



The E-Gobrecht

Liberty Seated Collectors Club

2017 Volume 13, Issue 6

June 2017 (Whole #149)

Great Attendance at Local Meetings!

LSCC members and guests are flocking to regional and national club meetings and educational forums where Liberty Seated camaraderie and education are emphasized. The images below of the recent Central States Numismatic Society Annual Convention and Manchester NH Coin Expo are typical of current meetings. Many thanks to all for attending as the club's regional teams spend considerable effort to show the club's presence.



CSNS Annual Convention, LSCC Regional Meeting, April 2017 (above)



New Hampshire Coin Expo, LSCC Regional Meeting, May 2017 (above)

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The *E-Gobrecht* is an award winning informal electronic publication of the Liberty Seated Collectors Club (LSCC). The LSCC is a non-profit organization dedicated to the attributions of the Liberty Seated Coin series. The LSCC provides the information contained in this email newsletter from various sources free of charge as a general service to the membership and others with this numismatic interest. You do not have to be a LSCC member to benefit from this newsletter; subscription to the *E-Gobrecht* is available to anyone. All disclaimers are in effect as the completeness and/or accuracy of the information contained herein cannot be completely verified. Contact information is included on the last page.



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When you are all done, hit the Submit Survey button at the bottom of the form.



After submission, you will be asked whether you want to continue the Survey (complete the second form for the other part), or return to the LSCC Home Page.

As with the paper survey form, **the deadline for the survey is June 30**. Thank you for your participation!

Register now for "Developing a Passion for Liberty Seated Coinage" at the ANA Summer Seminar, June 17-22!



This course will feature interactive discussions on many topics, including the history and development of Liberty Seated coinage, evolution of the designs, and grading, including the nuances between series. The core of the class features a **deep dive** into each of the seven series: half dimes, dimes, twenty-cent pieces, quarters, halves, and both Liberty Seated and Trade dollars.

These deep dives entail in-hand inspection of many coins in all grades in all series, and will include in-depth discussions into collecting strategies, key dates, major varieties, attribution, counterfeits, and authentication. Students will have access to both reference materials and sit-down guidance from instructors throughout the course.

The ANA Summer Seminar Course Catalog is online. Seminar details and registration information are available at the ANA website, www.money.org.

Course #28 is a four-day class and sessions go all day. Breaks, meals, and evenings allow for networking and camaraderie with all students and instructors, and provide plenty of time to talk coins with people of all backgrounds and levels of experience, from morning to night.

Class size is limited to 24 students, so if you are interested in attending this class, register soon, as it is filling up!

Seminar #9: Developing a Passion for Liberty Seated Coinage

Instructors: Gerry Fortin (LSCC President)

John Frost (LSCC Director of Education)

Guest Lecturer: Len Augsburg (LSCC Vice President)





Auction News

by Craig Eberhart, LSCC #1348

Central States Numismatic Society Heritage Auctions Chicago April 26-30

An 1840-O half dime graded AU55 by NGC sold for \$3,760. An 1840 dime graded ANACS MS61 went for \$1,997. An 1862-S dime (F-102 R-4+) in PCGS XF45 sold for \$1,880. One of the most impressive dimes in the sale was a previously undocumented or "newly discovered" uncirculated 1871-CC dime. This dime, one of six uncirculated coins now known, was graded MS62 by NGC and sold for \$48,175.

Two 1842-O small date quarters, both graded by PCGS, were in the auction. A VG10 sold for \$998 and a VF25 with a green CAC sticker sold for \$2,232. A colorfully toned 1847-O quarter graded NGC MS63 was sold for \$12,925. An 1853 no arrows quarter graded PCGS AU55 brought \$4,935. A PCGS VF30 1864-S quarter sold for \$2,585. The 1864-S is occasionally available up to XF40, but becomes comparable in rarity to the two rarest San Francisco quarters, 1860-S and 1872-S, in higher grades. Another rare San Francisco date, 1869-S, also graded PCGS VF30, but with a CAC sticker brought \$881. A PCGS XF45 1873 closed 3 quarter, only known without arrows, brought \$1,880.

An 1851 half dollar (WB-8, Errant 8 in Dentils, R-6) graded PCGS AU55 sold for \$2,232. The ever popular 1861-O CSA obverse half dollar, with the crack from Liberty's nose to the rim, graded PCGS XF40 and brought \$2,374. A PCGS XF45 1866-S no motto half dollar, perhaps the third rarest San Francisco date after the 1855-S and the 1878-S, was bought for \$2,820.

Last but certainly not least among the San Francisco Liberty Seated half dollars is the 1878-S. The 1878-S is not only the rarest date Liberty Seated "S" half dollar, it is also the second rarest Liberty Seat-

ed half dollar trailing only the "non-collectible" No Arrows 1853-O half dollar (the finest of which is currently available through a LSCC member dealer). Nevertheless, the 1878-S half dollar is the rarest Liberty Seated half dollar that might be available annually. The example in this auction was graded PCGS genuine with AU details and sold for \$42,300.

