make connections. As a young collector, it is really easy to get a little starstruck when you see some of those “big name” numismatists for the first time, but you have to remember they are just people. Most of them would love to get to know you, offer advice, and share their knowledge. As long as you are polite about it, don’t be afraid to introduce yourself and make connections to build your network.”

Which numismatic summer program you’ve attended was your favorite? (Summer Seminar, Witter Coin U, Stack’s Bowers Professional Numismatist Program) How have they helped you? “I get asked this question all the time, and it’s actually impossible to answer. All three of these programs have completely different purposes and focuses; you can’t really compare them. Summer Seminar focuses more on special-interest classes and fellowship with like-minded collectors. WCU focuses more on training you to be a coin dealer and connecting with other young dealers. PNP focuses on providing you with well-rounded professional training and introducing you to multiple career paths within the industry. It’s not fair to compare them, because each event has a purpose and a place within the industry, and I would recommend each for different reasons.”

Young Numismatists
OF America



2025 PAN Coin Show

by Alivia Rawson

I attended the Pennsylvania Association of Numismatists (PAN) Coin Show in Monroeville, Pennsylvania, on Saturday, October 18. The show was held in the Monroeville Convention Center with over 175 dealers present. The admission was free for members and non-members of PAN. However, PAN Members are permitted into the show an hour before it opens to the public.

In the PAN exhibit area, there were about twenty exhibits within six classes—U.S. coins, World coins, numismatic paper, medals, tokens, errors & altered coins, and exnumia. Each exhibit was judged by ANA judges. There were two YN exhibits—American Women's Quarters and Numismatic News from 2013. My exhibit, American Women's Quarters, won first place in the YN category and 2nd place in the Adult U.S. Coins category. The awards ceremony was at 1:00 p.m. Each winner received a current product from the U.S. Mint, ribbons, and a certificate.

In the PANKidZone, there were free coins and coin holders. There were tables set up with thousands of wheat pennies for you to look through to fill your penny books. If you didn't have a penny book, they would give you one. They also had Treasure Trivia, where you go to the dealers' tables and answer questions about coins to earn PAN Dollars. You can also earn PAN Dollars by going to the PANKidZone, by wearing your PAN shirt, and by bringing a friend. At 2:00 p.m., the kids' auction took place. There were 50 different lots to bid on using the PAN Dollars you earned. Some of the lots were: proof sets, silver dimes, silver quarters, half dollars, a Morgan dollar, and 5 mystery lots. Most of the items sold for 30–50 PAN Dollars. Before the auction started, Robert Stakeley, the Heinz History Center's Educational Director, gave a short presentation on some of the exhibits that are in the Heinz History Museum.

PAN's Living American History Program was also at the show. Dennis Boggs as Abraham Lincoln, Curt Radabaugh as George Washington, and Patrick McBride as Benjamin Franklin made special appearances. They walked around talking to kids about their roles in American History and their impact on our nation's coinage and currency. The men sign gold foil bank notes with their historical character's signature and hand them out to the kids.

The PAN Coin Show happens every May & October at the Monroeville, PA Convention Center. The shows have a lot of activities for YNs, and the dealers are happy to help YNs expand their collections.



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, and fewer than 10 are left. Feel free to share this promotion with other numismatists. And of course, be sure to receive yours right away!

My First Coin Show: San Diego Coinorama Show

by Ben Lewandowski

You step into the big, bustling convention center. The smell of excitement is in the air! You wander around the exhibits in wonderment as your parents check in. You step over to the kids' booth right before the door. You stop when you see hundreds of Wheaties and suddenly run over to them and start filling up folders with the best ones.

When you are ready to go into the bourse, you are rewarded with a couple coins from faraway places, each sparking excitement and curiosity! You step into the rows and rows of dealers, and once again, you feel stunned. You suddenly jump in the air and do a happy dance! You are surrounded by people who share your love and passion! You run up and down the aisles staring at all the coins! You check things off your want list, left and right.

A dealer sees the sparkle in your eye, the dance in your step, as you skip down the aisles. He sees the joy that radiates through your body every time you learn something new about coins. You remind him of himself when he was your age. He wants to show you something that he hopes will nurture your newfound passion, that he had wished someone had shown him when he was your age. He calls you over and displays to you a hunk of silver, a piece of history. He proceeds to tell a long and amazing tale about the incredible history of the coin.

You long to keep the story of the piece of history alive as long as you live because over time, every coin will remind you of the fantastic memories of all the wonderful people, coins, excitement, and passion that you long to never forget.

America 250: Connecting Coins With the Land(s) They Represent

A National Volunteer Project for Students K-12

2026 marks America 250, the 250th anniversary (semiquincentennial) of the Declaration of Independence. To celebrate this once-in-a-generation milestone, the American Numismatic Association is inviting students across the country to give back to the lands we all share and earn exciting coins and commemoratives as they volunteer.

The program officially begins January 1, 2026 and runs throughout the 2026 calendar year, while prize supplies last.



For more information on the ANA YN America 250 Project, visit money.org/america250-project.

Detecting Coin Counterfeiting

by Adhitri Sethuraghavan

Fellow collectors, I am going to tell you about an important topic: counterfeit (fakes or forgeries) coins. There are three distinct types of counterfeiting: altered coins, cast counterfeits, and die-struck counterfeits.

Altered Coins

An altered coin is a real coin (not counterfeit by itself) that is made to look like another coin. There are different ways people do this. Sometimes, the date on one coin is made to look like a different (and typically more valuable) date. For instance, a 1938 coin could be made to look like a 1933. Other times, the mintmark is removed with a tool so that a different one can be put in its place, or so that the coin remains without any mintmark.

When trying to find dates that are altered, look for 'scratchy' tooling marks around the year or mintmark. Those can reveal if someone has used tools to alter the coin. Sometimes, even 'errors' like missing mintmarks are simply altered coins. The best way to find out if a mintmark is counterfeit is to do thorough research about that specific coin, especially by referring to the *Red Book (A Guide Book of United States Coins)*.

Cast Counterfeits

Cast counterfeits are ordinary metal pieces made to look like coins. The counterfeiters take a genuine coin and put a mold around it to capture the design and details. Then, they take an ordinary piece of metal and put it inside the mold to 'mint' the counterfeit coin. Experienced numismatists have a 'feel' for the right buy and a feel for the wrong buy. Detecting the cast counterfeits is sometimes based on that feeling. Such coins might not have all the details of an actual coin. Its surface may be grainy, and its edge could have a seam. These differences help numismatists identify cast counterfeit coins.

Die Struck Counterfeits

Die struck counterfeits are the hardest ones to detect, as they are made with two dies that behave as real, legal dies from an official mint. Thus, even for experienced numismatists, detecting these types of counterfeits is difficult. However, there are two methods used to teach people to detect the die struck counterfeits. One method is to look at pictures and details of a real coin and compare closely for discrepancies. The other method is by examining samples or pictures of known die struck counterfeits, which often have indicators.

Transfer die forgery similarities.

Image courtesy of NGC.



