
The E-Gobrecht
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Acknowledgements

Many thanks to repeat submitters Brian Greer and Len Augsburg and first time E-Gobrecht author Vicken Yegparian.

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Details

- ==> Market update on the 2005 ANA Convention by Brian Greer. While the ANA convention was smaller by comparison to the previous few years, activity remained quite strong and collector coins were in serious demand. For the date collector, I can recall seeing a fair number of rare date Liberty Seated coins on the floor. Rare coins

from the Carson City mint were more available than at previous conventions; however, the asking prices were usually well above current retail price listings. Auction results from the last few years have also shown the demand for the rare Carson City coins to be far outpacing supply. Rare dates from other mints were also available although nearly all of these rarer date coins were at the tables of specialized dealers. Bargain hunting the better dates from non-specialized dealers has become more difficult in recent years but for those willing to be persistent, good finds are still out there. One significant change is the availability of higher-grade Liberty Seated coins. A couple decades ago it was unusual to see truly gem Liberty Seated coins. Now, due to the advent of third party grading as well as higher prices: gem quality coins are much more abundant both via auction as well as on the bourse floor. Despite the smaller bourse, participation at the LSCC meeting was quite strong. President John McCloskey spoke about the E-Gobrecht introducing many members to this service. He also showed us a unique error/variety combination with his 1856 Liberty Seated dime struck off center and from a nicely doubled die obverse. Other LSCC members also had some very interesting coins to share including the unique 1842 small date small letters reverse half dollar and the also unique 1873 no-arrows open three half dollar. The ANA LSCC meeting has remained a "can't miss" opportunity for the collector of Liberty Seated coins.

==> Hanover Numismatic Society Gobrecht Medals issued from 1966 to 1981 by Len Augsburger. In 1966, the Hanover Numismatic Society of Hanover, Pennsylvania commissioned a series of medals commemorating the work of Christian Gobrecht, who was born in Hanover in 1785. Silver and bronze medals were issued annually through 1981. The 1966 medal featured a portrait of Gobrecht on the obverse, while the reverse was a reproduction of the Gobrecht dollar reverse as first minted in 1836. The reverse included the words "ONE DOLLAR" which quickly attracted the attention of the FBI. Many of the 1966 medals were soon seized, in addition to the reverse die, which was never returned. The medals were returned to collectors with the legend "ONE DOLLAR" effaced. The Hobby Protection Act of 1973, mandating the use of the word "COPY" on reproductions, had not yet clarified the legality of such items as the 1966 Gobrecht medal. The FBI was unable to locate all of the 1966s and many survive today without the reverse effacement.

Sketches of Gobrecht works were provided to a private mint that returned an aluminum trial piece for each year, along with the actual dies after the silver and bronze strikings were complete. These dies remain with the Hanover Numismatic Society. The obverse die remained the same throughout the entire series and many of the Gobrecht medals described in Julian's "Medals of the United States Mint" were used as the basis for the reverse dies. One example is the Charles Carroll medal, Julian PE-6, which was used for the 1976 and 1977 reverses. An original example of this 1826 medal, in gold, appeared in Stack's Ford V 10/2004:220, there illustrated with a full-page color plate.

The Hanover Gobrecht medals were struck to the extent of several hundred each year, this number declining as the price of silver rose in the 1970s. They remain highly collectible today, with specimens frequently appearing on eBay.com (search for "Gobrecht"). Bronze examples are typically several dollars each, while the silver specimens are in the twenty to thirty dollar range. Medals from the later 1970s are

scarce, owing to their diminished mintages and are infrequently seen on <http://www.eBay.com> . The American Numismatic Society collection has a full set of these interesting medals in bronze, along with a silver example from the 1966 inaugural year of the series.

Thanks to Sterling Yost of the Hanover club for supplying much of the above information.

==> 1875 Letter on Carson City Trade Dollar Coinage by Bill Bugert. Readers may find the following letter interesting. Dated in December 1875 and addressed from the Coiner at Philadelphia to the Superintendent of the U.S. Mint, I have a photocopy of a letter that goes into detail on solutions to problems identified with minting Carson City Trade Dollar coinage. This handwritten twelve-page letter was found in the U.S. Archives correspondence files in Washington, DC while I was doing research in the late 1980's. It is almost a small thesis on minting techniques. Study it well for there is a wealth of information contained here. It is recounted exactly as it was written.