The Liberty Seated dollars in this auction included a nearly complete set of dates in uncirculated condition. These coins were part of the Mesquite Collection. A large selection of Trade dollars were also available. Of the 54 non-proof coins, 23 were Carson City issues including three 1878-CCs: a PCGS XF40 sold for \$3,172; an NGC XF45 for \$3,290; and a PCGS AU58 for \$9,987.

PCGS Members Only Show Legend Rare Coin Auctions New Orleans May 18

An 1855-O quarter, a coin rarely seen above VF, was graded PCGS AU53 and sold for the reasonable price of \$3,290. This quarter appeared to have been dipped which may have held down the hammer price. An 1870-CC half dollar graded PCGS VF35 sold for \$7,343. An 1852 PCGS AU58 silver dollar brought \$36,425.

An outstanding complete uncirculated collection of Trade dollars was also sold in this auction. This set was named the Linda collection and completed by a longtime LSCC member more than a decade ago. One of the most noteworthy coins was the 1878-CC graded MS63 by PCGS that sold for \$36,425.



Central States Numismatic Society Annual Convention
LSCC Regional Meeting
 Stephen Petty (right) and Gerry Fortin (below, right)



LSCC Calendar

June 8, 2017. **LSCC Social. Long Beach, CA.** Long Beach Expo. No club table nor regional meeting at this show. Thursday night social, 7 PM, at the Rock Bottom Brewery.

June 17-22, 2017. **ANA Summer Seminar "Developing a Passion of Liberty Seated Coinage." Colorado Springs, CO.** See page 3 of this issue of the *E-Gobrecht* for details or visit www.lscweb.org.

June 22-24, 2017. **LSCC table. Colorado Springs, CO.** Colorado Springs Coin Show, Mortgage Solutions Financial Expo Center, Colorado, Springs, CO. John Frost hosts.

June 22-25, 2017. **No formal LSCC activities. Baltimore, MD.** Whitman Baltimore Summer Expo.

June 30, 2017. Ending date for the **Liberty Seated dime census**. See www.lscweb.org.

July 7, 2017. **LSCC Educational Program.** Orlando, FL. FUN Summer Show 2017, Orange County Convention Center, 9800 International Drive, Hall WA4, Orlando, FL. Gerry Fortin presents "Many Faces of Liberty Seated." 2:30 PM.

LSCC website: www.lscweb.org



Regional News

by Dennis Fortier, LSCC #2016

It was a very productive spring season for the Regional Program. Eight new members signed up in the last two months, mostly at club events. Member renewals continue to role in even this late in the year. (Avoid missing an issue of the *Gobrecht Journal* by renewing for multiple years.) Two club shirts were sold as well and our supply is running low. If you are interested in a club shirt don't wait too long.

Bay State was well attended. The club table was in the hall rather than the usual side room. This made for greater visibility and more activity at the table as we were part of the flow of traffic.

The Central States Numismatic Society Annual Convention also had good attendance with between twenty and thirty attendees at the club regional meeting hosted by Stephen Petty. Gerry Fortin's presentation entitled "The Many Faces of Liberty Seated Coinage" was well received.

Joe Casazza hosted the club table at the Manchester NH Coin Expo. Gerry Fortin was asked to give his presentation ("The Many Faces of Liberty Seated Coinage") again for the members at Manchester. There were thirteen attendees, the most at a Manchester meeting in some time. Gerry's talk was enjoyed by everyone there. Mark Archambeault brought his 1877-CC Half Dollar die marriage collection for us to enjoy at the club table and John Frost set up a display linking up with Gerry's "Many Faces of Liberty Seated."

The Airport Diner after the Manchester show is a tradition and now there is a new tradition with a Dairy Queen having been located in town.

John Frost hosted the club table at the Pawcatuck Valley Coin Club's annual show in Norwich CT. A great deal of fun, food, and coins was had at all these events.

Dennis Fortier was invited to speak on Liberty Seated coinage at the Bristol CT Coin Club. There were about fifteen attendees who enjoyed the presentation on Overrated and Underrated Liberty Seated Coinage.

Joe Casazza (the club's new Northeast Regional Director) hosted a club table at the Nashua NH coin show which garnered an invitation to speak about the club at the Burlington (VT) Coin Club soon.

Garden State report by John Frost. Carl Feldman and John Frost hosted a club table and educational sessions at the Garden State Numismatic Association's annual convention in New Jersey in mid-May. The table exhibit highlighted Philadelphia Liberty Seated half dollars, highlighting the release of Bill Bugert's latest book in his Register series. A nearly complete set of P-mint halves was on display including most of the major varieties. Additionally, a laptop with the downloaded versions of Volumes I through IV was there with the page from the LSCC website. The highlight of the show for us was the identification of a new twenty-cent die marriage with a coin brought to the table by a new LSCC member. See the article on this discovery in the Summer 2017 issue of the *Gobrecht Journal*.