Remember to stay cautious and be on the lookout when buying. Also, there are many other books available that teach about the ways to detect counterfeits. So, learn, learn, learn!

World & Ancient Numismatics

The Young Numismatist

December 2025 & January 2026

**The Sun Never Sets on
British Colonial Currency**

**Bronze Disease: The Ancient
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**Matthew Boulton's Soho
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The Sun Never Sets on British Colonial Currency

by Jack Hancock

“The sun never sets on the British Empire” was an oft-quoted saying that summed up the imperial and colonial might of history’s largest empire. Having territory on every continent, in every time zone, over a quarter of the earth’s land area, the British Empire became the dominant colonial superpower over a half-millennium of different colonies, reaching its peak just before the second world war (Shafer). Historians separate this into two phases: colonialism, generally associated with the settler colonies such as America, and imperialism, associated with the resource-based colonies in India and Africa. Through the case studies of Colonial America, South Africa, and India numismatists can see the different approaches the British Empire took to colonialism through the lens of currency.

The British Empire handled currency in America in a unique way. It did not impose a general unitary currency throughout its colonies; in fact, it did not impose any currency at all. Trade, especially early on, was done either through bartering or through exchanges in various foreign currencies (Spanish *8 reales*, Dutch *leeuwendaalder*, French *écu*) mostly valued for the precious metal content (Yeoman 2023). Until the act was repealed in 1661, Wampum, the currency of the Native Americans in Massachusetts, was considered legal tender. This hodge-podge of currencies was of little concern to the British Authorities, who only cared that they received the goods grown on plantations and that taxes were paid. In the midst of the English Civil War, authorities in Massachusetts decided to establish the first official mint in English America to produce the “New England Coinage” of 1652 (Yeoman 2023). These coins were replaced with several iterations of tree coinage, and a few more royal charters were granted to independent mints in the colonies to coin their own money. This policy reflects the general attitude of Britain towards her American colonies, commonly called Salutary Neglect (St.Germaine). This approach was tightened after the French and Indian War, part of the larger Seven Years War that nearly bankrupted Great Britain. In response, Great Britain levied new taxes to repay the past defenses, angering many colonists who saw it as restricting their freedom. This was a major cause of the American Revolution, and the right of congress to coin its own money was enshrined in the constitution of the new United States.



Another example of a British settler colony (a colony where people from the British Isles moved to and lived en masse) is South Africa. South Africa was originally colonised by the Dutch East India Company in the 1600s. The Dutch used the Guilder, minted in Amsterdam, as their official currency (Odili). Like America, other currencies from different colonial powers were used; but the guilder was the most popular. In 1782 the Dutch Governor Van Plettenberg created the Rixdollar, a paper money used to supplement the supply of coinage from the Netherlands. The currency situation in South Africa upset many settlers, who suffered under currency shortages from their home country. The Dutch colony was taken over by Britain in 1806 as a strategic position on the pre-suez route to the lucrative colony of India (Britannica). The British took a slightly different route in South Africa than they did in North America. Upon taking control of the colony, they introduced the Pound Sterling as legal tender; but the guilder and other foreign currencies continued to circulate due to a small change shortage until 1826 when the British Government declared the Pound Sterling the sole legal tender (Odili). The South African Pound was minted in Pretoria until 1960. On the obverse, as with all British Colonial coins, it showed a crowned bust of the ruling monarch (Numista). This was symbolic of the British control of the colony, a tradition going back through millennia of British history showing the monarch on the front of the coin, a daily reminder of the colonial status of South Africa. Typical designs on the reverse show various motifs that commemorate British goals and aims in the colony, not that of the preceding boers (Dutch settlers) and certainly not of the native African tribes. All the ½ pennies' reverses depict a ship sailing through the Cape of Good Hope, honoring Britain's interest in the colony as a rest-stop on the way to India. The Dutch settlers eventually fought for independence from Britain in the Boer Wars, a long process that lasted from 1910 until formal independence in 1960. After that point, South Africa began to use the Rand as a way to establish their independence from the Pound Sterling. The design for the Rand changed several times, now showing President Nelson Mandella and one of five native fauna to celebrate the end of Apartheid and the revival of a truly independent South Africa.



The crown jewel of the British empire was undoubtedly India. Long coveted by European empires for its goods and market size, India first came under indirect British rule through the East India Company, a royal-chartered joint stock company that obtained dominant control of the Indian Subcontinent by 1850 (Britannica). During this period, the East India Company became the only company in history to mint its own trading currency, in addition to being the largest and most powerful company known to history, sporting its own army, administration, vast territory, and coinage system (Appel). The power to coin its own money – a power generally reserved for nation-states– came from the huge trade deficit regarding EIC trade in India; as the only quality British goods to trade were woolens (useless in Indian heat) and precious metals, which were naturally turned into coins starting around 1639 (Samant). In the four centuries when the East India Company gradually took control of India, coinage was a hodge-podge of local mint issues that slowly started to incorporate British symbolism into their designs, solidifying their authority in the region (Durham Coins). Under the Coinage Act of 1835 the East India Company absorbed the few remaining Mughal mints to become the sole entity minting and producing coinage in India, standardizing all currency in the Imperial Rupee. To flaunt this new authority and the wealth of the company they minted a mostly proof edition of gold coins known as Mohurs (Appel). In a world where many countries could not afford to produce gold coins, the production of the Mohurs by the East India Company was a clear statement of the power it held.

But the power of the East India Company had its limits. After a policy passed by the company deciding to grease their bullet cartridges with pig and cow lard (managing to upset both major religions of India, Islam and Hinduism) the Indian soldiers who contracted with the East India Company, the sepoys, rebelled. The company, who relied on these sepoy mercenaries to quell rebellions, was brought to its knees from the inside. But Great Britain was not going to give her prize colony that easily. The Crown stepped in and sent British troops who defused the rebellion and formed the British Raj; India controlled directly by the British Monarch. Coinage of the British Raj remained the Imperial Rupee (as per the Coinage act of 1835); but it increasingly showed British symbols. Queen Victoria's ever changing portrait graced the obverse of every coin, styling herself the Empress of India from 1877 onward. The reverses showed mostly floral motifs, and the denomination identified in several of the major languages of India, but most visibly English, yet another way to assimilate British authority into the everyday lives of Indians. The Indian Coinage Act of 1906 set up standardized coinage and mints (Reserve Bank of India). During the world wars, Britain experimented with paper and non-precious metal coinage as it pulled the silver, amongst many other resources from all its colonies, to fund the war effort. This all-take no-give approach to Britain's colonies led to a massive wave of independence movements following World War II, when India remarkably gained independence through peaceful protest. Once Independent, India abandoned the monarchical motifs and instead replaced the crowned head with symbols important to the people of India.



