



The E-Gobrecht

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Liberty Seated Collectors Club

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Collecting Date Sets of Liberty Seated Coinage

Part 2: Quarters through Half Dimes

By Dennis Hengeveld

The seated quarter dollars had their production starting a year earlier in 1838. The series was just like the other seated series, except for the half dime and dollar, struck until 1891, when it was finally replaced a year later by a new design, made by Charles Barber. The design is not much different than the half dollar; the most notable difference is the denomination and size, as can be expected.

In my opinion, this series is the most difficult of the seated series to complete by date only. The long run of dates (continuously from 1838 to the end of the series in 1891) is not the main criteria for this; it's the fact that many Philadelphia dates, especially the 1880's dates, are very scarce in any grade. In Mint state, most coins including branch Mint issues, are available although earlier dates can be very scarce or (virtually unknown) in full Mint state; this especially the case for the branch Mint issues.

These branch Mint coins were struck at the same Mints as the Half Dollars, the San Francisco, New Orleans and Carson City Mints. As is the case with the other seated coinage series, branch Mint coins normally command a premium over a Philadelphia Mint issues, although again this is not the case.

As I said before, the series started in 1838, replacing the capped bust design in production since 1815. The first two dates were only struck at the Philadelphia Mint. These issues are common in grades up to EF-40, but command a nice premium and get scarcer in higher grades. In Gem grades, a

coin is very rare and a trophy coin to most collectors. The design of these first two years is of the No drapery, type 1 design. This was changed in 1840 when drapery was added to the elbow of Liberty. Philadelphia Mint coins only exist as type 2 (with drapery). The New Orleans Mint first struck quarter dollars in 1840. Because the correct, with drapery dies were not received at the beginning of the year, production started using the old type 1 obverse design. During the year, the obverse die was replaced with the new obverse, thus creating two separate varieties for the 1840-O issue. The type 1 had a Mintage of 382,200 coins and the type 2 output for the year was 43,000 coins. Both command a premium over a common type coin of more than 100% and thus are not really interesting to date only collectors.

From 1841 to 1844, both Philadelphia and

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Auction News By Jim Gray

The Stacks Uhrich Sale contained a nearly complete set of the original five Seated series. The half dimes, dimes and quarters were complete and the halves only lacked the 1878-S

and the Dollars did not contain the 1851 and 1852. Almost all the coins were in low grades and almost all had various impairments from mild to severe. In spite of the quality of the coins, the collection showed the tenacity and patience of the collector. It also presented an opportunity for lower grade Seated collectors add to their collection. Many coins were sold in multiple lots that included some rare coins.

[Editor's comment: The Uhrich collection belonged to prominent LSCC member, Rich Uhrich. Rich is not only a collector and numismatist but a full time coin dealer specializing in Liberty Seated coinage. For more information, see his website at www.richuhrichcoins.com.]

Other seated coins that were not part of the Uhrich collection were also offered at the same time.

Of the 72 half dimes in the collection, 66 were sold in one lot. Half dimes of note included an 1840-O with drapery in MS63 that had not sold in two previous sales but this time roared to \$14,375. Seated half dimes from the collection included the following: 1846, F-15, \$1,035; 1863, VG-8, \$259; 1864, VF-20, \$690; 1865, VF-20, \$575; 1866, VF-35, \$748; 1867, VG-8, \$575.

Relevant dimes were as follows: 1841-O closed bud, large O, G-4, \$1,265; 1843-O, XF-40, not part of the collection and a solid coin, \$2,990; 1844, VG-10, \$506; 1856-S, VF-25, \$805; 1859-S, VF-20, \$690; 1860-O, VG-8, \$920; 1871-CC, AG-3, \$2,242; 1872-CC, F-12, \$1,380; 1873-CC Arrows, VF-30, with obverse scratches, \$8,913; 1873-CC, VG-8, 1874-CC, F-12, both very rough and did not sell.

Quarters included the following: 1842-O, small date, G-6, \$552; 1849-O, VG-8, \$1,840; 1851-O, VF-25 but spent some time in the ground, \$518; 1852-O, F-15, no sell; 1858-S, VF-35, \$920; 1860-S, VG-8, \$690; 1861-S, VG-8, \$161; 1864-S, F-15, \$1,265; 1867-S, XF-45, slabbed, original and very attractive, \$5,060; 1867-S, VF-30, \$834; 1870-CC, VG-8, \$9,200; 1871-CC, VG-8, \$5,060; 1871-S, XF-45, slabbed, no sell; 1871-S, F-12, \$1,035; 1872-CC, VG-8, very rough, no sell; 1872-S, VG-20, slabbed with dark mottled toning, \$4,370; 1873 Closed 3, VF-20, \$2,185; 1873-CC, VG-8, \$7,533; 1884 AU 50 and very nice, \$977; 1886, VF-20, \$1,150; 1891-O, \$1,093.

Halves were as follows: 1842-O, small date, F-12, \$1,035; 1847/6, VF-30, \$7,130; 1855-S, AU 53, slabbed, \$9,200; 1855-S, VG-8, \$345; 1870-CC, Fine, \$575; 1872-CC, XF-45, \$2,070; 1873, Open 3, G-6, \$4,025; 1873-CC, no arrows, G-6, \$345; 1874-CC, G-6, \$747; 1878-CC, VG-8, \$920.