MINT OF THE UNITED STATES
COINER'S DEPARTMENT

Philadelphia, Dec 21st, 1875

Hon. James Pollock
Superintendent-
Sir;

I have read and considered with much care, the letter of J.F. Evans, Esq. Special Agent of the Treasury Department (*unfortunately, I don't have a copy of this letter – Editor*), transmitted through the Director of the Mint, in relation to Trade dollars coined at the Carson City Mint, and said to be defective.

It would be much more satisfactory in deciding a question so important, and one effecting the work of another Mint, if we had in our possession for examination, both the unstruck planchets, and the coined pieces, as well as the dies used in the coinage, - so that we might make an examination, with the pieces, planchets and dies, before us, for inspection and comparison, and I would respectfully recommend that this course be adopted.

Not having the planchets, coin or dies to examine, I must take no pretense that the defects named by Mr. Evans do exist, and treat them accordingly ~

The defects in the coinage as specified are as follows:-

“Rough and imperfect in finish.”

“Want of distinctness in the figures on the coin.”

“Milling too light.”

“Reeding not heavy enough”

“Letters C.C. not quite of the same size”

“Impressions are light and uneven”

“General appearance of the coin not so attractive – as those coined at San-

Francisco.“ (About same as second defect noted)

“Pieces will not stack or pile properly”

Want of brightness in coin, and said to tarnish quicker than those coined at San-Francisco, and are therefore not so closely refined” (Refining has nothing to do with appearance)

I would respectfully submit that these defects, if they do exist, may arise from one, or more, or all, of the following causes;

- 1st Rolls not kept parallel.
- 2nd Want of proper adjustment of pinch-die, in draw bench.
- 3rd Use of punches too small for dies and collars.
- 4th Use of collars, originally too large or, made so by use.
- 5th Want of proper annealing.
- 6th Want of sufficient pickling.
- 7th Want of proper rinsing after pickling.
- 8th Dies not properly levelled.
- 9th Dies not properly centred.
- 10th Work on dies too deep.
- 11th Dies sinking.
- 12th Dies nor polished.

First – When Rolls are not parallel – a strip of uneven thickness is produced. If however the strip is properly annealed, the draw bench should correct this defect.

Second – Want of proper adjustment of the pinch dies in draw bench. If the pinch dies are not set parallel, a strip that comes perfect from the Rolls, will be made thicker on one edge than the other. But as this defect would be quite apparent, and easily remedied – as well as want of correctness in the Rolls – I am opinion that the defects alluded to arise from subsequent manipulations.

Third. Use of punches too small for dies and collars. If such were the case, planchets would be produced which could not be struck with a proper centre, and upon which the reeding of the collar would make but a faint and irregular impression.

Fourth. Use of collars originally too large or made so by use. This would strike me as the most likely cause of several of the “defects” named. Where collars so not fit the dies very snugly, the dies cannot be centred, the reeding will be imperfect,- the false border will be greater on one side of the piece than the other,- a burred edge will frequently appear. These defects can be easily noticed in the old Spanish and Mexican Dollar coinage. The use of a defective collar will render abortive all attempts at a perfect, or even passable, coinage. The collar controls the size and cantering of the pieces,- gives correct or defective reeding,- evenness or unevenness in the false border,- indeed it may be aid that a collar of exact size, and perfect in the reeding therefore, is essential to a complete development of the work on the dies, and to the production of a credible coinage.

Fifth - Want of proper annealing. When planchets ate not properly or uniformly annealed, they will not expand with equal uniformity in the collars – Some will

therefore be well defined on the edge, whilst others will not – defective reeding is the result.

Sixth – Want of sufficient pickling. Where planchets have not been properly pickled, the dirt and grease accumulated in the working, and incrusts by annealing, is not removed, and the coin struck therefore would not be “bright and attractive” but dark and dull looking.

Seventh – Want of proper rinsing after pickling. If the acid is not thoroughly removed by rinsing, the coin would “tarnish sooner” than where it was, and the acid coming in contact with the dies, would soon tarnish and destroy their luster.