In conclusion, the British Empire's approach to coinage and currency in America, South Africa, and India is representative of the different motives concerning those colonies. In America, a somewhat neglected colony left to its own devices when it came to currency, the circulation of private and foreign issues became a staple of colonial society and established the idea of American independence from British rule. In South Africa, a nation tossed from superpower to superpower, currency changed often and with little regard to the inhabitants, rather emphasizing the land's strategic location along major maritime trade routes. And in India, a country gradually assimilated into the British Empire where the Crown sought to infiltrate society by associating Imperial symbols alongside traditional Indian designs in an attempt to exert complete dominance over economy, territory, and society. Regardless of one's views on the British Empire, the coinage used in its colonies can be used as a historical example of how Great Britain tried to change the world.

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Bronze Disease: The Ancient Collector's Nemesis

by George Riblet

The field of coin collecting is split into two admittedly broad categories: collectors of ancient coins and collectors of modern coins. There is no real consensus on what delineates the two, but most agree it has to do in part with age, and in part with manufacturing methods (due to technological limitations, ancient coins were die-struck instead of milled like moderns). The vast majority of ancient coins that have survived into the modern day are dug up in what are referred to as “hoards” — a collection of multiple coins buried underground. However, when these coins are dug up and exposed to the air after spending possibly multiple millennia underground, complications can occur. The most troublesome of these issues is, by far, the dreaded and reviled bronze disease.

Bronze disease occurs when chemicals absorbed by a coin over long-term burial are activated by contact with the outside world. There are many different chemicals that can cause such reactions, but the main one is cuprous chloride. This chemical accumulates in the patinas of coins, and, when exposed to moisture in the air, reacts to create hydrochloric acid. The hydrochloric acid then eats away at the coin, producing more chloride deposits as it goes, which then react with the air to create more acid. This is the main danger of bronze disease: its cyclical nature. There is no true endpoint; bronze disease is never satiated. It will eat away at your coin until there is nothing left. Another concerning fact about bronze disease is that it is contagious. If the chlorides come into contact with another coin, they can spread — one sneaky coin could be the downfall of an entire collection.

Due to all of the dangers of bronze disease, it is critical to identify it before it is introduced into a collection. Bronze disease forms in characteristic green deposits; however, it is very important to note that not every green deposit is bronze disease. The central identifier of bronze disease is the pitting. When the acid eats away at the material of the coin, it will leave indents in the coin itself. This is another reason why cleaning of ancient coins is often necessary. There are many known cases of bronze disease hiding under other deposits and thus going unidentified.

Luckily, bronze disease is hardly a death sentence for a coin, especially if caught in its early stages, when it can still be stabilized. Sadly, it is impossible to reverse the damage already caused. The most you can hope for is to salvage what is left. The most important factor is prevention. It is much easier to prevent the disease from activating in the first place than to try to treat it once it has begun. The key to prevention is humidity. The chlorides are activated by humidity, so ancient coins should be stored at low humidity (below 40%). This can fairly easily be achieved through silica gel packets that are designed to absorb moisture. Full-on climate control is much harder for an independent collector to get their hands on, so unless a museum curator, silica gel is the best bet.



Bronze coin of Germanicus, 50–54 CE.

Image courtesy of Stack's Bowers.

Treating bronze disease, rather than preventing it, is much harder. Obviously, it is impossible to restore lost material, so the goal of all such interventions must be to stabilize the coin in question and prevent further damage. It is possible for bronze disease to remain dormant for long periods of time, and this dormancy is something those who fight against the disease cultivate. Baking the coin at low temperature in an oven is one approach, but it only staves off the corrosion for a time and can risk further damaging the coin. Another short-term solution is to dip the coin in distilled water. This is again only like putting a band-aid on the problem. There is a more permanent solution, but it is costly, dangerous, and time-consuming. The process goes like this: first, the diseased material must be removed by hand. This can be difficult, and the recommended tool is a diamond-encrusted dentist's pick. Also, it must be done carefully so as not to inadvertently damage the coin. Then, the coin is treated with ethanol and benzotriazole. Benzotriazole is (among other things) a corrosion inhibitor that keeps the copper from reacting with the chlorides. However, this is a volatile chemical that is known to be toxic, and it is suspected to be a carcinogen. Finally, it can be coated with museum-quality microcrystalline wax to protect it from further damage. Like all of the steps, this one is also risky. This wax is impossible to remove without dealing significant damage to the coin, and if you do not catch all of the chlorides, the cyclical reaction can continue under the wax, dooming the coin. This process is dangerous, not guaranteed to succeed, and also costly. When tallying all of the materials required, it came out to \$85, even when buying small quantities.

While the various dangers of bronze disease have been dramatized here, it is not as terrifying as it might appear. It is fairly rare and can only spread through direct contact. It can also only form on copper alloy coins, so no need to worry about your denarii. Ultimately, the best way to deal with bronze disease is to avoid it—don't buy infected coins, clean encrusted coins to get a good look at the surfaces beneath, store coins at low humidity, and store them separately. If you do all of these things, you are highly unlikely to end up with a bronze disease issue.



Brass Sestertius of Trajan (98–117 CE) with a “desirable green patina.” Image courtesy of NGC.

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Matthew Boulton's Soho Mint & Manufactory

by Clark Davis, Graphics Editor

In the late 1700s, Great Britain faced a problem—the severe counterfeiting of regal copper coins, half pennies particularly. Matthew Boulton, a businessman and inventor, reported that more than two-thirds of all copper coins he handled were counterfeit while traveling. Counterfeits were everywhere in circulation, and the “good” coppers were being removed from circulation (Gresham's Law). The people had had enough; this was so bad that in 1789, the public's trust in copper coinage, regal or counterfeit, was nonexistent. The coppers would *not* be accepted, except at very large discounts, leaving some merchants with large amounts of copper coinage in distress. This was bad for the economy, and legal consequences did not seem to dissuade the counterfeiters. *1797 Twopence Reverse. Image courtesy of NGC.*



England was in a dire situation and without many options. They had tried to make stricter counterfeiting laws to punish the counterfeiters; they largely did not care. The British government wasn't filled with counterfeiting experts, and the counterfeiters themselves just seemed to copy whatever the Mint produced. The eighteenth-century industrialist, Matthew Boulton, came to the rescue in 1797. He, the inventor of a steam-powered coinage press, suggested several methods to foolproof the coinage. Several of these methods included thick, raised borders to help the coins wear better; striking in the collar so the coins were perfectly round; having the coins contain the true value of copper: one ounce per penny and two ounces for two pence (avoirdupois).

The Royal Mint was not capable of producing such large coins—they only had screw presses then, so Matthew Boulton obtained a Royal Warrant to make pennies and halfpennies with his newly-invented steam press. His operations were delayed a little bit, and despite all of his cartwheel coinage having a date of 1797, they were first made in 1798! The coinage continued to be minted until 1807—nine total years of mintage. Overall, the coinage was a success because the cartwheel coinage could not be profitably counterfeited. The coinage presses that the counterfeiters were using were not capable of striking such large coins. The only way that Boulton earned a profit was because he was using steam presses, which were much more efficient and capable of striking larger coins. By 1807, the rising price of copper provided a need for a coinage reformation. This led to the Soho Mint making new halfpennies and pennies. They weighed less and had fewer anti-counterfeiting features—these coins were stripped down to the bare minimum. Boulton even believed that his anti-counterfeiting features were overkill, so he simplified his future copper coinage features with convex dies and by adding engrailed edges. The simplified and lighter coins he made later on appear to have worked. Now, they are easier to locate in nicer condition for an affordable price (\$150 for an AU halfpenny). Matthew Boulton's ingenious thinking and inventions led to the diversion of a copper panic and the making of better and more reliable coins for the nation, ending the large amount of counterfeits in circulation and saving England's economy.