The following dollars were sold: 1854, AU-55, well struck and not bad looking despite an old cleaning, \$5,290; 1855, VF-35, \$2,990; 1871-CC, F-15, marks and rim bumps, \$3,220; 1872-CC, VF-20, only L and Y showing, \$2,990; 1873-CC, VG-8, no sell.

The Goldberg Long Beach Sale featured an 1870-CC quarter, in AG 3 with a clear date and mintmark that did not sell.

The 1870-CC Half from my collection, that had not sold at a previous Stack Sale, was graded AU 50 and soared to \$37,000. Also featured was a 1870-CC Half in G-6 and nice for the grade, \$1,450; and a 1870-CC, G-5, with rough rims, that did not sell.

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The Heritage Sale featured some half dimes from the Club Member, Al Blythe's Collection; they were as follows: 1838-O, VF-25, \$978; 1840-O, AU 58, with drapery, \$5,463; 1844-O, VF-30, \$1,093; 1844-O, XF-45, \$1,725; 1849-O, MS 63, \$3,737.

The dimes featured in 1844 in F-12 at \$518. A very nice 1860-O, in XF-40 at \$6,325, and another AU but cleaned and artificially retuned for \$1,495.

Quarters featured an 1842-O, small date, in VG-10 at \$1,610.

Halves consisted of an 1842-O, small date, XF-45, but impaired with scratches and cleaning for \$748; an 1870-CC, G-4, scratched and cleaned at \$805; and a 1871-CC Dollar, cleaned and damaged, F-15 for \$4,600.

The Bowers & Merena Sale featured a solid 1844 dime in VG-8 for \$506, an 1842-O, small date quarter in MS 63 but cleaned for \$8,625. An 1856-S half in VF-35 sold for \$748. The 1870-S dollar in VF-25, which sold for \$552,000 in October 2007 soared to \$705,698. This coin was graded F-12 in the Stacks March 1987 sale, was graded VF-20 in its sale last Fall and is now in a VF-25 holder. In a few years this coin should be an XF.

LSCC Members meet at Baltimore Coin Show February 29, 2008

Sixteen club members met for a regional meeting of the LSCC on Friday morning at the Baltimore Coin and Currency Convention. The formal segment of the meeting lasted about an hour and included the following discussion points:

- Membership Report (556 paid members – about the same as last year, 377 subscribers to the *E-Gobrecht*)
- Member Feedback on *Gobrecht Journal*, Issue #100
- *Gobrecht Journal* Issue #101 - short summary of upcoming articles (Several authors were on hand.)
- LSCC Hall of Fame status
- Reminders
 - March 15th – deadline for seated dollar census forms; 46 to date.
 - LSCC website: www.lscweb.org
 - *E-Gobrecht* subscribe to Bill Bugert, wb8cpy@earthlink.net
 - Regional meeting at CSNS, April 18th, 9 AM, Rosemont IL
 - LSCC annual meeting at Baltimore ANA Convention, July 2008
 - Two presentations
 - 2007 Ahwash Award to Gerry Fortin
 - 2008 LSCC Hall of Fame Inductees
- Rich Uhrich gave a presentation on lessons learned in selling your collection (He promised a *GJ* article!)
- “Redbook Seated Team Trivia Contest”

Many member stayed behind after the meeting to share in camaraderie and seated coin discussions. Thanks for attending!



1840 - A Banner Year for New Orleans

By Joe Brame, LSCC No. 2121

If variety is one of the spices of life, 1840 was certainly a flavorful year for the New Orleans mint. During this year, two major varieties (not counting size of the mintmark) were struck of three of the four denominations coined in New Orleans. This feat was exceeded in the liberty seated series only by the Carson City mint in 1873, two of which are not collectible.

First, the disclaimer. This is not a scholarly article. Rather, this is a basic, rather simplistic analysis of the varieties struck in each denomination, raising a question at the end which may well have been addressed by others. Let me also add that this is written by a brand new member of the LSCC, inspired by the articles in the *Gobrecht Journal* referenced herein.

By way of historical highlights, I note that the first liberty seated coin struck in New Orleans was the 1838-O dime on May 7, 1838. At the other end of the spectrum, the last two liberty seated coins struck in New Orleans were the 1891-O dime and quarter. Incidentally, the 1891-O quarter was the only liberty seated quarter struck in New Orleans with motto on reverse. An especially interesting New Orleans coin is the 1861-O liberty seated half dollar, which was struck under three flags: USA, Louisiana, and the Confederacy.

Getting down to the substance of this article, the liberty seated half dime was struck both without and with drapery flowing from Ms. Liberty's elbow. Of special interest in this denomination is the tilted shield on the no drapery variety (although not noted in the *Red Book*), contrasted with the upright shield on the coin with drapery. The half dime variety collector can probably point out more distinctions between these two varieties.

Turning to the liberty seated dime, with deferral to variety collectors of this denomination, it appears to this writer that only one obverse variety was struck of the dime: without drapery. Drapery first appears, according to the *Red Book*, on the New

Orleans dime in 1841. I do note that the 1840-O dime was struck with small and medium mintmarks.