Thanks John. As you can see May was a very busy month for the Regional Program. This kind of comprehensive club outreach takes many dedicated volunteers.

June begins with The Long Beach Coin Expo, June 8-10, at the Long Beach Convention Center. There will not be a club table at this show, however, Brian Cushing (West Coast Regional Director) will host the club dinner, Thursday night at the Rock Bottom Brewery, 1 Pine Ave, at 7PM. Join in, where else can you go to dinner and talk coins?

Summer Seminar time is upon us, June 18-22, there are only a few slots left in the Liberty Seated Seminar. This will be the last seminar on Liberty Seated coinage for some time; don't miss out.

The Colorado Springs Coin, Currency, and Collectables Show at the Mortgage Solutions Financial Expo Center, 3650 N. Nevada Avenue, Colorado Springs, CO 80907, is June 22-24. John Frost and (LSCC old friend) Craig Eberhart will host the club table. The Liberty Seated Dime Survey is ending June 30th. Be a part of the club's record. There will not be another for years to come. Don't put it off.



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Cracked, Shattered, and Terminal by Benny Haimovitz, LSCC #2494

1837 No Stars Large Date Half Dime Shattered Obverse



The original 1837 No Stars obverse design of Christian Gobrecht is always a pleasure to see. This large date example is not only quite attractive, but also shows an obverse die that is clearly on the way to terminal state.

ing down the pole. Additionally, a thinner die crack starts at the rim from just above the K-3 position and runs out into the field.



A primary die crack starts on the rim directly above the Liberty Cap and progresses through the cap, leaving a small cud, over Liberty's fingers and continu-



A second major die crack appears from the rim just below Liberty's foot and continues into the foot

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support where it splits upward to Liberty's heel into the skirt folds and also down toward the numeral 7.



A third major die crack begins at the rim just below the K-8 position continues completely through the rock support and the shield, turning up towards Liberty's thigh.

The reverse has no significant diagnostics other than completely flattened dentils which is common for many half dime dies of this period.



Images courtesy of PCGS TrueView with this example graded MS63 with CAC approval.

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The Curious Collector

by Len Augsburger, LSCC #1271

An Insider's View of Coin Collecting in 1862

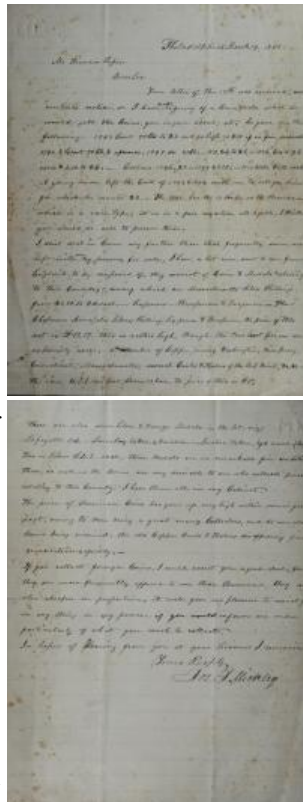
As part of my position with the Newman Numismatic Portal, I have the pleasant chore of sorting through many of the items in Eric Newman's numismatic library. In assembling his library, Newman was happy to purchase anything that advanced his research objectives and the condition or presentation wasn't nearly as important as whether the content was worthy. In this sense, a modern reprint could be just as useful as an 18th century original printing. Occasionally, an item appeared which greatly appealed to both the literature collector and the numismatic researcher, and, if Newman had to compete against the collectors of deluxe editions and similar *desiderata*, that was fine. The document we examine herebelow, a two-page original letter from Joseph Mickley to Francis Lepere (discovered in the Newman library among unrelated material), falls squarely in the latter category.

Mickley was one of the foremost collectors of his day, a Philadelphian with connections in the Mint and a first-rate coin cabinet. The sale of his collection in 1867 included an 1804 dollar, a substantial run of U.S. proof coins from the 1820s to 1850s, seven patterns of 1792, superb colonials, and a host of world coins and medals. The letter at right was written from Mickley to St. Louis collector Francis Lepere, on March 19, 1862. A Missouri collector in the 1860s would have had to operate strictly by mail - there was little or no numismatic trade at the time in that part of the country. The dealers, such as they were, were concentrated in the northeast - Philadelphia, New York, Boston. Mickley wrote to Lepere as follows:

Your letter of the 13th was received and contents noted. I have made inquiry of a Coin dealer, what

he would sell the coins you inquire about, at. He gave me the following. 1793 Cent 75 Cts to \$2 and as high as \$10 if in fine preservation, 1795 ½ Cent, 50 Ct, \$1 upwards, 1797 do. 25 cts, - 1831, \$6 to \$8, 1836 \$4 to \$6, 1852 \$4.50 to \$6 - Dollars 1796, \$2 - 1797 \$1.25, - 1801 & 1802 1.50 each.

A young man left the Cents of 1793 & 1794 with me to sell for him for which he wants \$2. The 1793 has the 13 links on the Reverse, which is a rare Type, it is in a fair condition, all legible, I think you would do well to procure these.