Eighth. Dies not properly levelled. This is a prolific source of defective coinage – Among the defects caused thereby may be named – want of uniformity in developing the work upon the dies – false border, too deep on one side and too light on the other – defective reeding, crumbling on edge of dies and consequent defects on edge of the piece is thicker than the other. Unless dies come together perfectly levelled, it is impossible to produce a perfect impression of the work upon the dies, or the reeding in the collar. No difficulty should be experienced in levelling dies, and keeping them so – since the adoption of the solid stake, at my suggestion, and which has been in use since 1867. The dies sent to Carson are hardened here, but each die must be filed to fit the Coining Press in which it is to be used. The foreman in the coining room is responsible for this work. Want of care on this point may be the cause of much of the trouble at Carson.

Ninth. Dies not properly centred. This is so obvious a defect that anyone should see it at a glance.

Tenth – Work on dies too deep. The work on the Trade Dollar dies is too deep. The relief is too real, and not enough apparent relief. The left claw and leg of the Eagle on the reverse, can scarcely ever be brought up. To the uninitiated it looks “battered”. The difficulty is that with the pressure employed there is not enough metal to fill up all the work on the dies. I have frequently pointed out this defect, and much effort has been made to remedy it without complete success.

Eleventh. Dies sinking. When dies sink under the great pressure in coining or from defective hardening, the pieces struck therefore are very imperfect, presenting a battered and unsightly appearance.

Twelfth. Dies not polished. The want of brightness said to characterize the Carson Dollars, may, to a great extent arise from the use of unpolished dies. Polished dies have only been used, in our ordinary coinage, within the past few years. I found that the labor in keeping the dies polished was trifling, whilst the beauty of the coinage was much enhanced. This work I specially commit to the foreman of the coining room. Mr. Echfeldt, late an Officer in the Mint at San-Francisco noticed in one of his visits here, that our coins were brighter than those coined at San-Francisco, and on learning the cause, said the plan should be adopted on his return, which I know was done. It is a very simple operation, and should not be omitted.

In fine to have perfect coinage, the best appliances should be had, and then

the exercise of constant and unremitting watchfulness.

Ingots should be rolled on parallel rolls, and fillets drawn between perfectly adjusted pinch dies.

Annealing – in strips and planchets should be to a light cherry red.

Pinches, should be of exact size and kept with the beds in perfect order.

Milling – No more milling should be had than is necessary to let the planchets into the collar.

The Sulphuric Acid used should be in the proportion of one part acid to twenty parts water.

Planchets should be allowed to remain in the solution from three (3) to five (5) minutes according to condition of silver.

Rinsed – Planchets should be thoroughly rinsed in pure water, and dried in clean saw dust in Revolving Riddle.

Dies – Being ready for coining the dies should be polished and perfectly set.

Collars – Use of exact size with reeding on inside clearly defined.

The Press – should be carefully adjusted by the use of a sufficient number of blanks, so as to have the dies centred parallel and in such proximity to each other, that each revolution will give enough force to bring up the work on the dies.

With these precautions I can see no difficulty in producing as good work at one Mint as at any other, provided the appliances are equally favorable.

In reference to the concluding portions of the Director's letter "as to the limit allowed in the adjustment of Trade Dollar planchets, and the actual deviation shown in coined pieces".

The rule prescribed for the Adjusters is that no lights or heavys shall be passed that exceed a grain in divergence from the standard weight. Where the Silver works well, the draw bench brings them close to standard, and not frequently above or below one half ($\frac{1}{2}$) of a grain. The Director will understand that our heavys must be adjusted to meet the light and standards so as to make the deliveries in bulk run within one hundredth of an ounce of the standard weight. By an examination of the records of the weighings of single pieces, I find that the Trade Dollars run about one-third ($\frac{1}{3}$) standard – one-third ($\frac{1}{3}$) lights and one-thirds ($\frac{1}{3}$) heavys, and that the variations on lights and heavys seldom reaches more than three-eighths ($\frac{3}{8}$) of a grain from standard. The uniform variation being on lights and heavys from one-sixteenth ($\frac{1}{16}$) to one-quarter ($\frac{1}{4}$) of a grain on a single piece. The difference of the full allowance (one and one-half ($1\frac{1}{2}$) grains on a single piece) could have no effect on the coined piece, that would be noticeable to the eye – The suggestion of Mr. Evans in this connection, may therefore be dismissed, as containing nothing of practical value.

All of which is respectfully submitted by

Your Obedient Servant
Soudon hunday (?? – Ed.)
Coiner

==> LSCC member elected to the ANA Board of Governors. Congratulations to Michael S. Fey on his recent election to the ANA Board of Governors. With 4,642 votes, Michael was one of the seven new Board members recently elected. Best wishes and good luck, Michael!