The liberty seated quarter, like the half dime, was struck first without drapery and then with drapery. A recent article in the *Gobrecht Journal* (July, 2007) by Randall Wiley presents strong evidence for a correction in the mintage figures shown in the *Red Book* for these two varieties. Further, so as to not overlook reverses, one of the 1840-O quarters without drapery has the mintmark positioned far to the left of center. Let's call it the liberal "O," with no reference meant to any politician. Then there is the extremely rare 1840-O quarter with drapery and large O, the subject of Michael Fey's article in the *Gobrecht Journal*, July, 2007.

This brings us to the last denomination struck in New Orleans in 1840: the liberty seated half dollar. Essentially, there are two varieties, one with small letters on the reverse and one with medium letters on the reverse. However, and this is extremely critical, the liberty seated half with medium letters, struck in New Orleans, does not have a mintmark. Further, those struck with a mintmark present three different sizes of the "O": very small, small, and large (according to the learned treatise of Wiley & Bugert).

To the best of this writer's knowledge, the medium letters 1840(O) liberty seated half dollar is the only business strike coin (some modern proof coins were struck at San Francisco with no mintmark) struck at a branch mint without a mintmark. In his article in the *Gobrecht Journal*, November, 1999, Dick Osburn methodically defines the population range for this coin (in his rarity Group E) to be 401-850 specimens. Indeed, this coin has not received the attention it deserves.

Finally, the question foreshadowed above: what was the reason for drapery being added to the design, requiring an extra step in die preparation?

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1840 - A Banner Year for New Orleans (Continued)

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Certainly, it was not the moral issue, which dictated the addition of coverage for the Type II quarter in 1917. Could it have been for the purpose of balancing or lending symmetry to the design? This question has probably already been asked and answered before, but a repeat of the answer might be appropriate at this time.

I am certain there are other obverse and reverse varieties for coins struck in New Orleans in 1840. I sincerely hope this analysis promotes interest in this regard, perhaps stimulating a collector to assemble a set of the major varieties. Any and all corrections and revisions to this short survey would be greatly appreciated. And thank you for reading.

Seated Dollar Census

Due March 15, 2008

Please submit yours today

Even if you only have 1 coin.

The blank census forms were sent to members with the LSCC mailing in mid-January.

Please fill it out and send it to John McCloskey, per the instructions on the form.

Results will be published in a future issue of the *Gobrecht Journal*.

Gerry Fortin Featured

in the March 2008 Issue of the PCGS *Rare Coin Market Report*

Check it out! PCGS ran a very flattering article and report on Gerry Fortin, his website (www.seateddimevarieties.com), and his dime collection in the March issue. His many years of numismatic effort are finally being recognized. Congratulations, Gerry!



Rotated Reverse Seated Dimes

by Jason Feldman

Over the years I have grown increasingly fond of coins with rotated reverses. For the most part, these coins are extremely difficult to locate. I have spent the last three years very actively collecting and search for seated dimes with rotated reverses. I have been able to discover several new coins and am still searching for more.

Rotated reverses can occur two different ways; the first is when mint employee installs the die incorrectly so the obverse and reverse do not line up properly. When this occurs and the problem is fixed and there are no variations in the degree of rotation. The second is when the die becomes loose and then moves a little bit as each new coin is struck. 1849-O is a perfect example of the result. I have located four different degrees of rotation on the die pairing.

The following information represents my research completed to date.

1837 dimes are often found with a 20° + rotated reverse. These can be found paired with the cracked obverse and clashed reverse. One small date specimen comes with a strong crack on the reserve at originating at the E in UNITED going into center of the coin. This comes with a rotation of about 30 degrees. There is a Large Date coin with a 40° rotation that appeared on eBay. I have noticed some variation is the degree of rotation for this date. All 1837 dimes are common.

1839 dimes with a various degrees of rotated reverse and are common; however, there is one know example of a single 85° rotated reverse. This is very rare and a second coin has not surfaced. These coins carry a significant premium.



1840-O can be found with a slight rotation of about 20°. These are somewhat scarce as are all 1840-O dimes in grades above VF. There is a noticeable repunching of the sixth star. There is no premium associated with the rotation of the dies but the obverse die is a new discovery and the coin does carry a slight premium.

1841 dimes with an 18° rotated reverse exist. I have located a single example with a rotation of 30°. These are not too scarce and can be found with some effort. All examples located so far also have a repunched date. These coins carry a slight premium.

1845-O with a 15° rotation have been found. As a second example has been confirmed, I suspected there are more. Due to the minor rotation, many examples may be unnoticed. Both of the examples I have seen are also the thick date and mint mark variety.

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Rotated Reverse Seated Dimes (Continued)

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1849-O is a year that produced numerous and rare rotated reverses. The large O with a 52° clockwise (CW) is the rarest of the group. It is also the only rotated reverse dime from this year with the large O. An AU coin appeared in a Stacks sale but I was unable to purchase the coin. It was properly identified but I have not seen it reappear on the market. The small 1849-O can be found with numerous different degrees of rotation. These are fairly scarce. All carry a premium. I have been able to locate five different specimens from various die states. One specimen is a PCGS graded MS62. 1849-O are very difficult to locate in AU or better condition. I would suspect another mint state coin with a rotated reverse would be hard to locate. Currently, a PCGS AU58 coin is on the market with an asking price of \$2,450.