I don't deal in coins any further than that frequently some are left with me by persons, for sale. I have a lot now, sent to me from England, to be disposed of, they consist of Coins and medals relating to this Country, among which are Massachusetts Silver Shillings, from \$1.50 to \$10 each, - Sixpences - Threepences & twopences. - The Chalmers Annapolis Silver Shilling, Sixpence & Threepence, the price of this is 17 pounds 17 shillings, this is rather high, though the last two pieces are extremely rare, a number of Copper pieces: Washington, New Jersey, Connecticut, Massachusetts, several Cents & Halves of the U.S. Mint, etc., etc., - The rare U.S.A. Bar Cent Reverse 13 bars. The price of this is five pounds.

There are also some Silver & Bronze Medals in the lot, viz: Lafayette 5th - Louisburg taken, 2 varieties, - Quebec taken 8/6 each (copper.) Two in Silver, 2 pounds 2 shillings each, these medals are in remarkable fine condition. These, as well as the coins, are very desirable to one who collects pieces relating to this country. I have them all in my cabinet.

The price of American coins has gone up very high within several years past, owing to there being a great many Collectors and to our old coins being recoined, the old Copper Cents and Halves disappearing from circulation rapidly.

(Continued on next page)



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If you[*ve* a] collection [*of*] foreign Coins, I would assist you a great deal, for they are more frequently offered to me than American, they are also cheaper in proportion, it will give me pleasure to assist you in anything in my power, if you would inform me more particularly of what you wish to collect.

In hopes of hearing from you at your leisure, I remain Yours Resply. Jos. J. Mickley.

Mickley's missive tells us any number of things about collecting at the time:

- While the most noticeable difference in pocket change was due to the discontinuation of the large cent in 1858, collectors also noticed that pre-1853 silver was disappearing. The Mint has reduced the weight of the silver coinage in 1853 in order to achieve parity with gold. Prior to 1853 one could acquire silver at face value, melt it, and in return receive in gold several per cent above the face value of the silver. Needless to say, silver coins in circulation disappeared rapidly.
- Early U.S. copper coins were all the rage in the 1860s, and collector interest has remained lively to the present day. The St. Louis collector Lepere had obviously asked Mickley about purchasing early half cents and large cents (the initial letter is unlocated).

- Commerce was still conducted in pounds and shillings. Mickley's letter interchangeably refers to American and English denominations. Old habits die hard.

- Coin prices for U.S. coins were "very high." This seems a perpetual complaint. Mickley's 1804 dollar sold for \$750 in 1867, at the time about 3 years wages for an ordinary laborer. By modern standards Mickley's "very high" is ridiculously cheap. Mickley encouraged the St. Louis collector Lepere to instead pursue foreign coins, rather convenient as Mickley had them to sell.

After 1862, Lepere continued to collect American coins. Two auction consignments are recorded, to John Haseltine in July 1876 (<https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/auctionlots?AucCoId=510907&AuctionId=511584>) and to the Chapman brothers in February 1904 (<https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/auctionlots?AucCoId=21&AuctionId=510894>). Liberty Seated coinage in the 1904 sale included an 1836 Gobrecht dollar (\$9.50), 1851-O 25c (\$0.80), 1852 25c (\$3.00), 1846 10c (\$0.40), and 1846 H10c (\$0.45). Modern collectors would no doubt be pleased to pay such "very high" prices for the same coins.

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Quarter of the Month

by Greg Johnson, LSCC #1460

The Top 25 in PCGS/CAC

After 25 years as an enthusiast of Liberty Seated quarter varieties, and

more than 12 years of collecting them quite seriously, I reached a milestone of sorts last week. It was surprisingly satisfying and seemed worth sharing with other interested collectors. As I got involved with the LSCC about 10 years ago and my numismatic interests became known I was encouraged to lead the effort to define a collectible set of Liberty Seated quarter varieties. The result was the Top 25 Seated Quarter Variety Set published in Issue 111 of the *Gobrecht Journal* in July of 2011 and the subsequent survey of club members' collections published in Issue 119 of the *Gobrecht Journal* in March of 2014.

I actually had only 22 of the 25 varieties that make up the Top 25 in my collection at the time the set was published. Once the Top 25 had been defined, in addition to working on completion of the set, I worked on upgrading the quality of the coins. Quality in this context does not necessarily mean

higher grade; my goal was to complete the set with all coins in PCGS holders. This goal is exceptionally challenging. There are very limited total numbers of some varieties, and only a fraction (sometimes a small fraction) of those coins are of a quality PCGS finds acceptable for encapsulation in problem-free holders.



Last week, after more than 12 years of pursuing the necessary coins, I completed the Top 25 variety set in problem-free PCGS holders; in fact, all 25 coins are not only PCGS, but also CAC. The set is listed on the Gerry Fortin Rare Coins open registry at: <http://www.seateddimevarieties.com/openregistry/collection.php?name=GJ&set=32>. One of the more interesting things about this journey is the final coin located to complete the set. A number of the varieties are very rare but it was the 1852/52 that took the longest to obtain as PCGS/CAC.