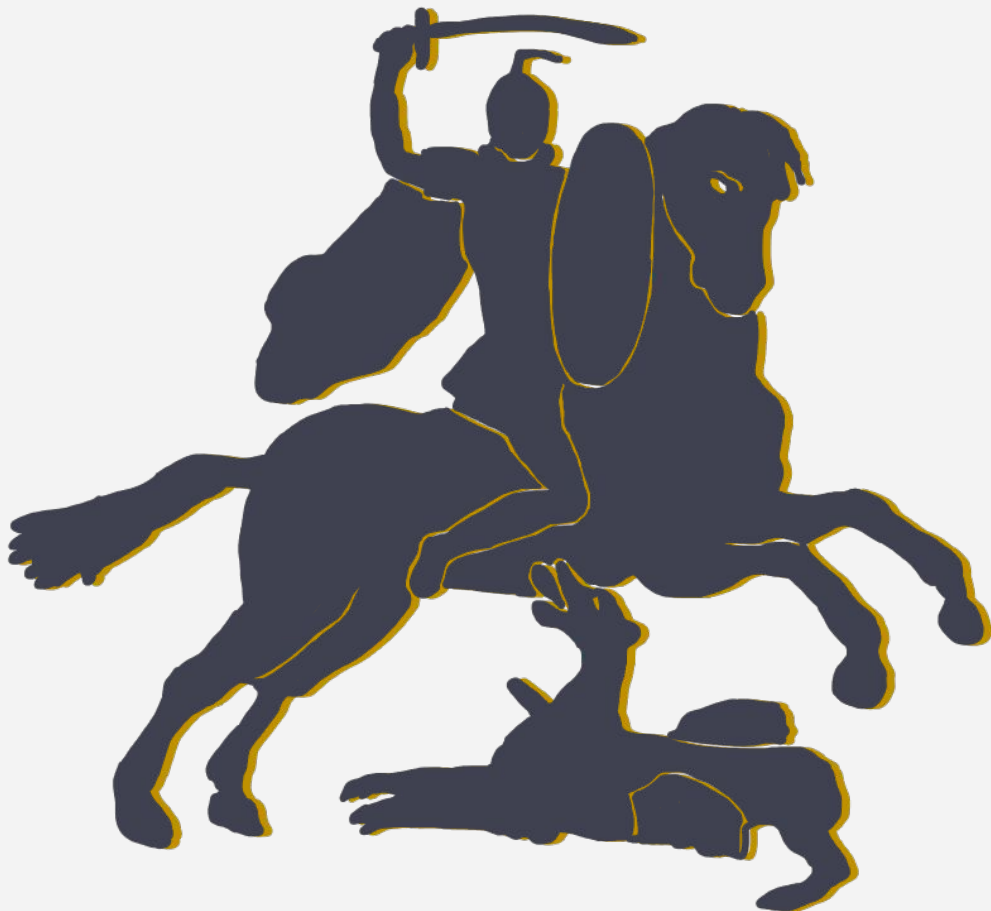
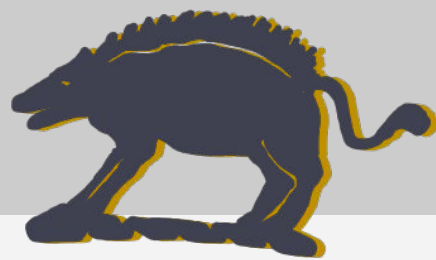
Exonumia & Paper Money

The Young Numismatist
December 2025 & January 2026

Communion Tokens
of Western Europe

1883 National Exposition
of Railway Appliances
Award Medal - *Part II*

North Africa
Emergency Notes



Communion Tokens of Western Europe

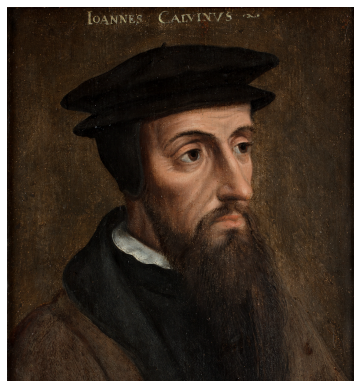
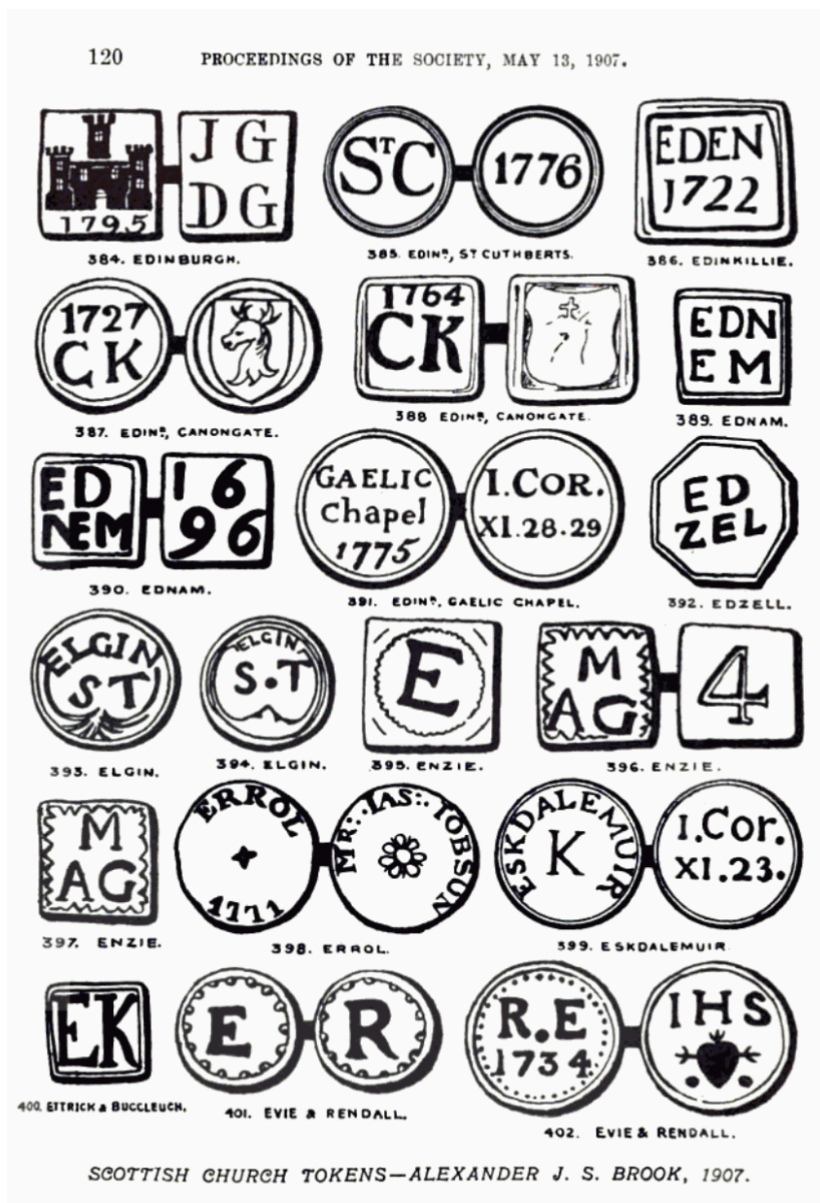
by Cam Scheirer, Research Editor

“The religious gatherings to which the tokens pertained became completely interwoven with the life of the people and were looked upon as a devout recreation.”