1850-O with a rotation of CW 45° can be found. These are very scarce. There are a few that surfaced but, despite much looking, other examples have not surfaced. These carry a premium if one should surface. The finest example I have seen is a NGC grade AU55.



1853 Arrows can be found with much looking. Because of the massive quantity of 1853 dimes, finding one can be a task. One is a counter-clockwise (CCW) rotation of 45° and another with a CCW rotation of 30°. These both carry a premium.

1854 Arrows have been found with a rotation of CW 65°. This is a very hard coin to locate and I have only found one low grade example. Others exist. This coin carries a good premium when found.



1854-O has been located with a rotation CCW of 50°. It is also the rare die pair of the shattered obverse and oblique mintmark reverse. Thus far only a single example has been located and is the one discovered by the author. A second example has been discovered with a 30° rotation. I have not seen any other examples other than the die pairing of the shattered obverse and oblique mintmark reverse. These coins carry a high premium because they are a scarce die marriage in addition to the rotated dies.



1855 is a year that a major rotation can be found. These are very hard to locate and, because of the level of rotation, are sought by both seated dime collectors and rotated reverse collectors. It is a rotated by 135°. The "OF" is very weak on the reverse, I know of five examples, which is not surprising considering

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Rotated Reverse Seated Dimes (Continued)

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the extreme level of rotation. Very rare. These coin carry a strong premium when located.



1858 is coin which has been recently discovered. Two examples have been found. The degree of rotation CW is 45°. Weakness is found on the AMERIC[A] on both known examples. This coin is newly discovered. It is unknown how rare this coin will turn out to be as sufficient time for further examples to surface has not yet passed.



1862-S is among my favorites. The 1862-S is finally being appreciated in higher grades. Those with rotated reverse are quite hard to locate. The rotation is CCW 35°. It is, to my knowledge, the only rotated reverse seated dime from the San Francisco Mint. These coins are extremely rare and very desirable. The reverse die is also the same die used to strike some 1861-S dimes and again in 1865.

1865 is the key to the seated dime series rotated reverses. The Proofs have a mintage of 500 coins. These are extremely rare with very few specimens surfacing. These coins are found with noticeable die rust. The rotation is a full 180°. It is a spectacular coin if you can locate one and all known specimens are Proofs. I have confirmed the existence of three different examples of this coin. It was originally listed as a business strike by Ahwash but since it has been accepted that all examples are in fact proofs. These coins will carry a hefty premium if offered for



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Rotated Reverse Seated Dimes (Continued)

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sale. I have only seen one offered for sale in the last few years and gladly paid the price to purchase it.

1866 has been seen in Proof condition with a rotation of 20°. A rough estimate of 1 in 20 coins has the rotated reverse. 1866 Dimes were struck from two pairs of dies; one was used for Proofs only and the other was used only for Proofs. These coins were struck from these proof only dies listed as A1 (Ahwash). These are slightly less common than coins struck from the other die pair. Currently, these coins carry no premium.

1875-S is found with a CW 50° rotation. This is the below wreath variety and are very rare. A second example with a clear, unfilled micro S is also known. These coins are found with a rotation of 20° CCW. The micro S is much more difficult to locate than the small S in general but I have found, since all clear micro S coins come rotated, they are more common than the small S. All micro S 1875 dimes carry a premium and, therefore, so do the rotated examples but not due to the rotation. The small S coins clearly carry a hefty premium due to the rotation. A few higher grade examples have turned up. While in writing this article, I was shown pictures of another 1875-S with what appeared to be a rotation of about 75° CW. Without the coin in hand I am unable to draw further conclusions but it is likely that others exist.



1876 has been discovered by the author and to my knowledge is the only example to surface. The rotation is a 85° CW rotation. The obverse die shows a rather obvious blob on the obverse. I have searched for a few years for another example but, thus far, this is the only one to turn up.



1876-CC is a year with two different rotated reverse coins. Due to the extremely large mintage of this coin, cherry picking this has been very difficult. One comes with a 120° CW rotation. In addition to being a rotated reverse, it is also a double die. This is extremely rare. The second is a CCW 45°. These are also very difficult to locate.



Most of the Rotated reverse seemed to have occurred on the early in the series. In my opinion, these coins are very underpriced based on their rarity and lack of availability. Putting together a complete collection of the coins listed would prove to be a major undertaking. In numerous cases, there are less than five known and those coins will not be available soon. I do not doubt more will surface but, in a case like the 1865 proof, how likely is that there are many more if any more to be found? If you know of any others not listed, I can be contacted at Jason@seated.org and would appreciate information of the existence of other coins.



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Collecting Date-Sets of Liberty Seated Coinage, Part 2: Quarters through Half Dimes

New Orleans Mint struck seated quarters for general circulation. To most collectors, the choice will be a nicely struck Philadelphia issue. Although these coins are less expensive than their New Orleans brothers, the mintages are lower. This can be expected, as many were saved by both collectors and hoarders. For the more adventurous collector, the New Orleans issues are interesting to seek for a premium, well struck example. Especially the first date of this group, 1841-O is suitable for this purpose. It has the highest Mintage differences between both Mints (New Orleans struck 452,000 coins in comparison to the 120,000 struck in Philadelphia) and the prices reflect this in all grades.