A quick look at the CAC population report for 1852 quarters (summarized in Table 1 as of

(Continued on page 13)

Table 1. 1852 Quarter TPG Populations and CAC Approvals.

	G-VG-F	VF	XF	AU	MS60-62	MS63	MS64	MS65	MS66	MS68
PCGS	11	20	13	19	5	7	11	4	4	0
NGC	2	3	7	13	8	7	8	5	1	1
CAC	1	2	2	3	0	0	4	1	3	0



(Continued from page 12)

May 28, 2017) removes any mystery regarding difficulty in locating the appropriate 1852/52. The 1852 is well known to any Liberty Seated quarter collector as a tough issue. It is also an unusual issue in that it is often easier to locate an MS64 than it is to find a nice XF. The next concern, of course, is paying for the coin once found. The weight change is 1853 apparently led to a number of 1852 quarters being "put away." There are therefore a disproportionately large number of high-grade examples; along with unusually few nice circulated examples available for collectors. I can con-

firm that, in addition to the AU50 PCGS/CAC example that I recently acquired (pictured on opposite page), at least one of the MS66 CAC 1852 quarters is the 1852/52 variety.

A detailed discussion of the 1852/52 was provided as part of the initial Top 25 set definition (*Gobrecht Journal* #111) as well as in the Quarter of the Month column in the May 2012 *E-Gobrecht* (available at the G F R C website: http://www.seateddimevarieties.com/Quarter/QOM/1852_52.htm).

Seated Shorts

From **Michael Luck**: Comments on the May 2017 *E-Gobrecht*. Liberty Seated dime survey is important and easy to use even for non-members to do!! This is excellent and well done to get important information of what collectors have.

Craig's auction news in this issue was outstanding!! Enough said.

Dennis' regional news excellent and with new volunteers getting involved and new memberships being added or extended and shows a rebirth and growth in Liberty Seated collecting. This bodes well for Liberty Seated coinage. Half dollar Liberty Seated coinage is on fire!!

Benny's and Greg's columns on specific coins, die varieties, and new discoveries were just plain great - hope both can continue for a long time!! Excellent!! 5 stars!

Jim Laughlin's article on the working of the New Orleans mint and its problems with those court depositions is fascinating. I never thought there was such skulduggery at the mint!!! I guess that all the problems of today are the same as back 150 200 years ago - always problems, pilfering, and stealing short changers. LOL. I never knew stuff like this existed!!! The archives must be full of items still yet to be discovered! I am looking forward to more discoveries!

The free advertisements are full of clickable coin dealer websites with hundreds of Liberty Seated and other coins for sale, photos, and quite a bit of interesting information all for sale. It is interesting to compare prices!!!!

Thanks so much, Bill, for sending and sharing!!

From **David Luftig**: I was wondering if a member of the LSCC can identify the counterstamp on this 1890 dime. It looks something like an artist's palette with the number 9.





Proposal for the Coinage of Small Silver Change at Charlotte and Dahlonega, 1838-1840

by Jim Laughlin, LSCC #876

One of the might-have-beens in the Liberty Seated series would have been the coinage of silver quarter-dollars, dimes, and half dimes at the Charlotte and Dahlonega Branch Mint in 1839-1840. While we know today it never happened, the following excerpts show that at that time, some 177 years ago, the proposal was being debated and nearly came to pass.

The North-Carolina Standard (Raleigh, N. C.), May 23, 1838

COINS, MINES--N. CAROLINA

We saw yesterday, for the first time, the gold coin issued by the Branch Mint at Charlotte in this State. It is a very fine specimen, and in all respects similar to the coin issued from the mint at Philadelphia, with the exception of the small letter c, under the head of liberty, which designates the issues of this Branch from either New Orleans or Georgia Branches.

It was Henry of France who uttered the patriotic wish that he prayed that his life might be spared long enough, to rule over France 'till every man could have "a fowl in his pot"; so we could wish that every citizen of the "old North State" could have his pockets lined with such valuable deposits.

We had the pleasure of seeing a specimen of native silver from one of the mines near Charlotte, in the hands of Col. Wheeler, the Superintendent of the Mint, who passed through the city this week on his way to Washington City. If the government authorizes the coinage of silver as well as gold at the Mint in North Carolina, it will supply a defect in our circulating medium, now very much to be regretted.

Edgefield advertiser (Edgefield, S. C.), January 31, 1839

BRANCH MINT IN GEORGIA

We take the following information from the *Globe*:

We have the pleasure of laying before our readers the following extract of a letter from an officer of the branch mint in Georgia, showing the richness in the gold region there, and the favorable prospects

which attend the miners. Connected with this subject, we have to remark that the bill which passed the Senate at the last session for extending the coinage of the two branch mints, in Georgia and N. Carolina to the coining of silver change, to wit: 25 cent, 10 cent, and 5 cent pieces, is received in the Senate; and we presume will encounter little or no objection, as the additional coinage will occasion no additional expense, will only occupy the mint when it might otherwise be idle, and will give a supply of silver change in parts of the Union, to which it would, with difficulty, come from the mints of New Orleans and Philadelphia, which alone now coin silver....