— Alexander J.S. Brook, *Communion Tokens of the Established Church of Scotland*

Exonumia is a field of study that incorporates the everyday object into the historical narrative. The objects that are classified as such form strong connections to individuals and groups of people. This month’s column returns to Scotland and highlights the items that allowed people into the religious ceremonies they valued most: communion tokens. From the Reformation to the Industrial Revolution, their use reflected the religious opinions, fears, and hopes of their eras.

The roots of the early modern communion tokens lie in Ancient Greece and Rome, where clay “tesserae” were used as tickets to religious festivals. Early Christians used similar tokens for admission to their meetings, preventing spies from infiltrating the ceremonies. Even after Christian persecution largely came to an end with the Roman Empire’s conversion to Christianity, “abraxas stone” tokens were still used by gnostic sects (deemed heretics by the Catholic majority) for the same purpose. In later times, the Catholic Church used tokens for a variety of purposes, most commonly by prisoners to partake in the Sacrament of Confession. *Image: Assorted communion tokens, from page 120 in Alexander J. S. Brook’s book Communion Tokens of the Established Church of Scotland*



Communion tokens were first introduced in France at the urging of Protestant Reformer John Calvin (1509–1564) around 1560, a time when Huguenot (French Protestant) communities faced significant persecution from the Catholic government. Tokens in France were used similarly to in the days of early Christianity, to prevent intruders from entering gatherings. The tokens were often called “shepherd tokens” for their depictions of shepherds tending their sheep, a reference to Jesus’s status as the “good shepherd.”

The first communion tokens in England were issued by the Catholic Cardinal and Archbishop of Canterbury Reginald Pole (1500–1558) during the reign of the Protestant-persecutor “bloody” Queen Mary to identify conforming Catholics. Tokens continued to be used after Mary’s death and England’s subsequent return to Protestantism, to mark eligibility for Communion. In the well-recorded case of Southwark parish, churchgoers purchased tokens for two and one-half pence each, using them like tickets to allow them to participate in Communion. They would be turned in when used at a Communion then reused by the church officials at the next Communion. The use of communion tokens served both to stop the extreme poor from entering Communion and to raise money for the parish. Those who did not pay the Church dues, however, were marked as such in Church “token books” and prohibited from taking Communion in later use.

“It was in Scotland that the Token practice took its deepest roots,” wrote an early scholar on the subject (Tenney 24). Tokens or paper tickets (both referred to as “tickets” or “warrants” in most early records) had been in use by 1560, and they were likely used concurrently for some time. Metal tokens became more common in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Unlike in England, communion tokens in Scotland were used not to raise money for the issuing churches but rather “as a help to encourage and induce the building of character, intellectual, moral, and spiritual, and at the same time a means of insuring a well regulated service and guardian the ‘puritie’ of the Sacrament” (Tenney 25). The process for receiving tokens in Scotland, therefore, differed significantly from that of England. To receive a token, individuals were required to apply and pass a test that usually involved reciting certain biblical texts (the Ten Commandments and the Lord’s Prayer most commonly) before a group of ministers. The badges would be given at a ceremony directly afterwards or at a later date.

Beyond their use in Scottish Presbyterian communities, tokens were also used to a much lesser extent by some European Lutheran and Methodist communities. Later, tokens spread to North America via Scottish and Irish immigrants, where they were used into the mid-twentieth century.

In most cases, the parish pastors were charged with issuing the tokens although it was local blacksmiths who produced them, supervised by two parish elders. Tokens would be used for years on end until they became overly worn or the supply was depleted by loss or non-redemption. When the tokens wore out, they would be melted for use in the next series. As it became increasingly common for individuals to forge tokens, churches cycled through designs more frequently, although sometimes the old tokens were simply restamped with the redesigns.

Because tokens were produced by many parishes, they come in a very wide variety of shapes and sizes. The typefaces of the letters on the tokens also varied widely, and were produced both incuse and in relief. Their method of production (usually stamped, cast, and clipped) also varied, but it was most common in rural areas for them to be cast or clipped from sheets. From early on communion tokens featured quotations from the bible, most frequently “DO THIS IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME” (Figure 4, Luke 22:19)



Mold for a cast communion token. Attribution:

By Geni - photo by user:geni, CC BY-SA 4.0,

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=80059290>

and “LET A MAN EXAMINE HIMSELF” (1 Corinthians 11:28), both quotations related to Communion. Tokens also often featured devices representative of Christianity, most commonly hearts, symbolic of Jesus’s love for sinners, but also vines, lilies, suns, and fish. They also featured the town arms of their parish. It became common later on for the tokens to depict the churches to which they belonged. This reflected the custom for tradesmen to depict their establishment on their tokens. Above all, it was very common for churches to copy the tokens of their neighbors.

The identifying letters on tokens were contractions of the parish names (the tokens from Abernethy were marked ABER, those from Inveraray featured IRAY). As the tokens developed over time, some tokens featured the full name of their parishes. Later tokens also featured the initials of the issuing minister, preceded by the letter “M,” standing for magistrate. Communion tokens often featured the letter “T” or the letters “TO” or “TOK,” an abbreviation for “token.” Some even featured the Hebrew word for “token,” “אֶזְכָּרָה.”

Communion tokens were most commonly made of lead, but also were made of brass, tin, copper, and even leather. The communion tokens of wealthier areas were sometimes made of silver, and one New York church even issued ivory tokens.

Most tokens are difficult to date as they were produced over a very wide period of time, and dated tokens only became common by the eighteenth century. The earliest dated token comes from 1648.

Over time, tokens traveled with their bearers, who carried them to serve as markers of their good character as well as to gain them access to the privileges of other churches. They were also carried by ministers when they moved to a new parish for use there.

Beyond their use as tickets for Communion, parishes also occasionally used their communion tokens as beggars’ badges, badges permitting individuals to beg in those parishes (see “Beggars’s Badges” in the October 2025 *The Young Numismatist*). Certain tokens with perforated edges were holed, allowing them to be attached to the clothing as an outward sign of permission to beg.