The 1845 and 1846 dates were only struck at the Philadelphia Mint and both are relatively common and affordable in all grades. New Orleans resumed quarter dollar production in 1847 with a total output of 368,000 pieces; especially in high grade, it is much scarcer than its Philadelphia counterpart. 1848 resulted in a Philadelphia only year and from 1848 to 1860, the New Orleans Mint continuously struck quarter dollars. Of these dates, the 1854-O (with Arrows at the date to denote to weight change from 6.68 grams to 6.22 grams the previous year, when this was noted by both rays around the eagle and arrows at the date as was the case with the Seated Half Dollars) would be the best option in all grades with some premium but not that much.

As is the case with the Seated Half Dollars, in 1855 the San Francisco Mint struck Silver Quarters for the first time in its short existence. From that date until the late 1860s, the date only collector can choose from the two Mints. Most dates have low mintages, although most coins are much more available than expected. With the civil war going on, silver coins were being hoarded by just about anyone and all silver coins quickly disappeared from circulation. In 1870, the Carson City Mint was opened and the first 8,340 quarters were struck at the Carson City Mint during the year. The low mintage created a classic rarity to collectors with Mint State pieces (virtually) unknown.

In 1866, another design change occurred on

all reverses of the higher denominations (quarter to dollar) denominations. To project the faith the reunited country had in God, the motto "In God We Trust" was placed on a scroll above the eagle. This motto continues to be on all United States coins since then, at least more or less as there are some exceptions. Patterns were created for these denominations during the previous years in several metals, all very rare but very collectable.

The series of patterns starts in 1861 with J-284, \$10 gold piece not too interesting for this article (but very historic in its own way), using the motto "God Our Trust" which was at first proposed. The first seated coinage with a motto related to God comes in 1862, when pattern Half Dollars in both silver and copper were made during the year. Both used the motto "God Our Trust", with the first type (J-293 in silver and J-294 in copper) displaying it on scroll, and the second type (J-295 in silver and J-296 in copper) displaying the same motto without the scroll. This type was also struck in the then semi-precious metal aluminum, probably for the few collectors of the day.

The same can be said for the first patterns of 1863. But the now familiar with the public motto, "In God We Trust," was used for the first time on J-342 in silver and J-389 in copper pattern half dollars. This type was also struck in the then semi-precious metal aluminum, probably for the few collectors of the day. The "In God We Trust" motto was also used on a silver dollar pattern, also struck in three metals (J-345 to J-346).

Quarter dollar patterns with the motto were first struck in 1864 (J-386 to J-389, with the latter being struck in another metal, this time Nickel) as were again Half Dollar and Silver Dollar patterns. The same scenario continued in 1865, with especially the silver pieces being popular. The reason is that these pieces are the true transitional pieces (pieces with a new type first used for official coinage a year later), when the motto was finally introduced on the seated and other coinage in 1866.

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Collecting Date-Sets of Liberty Seated Coinage, Part 2: Quarters through Half Dimes

Studying these different patterns is a very interesting field of study which I will not cover in depth in this article. For technical information, see the Judd and Pollock texts, both listed in the resources. The Judd book was recently revised with new updated prices, while the Pollock book is currently out of print and hard to find. However, both are well worth their money and in the case of the Pollock text, a must-have for the collector interested in these coins. For a more historic background on these truly fascinating pieces of US numismatics, I would recommend the Taxay book, also listed in the resources listing.

The first relatively affordable Carson City quarter dollar comes with the 1875-CC, at the time, the weight had again been changed from 6.22 to 6.25 grams. Again, this was noted to the public by arrows at the date in 1873 and 1874 as was the case with the half dollar. The coins slowly started to be seen in general commerce, although it did take until April 20, 1876 when silver traded again at par with paper money. This had not been the case since 1862, when it took more paper money than a given amount to buy the exact same amount in silver coins. Although more common than preceding Carson City issues, this coin still commands a strong premium in all grades.

The premium gets smaller with the next date, 1876-CC, and together with two Carson City issues that followed, ended this period the most affordable and the best choice for the collector who wants to include a seated quarter dollar in his collection minted at the Carson City Mint. As is the case with the half dollars, quarter dollar production stopped by the end of 1878 and was never resumed at the Carson City Mint.

The same scenario that could be seen with half dollars is the case with quarter dollars. The exception here is that the San Francisco Mint struck quarter dollars in 1888. This date, with an incredible high mintage for the era of 1,216,000 pieces, is commonly available in all grades and much cheaper than Philadelphia coins of the era, which although are easy to be found, will set you back a good amount of

money for the 1880's coins.

The 1890 date has the largest mintage since 1878, with a total output of 80,590 pieces, including 590 proofs. The last year of the series, 1891, saw the return of a well known branch Mints, the New Orleans Mint (re-opened in 1879, although it did not strike any quarter dollars until 1891). Production there was limited to just 6,800 pieces commanding a good premium over a Philadelphia issue (3,920,000 pieces struck for circulation) and San Francisco issue (2,216,000 pieces struck during the year) which are both very affordable and easy to find in any grade up to Gem Mint State.