The Charlotte Journal (Charlotte, N. C.), February 28, 1839

We see it stated that Mr. Strange has presented the resolutions by our Legislature requesting Congress to pass a law for having silver change coined at the Branch Mint in this place. In conversation a short time ago with gentlemen acquainted with the process of coining silver we were informed that it is altogether different from gold, and although the expense would not be great, yet as the Government would have to pay for the transportation of bullion for the purpose of coining it would be a saving of expense by shipping from Philadelphia a supply of change ready coined. We hope therefore, if Congress adopts either it will be that of forwarding to the Branch Mints a supply of change ready for use and not let us have to wait an age for its coinage.

The Bill (S.113) was introduced into the Senate December 20, 1838. It went through two readings, referred to the Committee on Finance, and then read a third time in the Senate. It was passed by the Senate January 25, 1839 and sent to the House.

Supplementary to the act entitled "An act to establish branches of the Mint of the United States," approved March third, eighteen hundred and thirty-

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five.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the director of the Mint be, and he is hereby, authorized to employ, from time to time, at the several branches of the Mint, such number of workmen and attendants, as, from the representations made to him by the respective superintendents, and from his knowledge of the business of the several branches, he shall deem necessary for the successful and economical prosecution of the work, and the safety of the buildings and other public property, at each branch Mint; which said workmen and assistants shall be employed and paid in all respects according to the provisions of the act entitled “An act supplementary to the act entitled “An establishing a Mint, and regulating the coins of the United States,” approved on the eighteenth day of January, eighteen hundred and thirty-seven.

Sec. 2 *And be it further enacted*, That it shall be lawful for the director of the Mint, by and with the advice and consent of the President of the United States, to direct the coinage of silver as well as gold at the branches of the Mint at Charlotte and Dahlonga, in case he shall believe that the same machinery employed for coining gold can, without injury to it, and without any material expense for alterations, be beneficially employed in said coinage: Provided, That the silver coined at said branches shall be of the denomination of quarter dollars and under.

Proponents pointed to the wording of the Bill that no additional expense were to be incurred to strike silver coins. The existing machinery was to be used, and therefore it was thought that the gold quarter and half eagle coinage presses would be able to strike half-dime and dimes, and potentially even quarter-dollars. Opponents wondered where a sufficient amount of silver bullion would come from.

The country in 1839 was deeply divided between the Democrats of Jackson-Van Buren and the Whigs, soon to be led by William Henry Harrison. Every ill the country experienced, appears to have been touted by the rival political party as having originated or been the sole responsibility of the other. In 1837, the country had experienced an economic panic that was near on a depression (known as the Panic of

1837). This was a many faceted economic collapse (Interested readers may wish to refer to Wikipedia or other historical sources for a quick recounting of events). Most banks at the time had suspended specie paying (i.e., paying out gold or silver coin). The country was running on private bank issued paper money referred to as “shinplasters,” this being before the Federal Government had issued a regular circulating paper currency. The country was plagued with private bank notes that were irredeemable or were counterfeit. Each political party was looking for traction for the upcoming fall 1840 Presidential and Congressional elections.

On January 29, 1839, the first paragraph of the Senate Bill was slightly reworded by the House Ways and Means Committee, to require the director of the Mint to have “the approval of the President.” It was passed out of Committee for approval of the full House and there it sat.

Like in recent times, the House had been working on the general appropriation Bill to fund the Government and was coming up to an adjournment deadline of March 3rd. On February 26th, when the appropriation Bill was brought up, an amendment had been immediately proposed by a member from Pennsylvania to strike out all appropriations for the branch mints and substitute just \$600 for each facility for a single caretaker to oversee the properties. This caused some interesting oratory from the floor of the House. Here is a short excerpt from a rebuttal that went on for many columns...(25th Congress, 3rd Session, Page 210 (Page 229 of UNT index))

Mr. Bynum was one of many who responded to the amendment to strike the funding.....*The proposition was, in his mind, an insidious one, and wore the “ear mark” (to use the language of a friend of his), of the party, and system of the party, whence it came; and he would show that it sprung from the very source from which such a motion should. The proposition to strike out all appropriations for the branch mints in the South, he would show, sprung from one who stood in need of a “straight jacket” by far more than did those who voted to establish the mints, and the gentlemen from Pennsylvania had denounced all who voted for that bill as such. Now, sir, what does the member ask by the proposition? To stop all appropriations for the southern mints, and, consequently, by this indirect blow, strike them down, after having , in the short*

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space of six months, been established, without giving them the least trial to test their utility; and this he would have us do without furnishing one single additional fact more than was known at their establishment. Not a single new fact has he presented to justify this House in striking down those institutions which, but a few years ago, were established by a vote of 115 to 60, lacking five only being two to one. Does the gentlemen think that there is so much stupidity in this House to do such a thing? Were we to do it, we should truly deserve the epithets that the member, in his assumed wisdom, has applied to us. Before we attempt such a thing, why did not the gentlemen make proper calls on the Department for all the information necessary to justify the voting for such a proposition? Sir, does he think, by such “lunatics”, to adopt such a proposition, without these necessary and usual calls? And to require the House to do such an act, shows much more clearly that he himself stands more in want of a “straight jacket” than others....