In the same way that beggars’ badges were a means of excluding those considered undesirable, communion tokens served to exclude the poor and the people who would not submit to the concerted efforts of the church to gain followers. But communion tokens are also representative of the devotion of many Scottish to their faith. It is this duality that makes the study of communion tokens, and exonomia as a whole, fascinating.

Communion token inscribed “THIS DO IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME,” from Luke 22:19.



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1883 National Exposition of Railway Appliances Award Medal - Part II

by John Swindling

— Read the first part of this article in the November issue —

Part II: The detail on the train looks amazing, it's like it's driving right off the medal! The locomotive on the medal isn't identified, so I wanted to try and figure out which engine was the model. The historian at Steamtown National Historic Site confirmed it appeared to be a 4-4-0 American type locomotive, a very common wheel arrangement for locomotives in the 1880s. The Pennsylvania Railroad Museum didn't know either, but the Baldwin Locomotive Works was also in Philadelphia in 1883. Perhaps Mr. Morgan or Mr. Barber used one of their engines for the medal!



The bronze medal from the author's collection, awarded to Samuel Laycock and Sons

Samuel Laycock and Sons

The actual medal that made me want to learn more about the exposition was bronze, won by Samuel Laycock and Sons for the Best Curtain Roller. I was able to trace my medal and the company that won it. The medal came to me from England, where Samuel Laycock and Sons was originally located. The company was in Sheffield, England, in an area known as Portobello Place. They were established in 1771 and made curled horse hair upholstery and railway parts. They were listed as an exhibitor (spelled wrong as “Lacock”) in the official Railway Exposition program on page 87. The bronze medal for best curtain rollers was on page 45 in Department A, Class No. 4 of the premium list.

Listings in the official guide showing my medal and the company display in Avenue B at the Expo

FURNITURE AND FURNISHINGS.

Andrews & Co., A. H., Desks and chairs, Chicago.....	B C
Bushnell, E. L., Springs and upholstering materials, Poughkeepsie, N. Y.....	A B
Burley & Tyrrell, China and silverware, Chicago.....	L
Chesterman, Edwin, Car seat, Howell, Mich.....	W S
Creamer, Wm. G. & Co., Interior trimmings, New York.....	C
Cobb, Z. & Son, Seat and back springs, Chicago.....	B C
Forest City Furniture Co., Rockford, Ill.....	3
Foulke, Wm. H. & Co., Chicago.....	I
Gardner & Co., Seats, etc., New York.....	D E
Haas, D. F., Seat and arm-chair, Philadelphia.....	14
Hale & Kilborne Mfg. Co., Seats, springs, chairs, etc., Philadelphia.....	B C
Hart, H. C. & Co., Trimmings, Detroit, Mich.....	A
Horton, N. N., Reclining chairs, Kansas City, Mo.....	D
Lacock, Samuel & Sons, Rugs, hair coverings, etc., Sheffield, Eng.....	B
Mason, C. C., Seat, Altoona, Pa.....	G
Marks' Adjustable Folding Chair Co., New York.....	33
McGrath, John J., Linerusta-Walton-Decorating material, Chicago.....	42
Rubber Step Mfg. Co., Boston.....	S R
Raw Hide Mfg. Co., Raw hide seating, Boston.....	A X

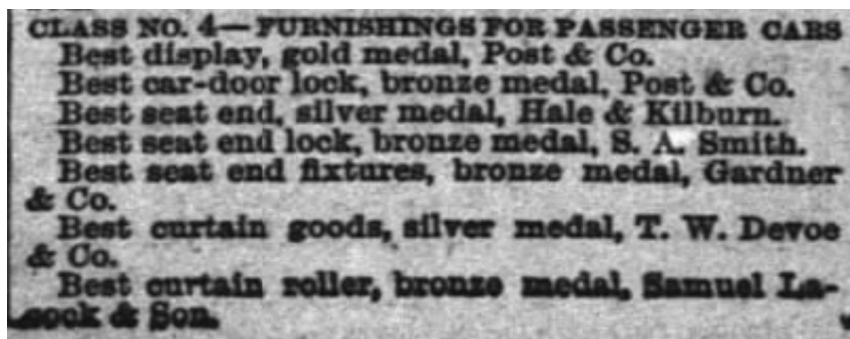
Premium List.

45

Department A — Class No. 4 — Interior Furnishings for Passenger Cars.

Best Display.....	Gold Medal
Best Bell Cord Fixtures, complete.....	Silver Medal
Best Bell Cord.....	Bronze Medal
Best Car Door Butts.....	Bronze Medal
Best Car Door Latch (Saloon).....	Bronze Medal
Best Car Door Lock.....	Bronze Medal
Best Seat End.....	Silver Medal
Best Seat End Lock.....	Bronze Medal
Best Seat End Fixtures.....	Bronze Medal
Best Curtain Goods.....	Silver Medal
Best Curtain Roller.....	Bronze Medal

Samuel Laycock and Sons is listed as the winner of the bronze medal in multiple award list publications—it was cool to match up the medal, the company, and the award list with the medal in my collection! In fact, in advertisements after 1883, the company lists their accomplishment of winning the “First Prize” medal in Chicago at the Exposition.



Award listing from 1883 in the Inter Ocean, showing the author's medal at the bottom

William Samuel Laycock was issued UK patent 3,344 on July 14, 1882, for "Improvements in self-acting window-blind apparatus" and U.S. Patent 271,339 on January 30, 1883. Laycock and Sons became successful at selling railway parts after the exposition, and even built “the most luxurious train in the world” in 1908, called the Southern Belle. After he died in 1916, the company even started making cars. Through a series of purchases, it's now part of GKN Ltd (meaning Guest, Keen and Nettlefolds), a leading car and aerospace manufacturer in England today.

In my opinion, this is one of the best train medals ever made. I've enjoyed researching about my medal and the 1883 Railway Appliances Exposition. Next time you buy a medal, I hope you're as excited as I am to learn all about it. I didn't even know what a curtain roller was! Thanks to my teacher from the Junior Railroad Club on Outschoor, you can see a real-life curtain roller on a Pullman car too!

Below: Illustrations from US Patent Number 271,339 of the curtain roller spring mechanism

(No Model.)

W. S. LAYCOCK.

SPRING ROLLER.

No. 271,339.

Patented Jan. 30, 1883.

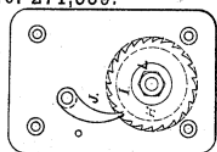


Fig. 2.



Fig. 6.

BY ROYAL LETTERS PATENT.
 PRIZE MEDAL, LONDON. PRIZE MEDAL, LONDON.

AWARDED 1851. AWARDED 1862. AWARDED 1883.

SAMUEL LAYCOCK & SONS, LIMTD.,
 PORTOBELLO PLACE, SHEFFIELD, ENGLAND.

Manufacturers of Hair Seating, Curled Hair, and Dressers of Brush Makers' Drafts, Mexican Fibres, Cocoa Fibres, and American Bristles.
 Manufactory — PORTOBELLO PLACE, SHEFFIELD;
 Also CREWKERNE, SOMERSETSHIRE; LAVENHAM, SUFFOLK.