Although the series is long, with many scarce and hard to find issues, this is a series which is certainly possible to complete. Take your time building such a large 19th century set (with a complete date/mint mark set being even harder) and pick out coins you really like. As a notice, and this can be said for any series, seated or not, when you don't immediately fall in love with a certain coin, think by yourself if you could appreciate this coin the way it is. If not, pass on it and keep searching.

Collecting Seated Dimes by date only

The Seated Dimes series is the lowest denomination of the Seated type that was minted during the whole lifetime of the design. The Seated Dime or 10 cent piece was first minted in 1837. It was minted continuously in all the years until 1891, when this design too was replaced with the more modern Barber design as were the quarter and half dollar series.

As said, the production of the new dimes started in 1837. The type 1 design, only struck the same year at the Philadelphia Mint and for a short period in 1838 at the recently opened New Orleans Mint, featured a design which was the closest to the original design by Thomas Sully. The design featured no obverse stars, with the Seated Liberty De-

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*(Continued from page 11)***Collecting Date-Sets of Liberty Seated Coinage, Part 2: Quarters through Half Dimes**

sign simple but beautiful like it was meant to be. This same design was also used in the first year for half dimes.

In the first year, the Philadelphia Mint struck a total of 682,500. Many were saved and finding a nice example should not be too hard. In 1838, when production of the larger denominations was started, thirteen obverse stars were added to the design. Except for a small design change in 1840 (with drapery added to Liberty's elbow) and arrows at the date from 1853-1855, the design essentially stayed the same until 1860.

The New Orleans issues of these coins are not as rare as is the case with the larger denominations. Production was large during the years, giving the date only collector several different branch mint issues to choose from without paying a large premium. It must be noted however, that many New Orleans issues are weakly struck (a general problem with New Orleans coins) and in many cases, the Philadelphia coins come much nicer. For the date only collector, the preference would be a nice fully struck Philadelphia coin when nothing is available.

In the 1838-1860 period, there are some key-dates, even for the date only collector. The first coin commanding a premium over common dates of the era is the 1840, when no Dimes were minted at the New Orleans Mint. Although it brings a premium and will cost more than other Dimes of the 1840's, the first "stopper" (more or less) is 1844. Again, there were no dimes minted in New Orleans that year and production at the Philadelphia Mint was only 72,500, the lowest mintage of any dime since 1811. The coins are scarce in all grades, although they can be found with some searching and a lower AU piece (50 or 53) will set you back about \$2,500.

Seated dime production shortly resumed at the New Orleans Mint in 1845 but was stopped and not resumed until the end of the decade in 1849. In these three years, production at the Philadelphia Mint started in 1846 with a total output of only 31,300 pieces (the lowest since the classic rarity of 1804) creating a scarce coin which is very rare in any Mint State grade and unknown in Gem. Both 1847 and

1848 dates are scarce but should not be too hard to find.

Other dates until the Arrows-at-date design are all available, with the New Orleans production staying under 510,000 pieces in these years. The with-arrows design was minted in Philadelphia in 1853-1855 and, in New Orleans, in 1854 and 1855. All issues are generally available, with the 1853-O being the scarcest of the set. Others are easily available and for the date-only collector including an issue of both Mints would be a great display of the type.

The San Francisco Mint started producing dimes in 1856, with a total output of 70,000 pieces. Most if not all immediately went into circulation and the issue is apt to be hard to find in all grades, harder in AU and even more so in MS. This certainly is not a date-only collector would likely include in this collection, but if you have some extra cash to spend, why not? It is your set you are working on, and the fun of collecting is that you choose what to include in it.

San Francisco, California lies in an area which was already inhabited by Indians at least 15,000 years before any Europeans arrived in the new world. When the first Europeans visited California with its foggy days and strange (at least to European colonists) geography, it was believed that California actually was an island some distance from the main land. On early maps of California, it is indeed shown as an island, with several small islands in the water between California and main land. These islands were based on myths and nothing else, but were subsequently included in these maps.

From 1500 to the mid 19th century European activity on the western coast was very limited. In fact, the only Europeans who visited were explorers who documented parts of the country and claimed it to the flag they were sailing under. One of these voyages included that of Francisco de Ulloa. In 1510, a novel based on this voyage where the character explores an island is published for the first time.

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Collecting Date-Sets of Liberty Seated Coinage, Part 2: Quarters through Half Dimes

The island is called “California” and this is the earliest known use of that name.

The Spanish had a long history of influence in the new world, including California. However, not many people decided to move to California in the late 18th century, as most of the activities on the continent were near the eastern coast. The current state of California, together with Mexico and other parts in South-America were part of the Spanish Colonies, with its major activities in South-America, were silver mines proved to be a welcome income to the Spanish government.

The area of San Francisco was claimed by the Spanish in 1769. A mere six years later in 1775, a Spanish mission set out for California to keep it in Spanish hands. This mission, called Mission San Francisco de Asís, was established with a small settlement and a military fort. In the early 19th century, San Francisco’s population grew, although only in very small increments as there still was no interest in the area except for some Russian colonists. Eventually, these Russians had colonized almost all of an area near the western coast of North America, reaching from Alaska all the way down to Southern California.