The debate may have continued for some time, however the Speaker interrupted the proceedings with an announcement of a receipt of a message from the President of the United States concerning the Maine Boundary dispute. This had been escalating into a possible armed conflict between the forces of the State of Maine, and the British Province of New Brunswick. There had long been an area of disputed territory between the U.S. and British Canada along the Maine frontier. The U.S. believed that there was an agreement that the disputed areas were to be jointly administered by both U.S. (Maine) and British (New Brunswick) to prevent mineral exploitation, etc., until a joint commission finally settled the formal boundaries. The Governor of New Brunswick, however, believed that the agreement gave them exclusive right to administer the area. Officers from Maine operating in the disputed area had been arrested and jailed by New Brunswick troops. There was a tit for tat escalation, with the Governor of Maine calling up 500 Militia and New Brunswick moving troops into the disputed area. The Van Buren administration was attempting to gather details and at the same time open official communication with London. There was a clear war scare in Congress.

After the house had sent the President’s mes-

sage to Committee, it resumed debate on the general appropriation Bill and it was noted that the debate to strike the funding for the three branch mints “was continued at great length”, but ultimately that amendment was defeated. The general appropriations Bill was eventually approved.

The rush of House business in the last 5 days of the 25th Congress, with the war scare with Britain looming, and much unfinished business; the House never brought to the floor the amended version of the Senate Bill authorizing Charlotte and Dahlonga to strike silver coinage.

Perhaps if the House had just accepted the Senate language and not amended it with the minor language change that the director of the Mint had to act “with the approval of the President,” the Bill might have made it to the floor of the House for a third reading, debated and passed. As the Bill was known to have been amended, it would have had to have been returned to the Senate for their approval or to a joint committee to reconcile. There simply wasn’t time.

In the following 26th Congress, on December 31, 1839, Senator Brown had resubmitted the same Bill. The Senate had read it twice and sent it to the Committee of Finance. It passed out of Committee without amendment on January 9, 1840. On April 17, 1840 the Bill upon the third reading was moved by Senator Preston to be recommitted back to the Finance Committee with instructions to look into the expediency to abolish or suspend the various branch mints. A lively debate ensued. A short excerpt being ... (from Page 317 appendix to 26th Congress, 1st Session, (page 889 of UNT index)

Mr. PRESTON said he was not so much frightened by this cry of “shinplasters”, by which a certain party in this country always attempted to answer the arguments used against them. He had showed that these mints cost twenty percent on the amount coined, and the answer of the gentlemen from North Carolina was, “shinplasters!” When we speak of defaulters running off to Europe with the public money in their pockets, the answer is, “shinplasters”. Gentlemen have their imaginations tortured to death with these phantoms of paper currency shinplasters, and they conjure them up on all occasions, without sense or reason. When it is asked if these mints had added to the specie circulation of the country, it is answered, No—but, “shinplasters”. Have they involved an expense without

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and equivalent? Yes—but, “shinplasters”. Have they added to the Government patronage? Oh, yes; but, “shinplasters”. The gentlemen from North Carolina (Mr. Brown) says that his State is free from circulation of shinplasters, and had smaller paper circulation than her sister States, in proportion to her population. He begged leave to differ in opinion with the gentlemen on this subject. The notes of the North Carolina banks were pushed into the adjacent States, and were known as far as Georgia. With regard to the proposition he submitted, he had no other object in view but the public good. He thought that the portion of the property of this country which had been invested in these mints was unprofitably employed, and he was not disposed, in consequence or a mere party slang, or a dread of bank paper, to impair the interests of the country by suffering it to remain so.

Mr. BROWN would say a few words in reply to the very temperate lecture of the gentleman from South Carolina (Preston). He regretted that the sensibilities of the Senator should be excited on this subject, whether by any remark made by him casually in the course of the debate, or by the mere mention of the odious subject of metallic currency, he should not undertake to determine. The gentleman, driven from the ground of his argument, driven from the positions he attempted in vain to establish, had endeavored to retreat, under a display of wit, and by ringing all the various changes upon the word, “shinplasters”. The gentleman possessed considerable powers as an orator and a writer, and he doubtless possessed musical and poetical talents of a high order. Now, he would recommend to the gentlemen to turn these words into poetry, and set them to music, and he would then be able to give them more effect, when he wanted to display his wit at the expense of a metallic currency.