==> New E-Gobrecht subscriber and Stack's employee, Vicken Yegparian, has this to add about overstruck coinage previously reported in the E-Gobrecht. "I was intrigued by Len Augsburger's listing of "Overstruck Seated Coinage." I can add one tangentially related pattern piece, an 1852 Judd 146 Ring Dollar in Silver struck on an 1860 Dime Obverse Die Trial (Stack's 68th Anniversary Sale, part of the Randolph S. Rothschild Collection, October 15, 2003, lot 1114). Since there were no traces of the 1860 Dime's reverse on the Ring Dollar's obverse, the cataloguer ventured that the original 1860 Dime striking was a uniface die trial, although I presume that any traces of the Dime reverse could also have been obliterated by the overstriking. It sold for \$21,000 + 15% buyer's fee. Seated Dimes were also often used as host coins for Civil War Tokens struck in silver."

==> The results of the election of officers for the Liberty Seated Collectors Club was announced at the LSCC meeting at the 2005 ANA Convention. The membership elected the following officers:

President	John McCloskey
Vice-President	Larry Briggs
Secretary/Treasurer	Greg Shismanian.

Congratulations! As these are volunteer positions, the membership thanks you for your dedication and desire to serve the greater good of the numismatic community.

==> Recent or upcoming Liberty Seated Collections on the market. Please report others for distribution in the E-Gobrecht.

The Mark Sheldon collection of AU-MS Liberty Seated Half Dimes was offered at the Pre-2005 ANA William H. LaBelle collection sale by American Numismatic Rarities. The full set of seated half dimes with many major varieties and overdates, as well as many of the coins Mark wrote articles about {in nice collector grades} were included.

The Rod Sweet collection of Liberty Seated Dollars was offered by Bowers and Merena Auctions in the July 2005 rarities Sale.

The William A. Harmon collection of U.S. Half Dimes will be offered by Heritage Numismatic Auctions on September 21-24, 2005 at the Long beach Show. Comprised of 400 coins, it comprises his lifelong collecting effort.

The Lemus Collection of U.S. Dimes, 1796-1916, will be offered by Stack's at their 70th Anniversary Sale in October 2005. This collection is a complete date and major type set of Dimes with most pieces falling in the Mint State range. Stack's has graciously offered to send a copy free of charge to any interested E-Gobrecht subscriber who does not already receive Stack's catalogues. Contact Vicken Yegparian via email at vickeny@stacks.com.

Jules Reiver collection of copper, silver, and gold coinage will be offered by Heritage Numismatic Auctions in November 2005.

Recent Finds

==> Anyone wishing to report their recent finds, including rarities, cherry picks, late die states, "neat coins," etc., are encouraged to share it with others in this column. An anonymous numismatist reported the following finds:

- 1876-S Type 2 reverse half dollar in VG.
- 1847/6 Overdate half dollar in XF.

Miscellaneous

- Steve Crain, LSCC member and half-dime numismatist, recently spent a month in the hospital recovering from bypass surgery. He reports he is doing extremely well and feeling better than he has in perhaps several years. We all wish him well and a speedy recovery

- In their upcoming September 2005 auction, Stack's will be selling some literature that once belonged to D.W. Valentine, the author of *The United States Half Dimes*, The American Numismatic Society, 1931.

Calendar

Next issue of the Gobrecht Journal – November 2005

Information on the Liberty Seated Collectors Club

The LSCC Pledge. To encourage, promote, and dispense numismatic knowledge of the Liberty Seated coins; to cultivate fraternal relations among its members and all those interested in the science of numismatics.

LSCC Officers.

President: John McCloskey.

Vice-President: Larry Briggs.

Secretary/Treasurer: Greg Shismanian.

LSCC Membership Information. Dues are \$15 per year and include three issues of the *Gobrecht Journal*, an award winning numismatic publication. To join the Liberty Seated Collectors Club, for *Gobrecht Journal* mailing address changes, or for other membership questions, correspond with the LSCC Secretary Greg Shismanian. His address will be reported in the next issue. (In the meantime, send me any correspondence and I will get it to him. *Editor.*)

Articles, comments, or advertisements for publication in the *Gobrecht Journal* may be addressed to the LSCC President:

John W. McCloskey

President, LSCC, and Editor, *Gobrecht Journal*

Email address: John.McCloskey@notes.udayton.edu

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