In 1821, Mexico became independent from Spain. With Mexico now being a relative small country in the early 19th century, the country was much greater and included California, Texas, and other parts of the current Southern States. During the American-Mexican war of 1846-1848, American settlers (believed to be no more than 500 Americans who lived close to the coast in 1846) fought for their independency from Mexico. California was ceded to the United States on February 2, 1848 following the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, 17 months after these American settlers declared California independent from Mexico and starting the war. This was done by raising a primitive flag, displaying a Grizzly Bear next to a Large Star in a dark red color on a white background and the words “California Republic,” directly under these symbols over the city of Sanoma. However, California was, after it was ceded to the United States by Mexico not considered

to be a full and equal state until the so-called compromise of 1850.

I am of the opinion that this early history of the American Continent, more or less fully related to United States history, must not be forgotten, as they give a very interesting view of the United States and how its geography changed over the years through wars, peace treaties, and other circumstances which had many impacts on everyday life of the Americans. These Americans can truly be considered as the builders of the western states during the 19th century.

After the San Francisco Mint started to strike dimes in 1856, the other dates of the 1850s up to 1860 are generally available and it should not be too hard to find a nice and well struck example for your date-only set. Much was to change in 1860, when the design of the dime was completely revised. The legend was moved to the obverse and the reverse was replaced with a large wreath. The first decade of the design, the 1860s will most likely include more San Francisco dates than Philadelphia coins. The output of the Philadelphia coins was very low during the civil war and a few years afterwards. Because the impact of the civil war was much smaller in the west of the country, production of dimes stayed relatively stable at the San Francisco Mint.

The Carson City Mint started to strike dimes a year after opening, in 1871. As is the case with the other denominations, the first few years are not really to be considered for date-only collectors because of the rarity and price of these issues compared with other Mints. The first affordable issue comes in 1875. In these few years between, arrows were again placed at the date in 1873 and 1874 as was the case with the large denominations. This was also done by the Mint Act of February 12, 1873, which also discontinued both Silver Dollars and Half Dimes. The Carson City coins are virtually unobtainable in anything higher than very fine, although San Francisco issues will cost about as much as the Philadelphia with-arrows issues. As has been said before, for the date only collector a good option

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Collecting Date-Sets of Liberty Seated Coinage, Part 2: Quarters through Half Dimes

would be to have one Philadelphia issue and the other date from the San Francisco Mint.

As with all other Seated Series, production at the Carson City Mint stopped in 1878 and was never resumed. The trio of Philadelphia coins struck in the years that followed (1879-1881) are very scarce, and, with no dimes minted at the San Francisco Mint between 1877 and 1884, there is not much to choose from. Although mintages were low during these years (1879: 14,000 for circulation + 1,100 proofs – 1880: 36,000 for circulation + 1,355 proofs – 1881: 24,000 for circulation + 975 proofs) not much were put into circulation with enough coins being out there and used in commerce and many were saved for later generations to enjoy.

San Francisco production of dimes was resumed in 1884. The 1885-S is the scarcest of the later San Francisco dates with a mintage of 43,690. The 1885 from Philadelphia is much more common so the date itself is not much of a problem. Until the end of the series, this stays the same. The last option I opt to include is the 1891-O, which is the first New Orleans Dime to be struck in 31 years. This coin is slightly scarcer than its Philadelphia counterpart but does not bring much more and is a good way of saying goodbye to a long lived series and one of the workhorses of 19th century expanding America.

Collecting Seated Half Dimes by date only

The lowest denomination of the Seated type is the silver 5-cent piece, or half dime. Like the dimes, this denomination was first minted in 1837 with the original design by Christian Gobrecht displaying no obverse stars and a very nice small letter reverse. The denomination shows many similarities to its larger brother, both in design as in mintages.

Unlike the dimes, this denomination was not struck through 1891. When it comes to the end of these small but fascinating series, there are more similarities with the largest seated design type, the silver dollar previously discussed. As was the case with the Silver Dollar, this denomination was discontinued

as per the Mint Act of February 12, 1873 and never to be seen again in United States commerce. The 5 cent piece was replaced with a larger, nickel coin, in modern times known as the shield nickel. The nickel, as they are now called (this was not always the case. In fact, prior to the introduction of the 5 cent nickel piece, the Flying Eagle and Indian Head Cents were called “Nicks” or “Nickels” because they largely consisted of Nickel until 1863 when that too was replaced with a bronze composition), has proven to be a worthwhile coin in everyday commerce and is still popular up to this day.

Like I’ve previously mentioned, the series started in 1837 featuring the no-stars type (type 1). This type is very popular with type set collectors and thus commands a premium, although the coin itself is not rare. The lonesome Philadelphia date of this type comes in two date sizes, designated as large and small date. It is believed that of the total mintage, 1,405,000 struck for circulation and a handful proofs for collectors, approximately 65-80% is of the large date type (the exact number is unknown), although there is not much of a price difference in today’s market. Personally, I’ve experienced that this date is quite hard to find with premium surfaces, and although it might be a common date this might require some searching to find a satisfactory example of this date.