At a warmer period of the year, when the sun poured down its burning rays with baleful influence, he had heard of the prevalence of a disease called hydrophobia, the characteristics of which was that both men and animals, when afflicted with it, were seized with a dread of water. Now, from witnessing the sensibilities of some gentlemen whenever the subject of a metallic currency was introduced, he should suppose that there was such a disease as the specie-phobia, and that those suffering under it are seized with a horror of gold and silver. Whenever it is proposed to adopt measures for

increasing the supply of gold and silver coinage, we are answered with the cry of “gold humbug”. When we speak of the abuses of the banking system, and wish to counteract the effects of the bloated paper system, we are answered with the same cry of “gold humbug”. When we are called on to prevent the banks from getting absolute supremacy over the affairs of the country, we are again answered with the magical cry of “gold humbug”. There was a potency in this phrase that overcame all arguments in the estimation of honorable gentlemen; and he would now recommend to the gentlemen from South Carolina, when he is setting his favorite song of “shinplasters” to music, that he will introduce the no less captivating phrase of “gold humbug” in the measure.

But the gentlemen said that he did not introduce party politics into the discussion. Did I not, continued Mr. B. hear the words “gold humbug” used from the other end of the chamber. And have I not heard this slang, designed to dupe the ignorant and mislead the unwary, rung again and again, whenever any measure is in agitation to improve the currency of the country? But the gentlemen had no design to introduce party politics into the discussion; his soul rises above every consideration connected with party feeling. Nothing of this sort was on his mind when he reminded us of those leg sub-treasurers who have absconded with large sums of the public money. But had the gentlemen forgotten that within a very few days past, a bank sub-treasurer in a neighboring city (Richmond) has run off with half a million dollars? Has he forgotten that other paper sub-treasurers have, in other parts of the country, very recently done the same thing? But when we talk of infusing a greater quantity of metallic currency into the circulation of the country, and preventing banks from using the revenues of the Government to swell out their issues, we are met with such arguments as “gold humbugs”, or “leg sub treasurers”, and other such phrases so common in the political vocabulary of a certain party.

But, said Mr. B. there was another word which the gentlemen had eloquently harped upon, and he thanked him for it. That word was economy. He hoped that they would hereafter give a practical evidence of sincerity of their profession in regard to economy. He had seen gentlemen voting for nearly a half-million of dollars for books to supply themselves, and furnish profitable jobs to their political partisans, in the

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course of the last six or eight years; and yet they cannot vote this trifling expense for an object calculated to promote the convenience and interest of the people. When he came to reflect on this, he could not avoid coming to the conclusion, that gentlemen who were so fond of supplying themselves with books, at the public expense, were friends of the paper system out and out. The gentlemen talked about selling out these branch mints, and no doubt they were sincere. And he had no doubt, if they were set up at auction, that some bank would become the purchaser, for the purpose of flooding the country with its irredeemable paper; and we should again have some bank sub treasurer fleeing from them with his half a million.

The question to recommitment the Bill back to Committee was defeated. The Senate then passed the Bill and it went to the House. The *Congressional Globe* has no reference to this Bill ever being taken up by the

House, April 17, 1840, to March 3, 1841. It is possible it went to a House Committee and never made it out. It is hard to say. The House spent some time debating the Independent Treasury Bill and a proposals to eliminate the Dahlonega Mint. Perhaps the House leadership did not relish opening up another debate on a Mint issue. The fall 1840 elections saw the Whigs soundly defeat the Democrats, winning the Presidency, and secure majorities in both the Senate and House. There passed a brief moment in time when a "D" or a "C" mintmark may have adorned a seated dime or half dime.

Sources:

Congressional Globe, 25th and 26th Congress, University of Northern Texas, at <http://digital.library.unt.edu>
North and South Carolina newspaper: Library of Congress. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov>

Seated Shorts

From **John Spruhan**: On June 8th, Farmer Auctions in Salem, VA is auctioning my collection of Half Cents, Large Cents, Two Cent Pieces, Twenty Cent Pieces, and Liberty Seated half dollars in the following auction. Most of the coins are lower grade but there are a number of certified coins cataloging over \$200. These sets are nearly complete by date and mint except for very rare items, like the 1878-S half dollar. I am also auctioning my collection of Golden and Silver age comics as well. This is online as well as on site. Happy hunting! www.farmer-auctions.com.

From **John Frost**: Mike Simpson (who Dennis and I know) was at a store today and they had taken in a unknown coin in change, as a dime. It turned out to be a Liberty Seated **half dime**, although in very poor condition. [It is] Amazing a half dime circulated as money in 2017! I will take photos of it when I see him next, and write up a paragraph for the *E-Gobrecht*. I think folks would get a kick out of that!

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Wanted: Material for this newsletter!

Please consider submitting something for print. It need not be elaborate; it can be something as simple as a short note on your favorite variety, neat find, nice cherry pick, happenings at a coin show, rare Liberty Seated coinage coming up for auction, etc. If you are interested in it, rest assured, others will be too! Sharing information is a goal of this newsletter and you need not be an experienced or famous writer to submit something. This is a continuing plea.

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