UPHOLSTRESSERS' TRIMMINGS, &c., SUPPLIED ON THE BEST SHIPPING TERMS.

RAILWAY CONTRACTORS
 And Manufacturers of Curled Hair for Upholstering Railway Carriages, Steamboats, Tram Cars, &c.; Grey and Coloured Hair Rugs, and Grey and Fancy Coloured Damask Hair Seatings; Hair Carpets, Rugs, and Patent Passenger Carriage Blinds (W. S. Laycock's Patent).

CURRENT PRICES AND ESTIMATES GIVEN UPON APPLICATION.

PRIZE MEDALS AWARDED:

FIRST PRIZE MEDAL, LONDON, 1851.	FIRST PRIZE MEDAL, SYDNEY, 1880.	FIRST PRIZE MEDAL, MELBOURNE, 1881.	FIRST PRIZE MEDAL, CHICAGO, 1883.
FIRST PRIZE MEDAL, ADELAIDE, 1887, SALTARE, 1887, AND MELBOURNE, 1888.			(50)

Above: Samuel Laycock and Sons Advertisement from 1897, see bottom right corner

Acknowledgments

Special thanks to everyone who supported this research, including: Mr. George Cuhaj, who inspired the purchase of my medal and the research afterwards; Mr. Tim Corio and Mr. Ted Harkness, who provided pictures of the medal from the late Mr. Andrew Harkness's collection; Mr. Bob Julian and Mr. Roger Burdette who helped discover more about the origins of the medal, Mr. William Vantuono, Editor-in-Chief of Railway Age magazine; ANA Librarian Akio Lis; ANS Librarian David Hill; Ms. Heather Linke of the Outschool Junior Railroad Club; Mr. John Frost of the Barber Coin Collectors' Society; the Pennsylvania Railroad Museum; Steamtown National Historical Site; the Chicago History Museum Abakanowicz Research Center; the National Iron and Steel Heritage Museum; and Mr. Wayne Homren, editor of the E-sylum. But most of all, my dad Jeffrey Swindling for buying the medal and helping me find things on the internet!

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*Image courtesy of Heather Linke,
used with permission*

North Africa Emergency Notes

by Caleb Meier

North Africa yellow seal currency notes are among the most interesting paper money issues in American history. Created under desperate conditions during World War II, their history and popularity are nearly unrivaled in the realm of United States paper money. Additionally, a diverse variety of denominations were made, ensuring their collectability for a wide range of budgets. Exciting and intriguing, there is a lot to uncover about North Africa emergency notes.

Few regions of land were more important during World War II than the land in North Africa and the Mediterranean. Large deposits of oil in the area made the territory valuable and intensely fought over. Therefore, when Allied forces made an attempt to obtain the land during Operation Torch (starting on November 8, 1942), it was vital that American currency would not be of value to Axis forces in the case of an Allied loss. To prevent this, the American government produced special North Africa notes with bright yellow seals in place of the typical blue seals seen on silver certificates at the time. Therefore, if Axis powers defeated the Allies, the yellow seal notes could easily be identified and deemed worthless if enemy powers attempted to use the money.

Unlike the similar HAWAII overprint notes produced during World War II, North Africa notes were not printed for use by the general population, but rather to be used as a form of payment to soldiers involved in Operation Torch. As a result, North Africa notes are significantly rarer than HAWAII overprint notes, as North Africa notes needed to be saved by soldiers and brought back to the United States in order to survive. However, many soldiers did save these notes as souvenirs, so they are not terribly difficult to obtain today.

Due to the unique situations that led to the creation of North Africa notes, these bills are considered highly collectible today. Although only minted from 1942 to 1944, several denominations



were made, allowing many collectors the opportunity to pursue adding one to their collection. One-dollar bills were created for the 1935-A series and represent an affordable option for entry-level collectors. VF examples can be obtained for around \$75, while uncirculated pieces can be purchased for around \$300. Five-dollar North Africa bills were printed in the 1934-A series, and are also pretty affordable, with VF notes trading for about \$85, and uncirculated notes often selling for over \$300.

For the more advanced collector, ten-dollar bills and star notes can represent more of a challenge. While 1934-A ten-dollar bills are common, commanding \$100 in VF condition and \$300 in uncirculated condition, very few 1934 series ten-dollar bills were made. They are in high demand, and can sell for as much as \$2,000 in VF condition and \$15,000 in average uncirculated condition. According to *A Guide Book of United States Paper Money*, only one 1934 series ten-dollar star note is known. This piece is considered the pinnacle of North Africa emergency note collecting and has sold for over \$30,000 in the past. Star notes for each of the other denominations also command significant premiums, with VF pieces selling for around \$400 and uncirculated notes selling for upwards of \$2,000 for each of the one-dollar, five-dollar, and ten-dollar 1934-A series issues.

Clearly, North Africa yellow seal emergency notes are among the most intriguing issues in United States paper money history. Their unique history and high collectability make them extremely popular with many collectors. They would make great additions to any collection.

Collectors' Challenges

The Young Numismatist
December 2025 & January 2026



— US Coin Designers —

by **Miles Tichner**, Collectors' Challenges Columnist

Members can earn 10VN\$ for completing the word search!

I	C	I	C	A	P	G	O	B	R	E	C	H	T
A	T	A	E	L	O	N	G	A	C	R	E	A	S
G	R	E	N	N	E	R	B	E	I	T	R	L	A
A	M	E	R	C	A	N	T	I	S	O	B	E	I
S	L	L	S	W	C	M	R	V	A	C	F	N	N
P	K	I	C	T	I	F	N	O	K	S	L	R	T
A	C	E	H	R	T	R	M	I	N	M	A	B	G
R	O	N	L	S	E	A	O	G	E	N	N	A	A
R	N	C	A	R	R	N	R	H	A	W	A	R	U
O	N	A	G	E	A	C	G	T	S	E	G	B	D
E	I	M	I	B	S	I	A	N	S	C	A	E	E
C	S	C	I	R	E	S	N	C	H	R	N	R	N
N	H	G	G	A	N	C	M	P	R	A	T	T	S
C	F	G	N	T	N	I	M	N	I	A	C	I	K

Word Bank:

Brenner
Barber
Kneass

Longacre
SaintGaudens
Mercanti

Francisci
Scott
Pratt

Reich
Gasparro
Voight

Weinman
Morgan
MacNeil

Flanagan
Schlag

Sinnock
Gobrecht

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

— Coin of the Month —

by Miles Tichner

The Goddard Viking Penny



Image courtesy of the Maine State Museum

Ask any collector what America's first coin was, and the most likely answer will be the 1652 New England silver coins. However, a discovery by archaeologists near Mount Desert Island, in Maine, suggests that the first coin in America dates many centuries earlier. In 1956, Guy Mellgren and his friend Ed Runge had travelled to Maine's coastline in search of a Native American site. A man named Goddard invited the archaeologists to search along his property. There, they found something extraordinary: an 11th-century Norse penny! How did it get there?

