



Reeded Edge Halves

“Gobrecht” Bust Half Dollars by Jim Koenings, LSCC #2798 & JRCS #048

Most Recently, I read through the John Reich Collectors Society (JRCS) INDEX and came across an article by Jules Reiver that appeared in the J R Journal, in their May 1986 issue.

Every Liberty Seated Half Dollar collector should read Jules’ “The Gobrecht Bust Half Dollars”. Jules was JRCS #006 and the greatest die variety collector ever (in my opinion)! Everyone that reads his article will come away thinking “I didn’t know that”.

His article can be found in Newman Numismatic Portal under JRCS, Vol. 1, No. 2, pages 20-22.

Jules also wrote the “Variety Identification Manual” (VIM)’s for Bust Half Dimes (1984), Bust Quarters (1987) and Reeded Edge Half Dollars (1988).

His work on Reeded Edge Halves started when Heritage Numismatic Auctions asked him to attribute Reeded Edge Halves and Bust Silver Dollars in the 1986 “Mid Winter ANA Auction” in Salt Lake City. He purchased several Reeded Edge Halves from that sale.

The thing that caught my eye in his “The Gobrecht Bust Half Dollars” article was that Capped Bust Halves from 1807 to 1836 have 7 stars on the left obverse and 6 stars on the right while Reeded Edge Halves (Gobrecht Halves) have 6 stars on the left obverse and 7 stars on the right.

Later, he pointed out 2 common 1837 die marriages. The first has a bar under the top serif of C in AMERICA on the reverse (see photo at top of next page).

This die variety is known as “Inverted G instead of C in AMERICA”. In 1988, Jules called it 1837 JR-16 when he had his VIM printed. Later, Dick Graham called it 1837 GR-7 when his book “A Registry of Die Varieties of Reeded Edge Half Dollars 1836-1839” was printed, in 2012.

The second 1837 die variety has a depressed hole in the upper left portion of the shield on the reverse (see photo at bottom of next page).

Some collectors call this “A Shot in the Back” or 1837 GR-2. Jules called it an 1837 JR-12 when his VIM was printed in 1988. It is rated R-3 (201 to 500 known) by Dick Graham.

If you search for either 1837 GR-2 or 1837 GR-7 long enough, you should find one without paying a premium. They can be found unattributed. These die varieties are also fun to collect in various Die States. They come in Prime, Early Die State, Middle Die State, Late Die State and with CUDs.

In the E-Gobrecht, December 2020 issue, I wrote an article entitled “Reeded Edge Halves are NOT Capped Bust Halves” and thought they should be called “Pre-Liberty Seated Halves”. After reading Jules’ article, I now think they should be called “Gobrecht Bust Halves” or some other name that makes it clear that they were the first coins to have reeded edges. Numismatic News calls half dollars from 1807 to 1836

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1837 GR-7 PCGS AU details Reverse with Circle Showing Inverted G



1837 GR-2 Raw VF30 Reverse with Circle Showing Depressed Hole

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“Capped Bust Half Dollars” and half dollars from 1836 to 1839 “Bust Half Dollars” in their coin prices section. They do not mention “Lettered Edges” or “Reeded Edges” in ANY category.

I consider having “Capped Bust Half Dollars” from 1807 to 1836 as the equivalent of having “Indian Cents” from 1859 to 1909 and having “Liberty Seated Half Dollars” as starting “Lincoln Cents” in 1910. “Liberty Seated Half” collectors are missing the 1909-S VDB of Lincoln Cents by not having “Gobrecht Bust Half Dollars” from 1836 to 1839. And yet most, “Gobrecht Bust Half Dollars” are no more expensive than Liberty Seated Half Dollars.

There are 56 known die marriages of “Gobrecht Bust Half Dollars”. 38 are common, rated R-3 or lower. Since August 2019, I have been publishing Newsletters of the “38 Most Common Reeded Edge Half Dollars” every month by email. My Newsletters contain large photos and other information to help you attribute them.

Currently there are over 100 interested collectors that receive this information free. The January 15th Newsletter had photos and information on the 1838 GR-10 die marriage.

If you would like to receive this information, please send your name and email address to:

Jim Koenings at Bustcoin1@verizon.net

Happy Hunting!

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