The only logical explanation was that the coin had been brought to America by Lief Ericson's group of Norse colonists. Around the year 1000, these colonists established a camp in Newfoundland, where archaeologists have found many Old World artifacts and tools that were unknown to Native Americans, including whetstones, pins, and iron rivets. Historians had long speculated that these Vikings made further explorations to the south, and the discovery of the penny in Maine seems to support this. Nevertheless, many experts challenged the Goddard penny's authenticity.

Mellgren worked part time in a numismatic auction house, and could have easily acquired a Norse coin to plant at the site. However, Mellgren believed the coin was minted in 12th century England, and it was not until years after his death that the coin was identified as Norse. In addition, lab tests showed that the coin had been buried at the site for centuries. While we may never know for sure whether the Goddard coin was a genuine find, evidence suggests that it was the first coin in America. Although less known than the 1652 coins, the Goddard Viking Penny is certainly one of the most intriguing coins of early America.

— Trivia —

- ❖ Despite the end of large cent production in 1857, a few were struck later in 1868 as a numismatic delicacy.
- ❖ The 1802 proof silver dollar, with only 4 known, is actually rarer than the famous 1804 dollar, with 16 examples known.
- ❖ When it opened in 1793, the Mint's security system consisted of Nero the Guard Dog. Today, things are much different.
- ❖ In the 1830s, a bald eagle named Peter lived at the Philadelphia Mint. He inspired Christian Gobrecht's 1836 silver dollar, as well as the Flying Eagle cent. Tragically, Peter the Eagle died after getting his wing stuck in a press flywheel.
- ❖ In 2011, U.S. Mint employee William Gray stole over 30,000 error \$1 coins that were missing edge lettering. He sold \$2.4 million dollars worth of the coins to collectors before getting caught.

— Riddle —

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

Guess which coin this garbled phrase is referring to. (Hint: think phonetically)

Emporium Dasher Double Balloon

Last month's answer: the gold dollar

— Survey —

What is your favorite rainbow toned coin in your collection? Send in a picture to be featured in the February issue!

What are your collecting interests? Early large cents? Silver? Exonumia?

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 February-March issue. Discuss until then.

— November's Survey Responses —

Share your best or oldest find—could be cherrypicking, coin roll hunting, or simply from change.

Hugo Kastle: My best cherry-picked coin is the 1950 FS-402a Franklin half dollar “booger” variety. I got the coin for Christmas in 2024, along with the Cherrypickers’ Guide. Interested to see if it was a variety, I checked the book while thinking it was unlikely—I was dead wrong. It turned out to be an approximately \$810 coin at AU condition according to the guide. My best circulation find is an 1884 Indian Head cent I found while I was coin roll hunting pennies.

Caleb Meier: I have had a few nice finds over the years. In circulation, my oldest find is a 1911 Wheat cent, and I have also found a few silver dimes, including a Mercury dime. I have also had quite a bit of success cherrypicking varieties. Some of my best cherrypicks are a 1918/7-D Buffalo Nickel, 1900-O/CC Morgan Dollar, 1858/7 Flying Eagle Cent, 1867 DDO 2 cent piece, and 1857 Flying Eagle Cent clashed with a quarter. Cherrypicking is my favorite part of coin collecting; it can be very rewarding if you look hard enough!

Peter Davis: My best coin find was a 1907 nickel I found coin roll hunting.

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).

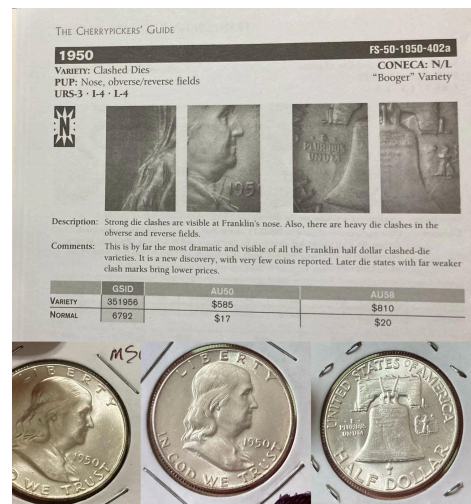
Clark Davis: 1911 Lincoln cent. “It was a really low grade, but I was ecstatic when I found it!”

Nate Leonauskas: 1883 Indian Head cent from coin roll hunting that I found in October 2019. I’ve encountered about a dozen 40% silver halves and a few war nickels coin roll hunting too, and my only silver from circulation apart from that is a 1963 Washington quarter. Also, the adage “buy the book before the coin” rings true: online, I’ve been able to score lots of mislabeled world crowns that are similar in appearance but not in value. Mislabeled countries in part of a larger empire (e.g. Austria/Bohemia, Norway/Denmark) are a particularly great way to make bank.

Miles Tichner: The oldest coin that I found was a 1902 Indian Head cent from a CoinStar reject bin. I’ve also made some good finds coin roll hunting, such as a 2006-S proof Lincoln cent, 1967 SMS Lincoln cent, and a 2019-W quarter, and a few silver dimes. I seem to have the best luck searching nickel rolls. This is probably because Wheat pennies have a distinctive reverse that makes them more likely to be removed from circulation, while with Jefferson nickels, the design is the same all the way back to the '30s. One of my better cherrypicks is probably an XF 1896 British Penny I got from a dealer's junk box for just 17 cents! In such a high grade, it's worth about \$20.

Elliot Eng: My best cherrypick is actually two coins of the same variety: the 1941-S Mercury Dime, Large S (FS-511). The first coin was bought raw for \$30 in 63FB, the other about a year later was bought raw for \$25 in 65. I haven't had many other good cherrypicks, but they say it's better to be lucky than good: I definitely got lucky in finding two of this relatively well-known and valuable variety.

Brett White: I was coin roll hunting a box of pennies, and I found 8 wheat cents about 40 rolls in. Then, I found an 1899 Indian head cent! At the end of the box I also found a 1916 Wheat cent! Also, I went to the grocery store, and in my change, I got a dollar bill with the number 666 with a star at the end (star note). I ended up selling it for \$159 to buy a cool coin for my type set.



See these answers also featured in the upcoming print issue

— 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.

Nate Leonauskas, Editor-in-Chief

Cam Scheirer, Research Editor

Clark Davis, Graphics Editor

Miles Tichner, Collectors' Challenges Columnist

Elliot Eng, President of the YNA

Adrian Perez, Vice President of the YNA

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Jack Hancock, Writer

Ben Lewandowski, Writer

Caleb Meier, Writer

Alivia Rawson, Writer

George Riblet, Writer

Adhitri Sethuraghavan, Writer

John Swindling, Writer

Peter Davis, Survey Respondent

Hugo Kastle, Survey Respondent

Lucas Lee, Survey Respondent

Brett White, Survey Respondent

*A special thanks to Abby Zechman for being generous enough
to interview (and for all she has done for the club).*



For Young Numismatists By Young Numismatists