In 1838, the New Orleans Mint began to strike half dimes, all of the no-stars type. The issue is a classic rarity and almost impossible to find in AU and MS grades. For that reason, the date only collector will most likely settle for a Philadelphia Mint coin, which now features 13 Obverse stars (type 2). This is a common issue which is easy to find in all grades.

The New Orleans Mint changed to the with-stars type in 1839 and struck this type in that year and a few months in 1840. The 1839-O has a similar Mintage of about 1,000,000 pieces but circulated more extensively and is much scarcer in high grades.

Production at both Philadelphia and New Or-

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leans Mints was divided into two separate types in 1840. The old type coin had mintages of 1,034,000 and 695,000 respectively at the Philadelphia and New Orleans Mints. The new type introduced that year had much smaller mintages 310,085 in Philadelphia and 240,000 half dimes in New Orleans.

This new type (type 3) featured a modified design, which was changed by Robert Ball Hughes, an Anglo-American Sculptor. This was done with all seated denominations, and featured a lower relief than previously, refining of several key-features of the design (most notable the rock and shield) and adding drapery to Liberty's right elbow.

The three early New Orleans issues of this modified design, 1840-O, 1841-O, 1842-O and 1844-O all had much smaller mintages than the coins struck during these years. Although not many collectors attempt a complete date/mintmark set of the seated half dime series, prices for New Orleans issues are relatively low to their mintage and overall availability. For the date-only collector, this will leave open more coins to choose from. It must be noted, however, that the New Orleans issues of this period often come weakly struck at several areas, this being more the rule than the exception. When it comes to overall eye-appeal, the date-only collector will most likely settle for Philadelphia coins which come most of the time sharply struck, although this is not always the case and some cherry picking for full detail coins has to been done there.

The 1840's were the years when westward expansion became larger than ever before but still relatively small in comparison with the next decade, after gold was discovered at Sutter's Mill, California on January 24, 1848. When holding a coin from this decade, especially in circulated condition, the collector can just wonder if that coin was part of a group of emigrants (as California was still Mexican Territory in the early 1840's) who traveled to California that decade, leaving almost everything they had behind in the eastern states were they originated from.

The half dimes of this important decade in United States history are almost all relatively available in grades up to MS-64 and even higher. There

is, however, the exception here again; 1846 saw no half dimes produced in New Orleans, and production at the Philadelphia Mint was just limited to 27,000 pieces, the lowest since 1802, the "collectible" key date of the denomination (with only the 1870-S, being unique surpassing it).

Most of the known survivors, believed to be less than 250 pieces, are in low grades up to fine. Very fine examples are very scarce, extremely fine is rare, and everything higher is very rare (AU examples) to extremely rare (uncirculated pieces, which are believed to be less than 10 true uncirculated examples, not counting several proofs known, being 5 to 7) in comparison to the mintage.

When collecting the seated series by date only, the 1846 half dime is one of the true key-dates. No half dimes were struck in New Orleans that year, leaving the date-only collector not much choice. Delicate searching has to be done before finding an example with a good strike and no problems. However, when it is done the coin is a worthwhile addition to any collection and one to be proud of.

The New Orleans Mint started to strike half dimes again in 1848 and continued to do so until the last full year of coinage, 1860. Most of these dates are scarcer than their Philadelphia counterparts, although the premium for most issues is low, leaving an interesting opportunity for the date-only collector, again. Examples could be any of the type 4 dates, which featured also arrowheads next to the date on this denomination, starting in 1853 and continued in both 1854 and 1855, after which the old type was resumed again. The reason to do so was the silver prices and hoarding thereof previously discussed in this article.

The type 4a seated half dime as I personally call it (although the design was the same as was Minted from 1840 through a few months of 1853, the weight was changed and thus creating a new type in my view) was Minted for the rest of this decade. All issues are relatively easy available (the San Francisco Mint did not start half dime production until

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1863), both from the Philadelphia as the New Orleans Mint (although the latter are relatively scarcer each year) but striking quality still varies a lot.

The last half dime of the New Orleans Mint was the 1860-O. With a mintage of 1,060,000 pieces, which actually is more than the Philadelphia issue (which consisted of 799,000 coins Minted), the coin is common in all grades. This coin is both notable being the last year of half dime production in New Orleans, but also featured a complete revised design done by Thomas Longacre. The obverse stars were removed from the coin and the Legend "United States Of America" was moved to the obverse. The reverse design was completely different, now featuring a large wreath which featured oak, maple, wheat and corn elements and a smaller half dime, the same which was done to it's larger sister the dime.

As was the case with the other silver denominations following the Civil War, the half dime too was hoarded soon after the War began. From the 1863-1867, production at the Philadelphia Mint was very low, especially so in the last three years of the period because of the large amount of silver now flooding everyday commerce after peace had returned again in 1865. To prevent that Proofs for collectors became instant rarities, the Mint decided to strike a limited production of circulation strikes. All these circulation issues are rare as their mintages will suggest, although there won't be much difference in pricing between a fine and lower Mint State coin, because these issues were scarcely used and most stayed in AU or Mint State condition.

Luckily enough for the date only collector, there was the San Francisco Mint. The western Mint started to strike half dimes in 1863 and did so through the end of the series. The mintages were larger there than those of the Philadelphia Mint (this being true of all coinage of the period), although still relatively small in the context of the half dime series. These issues circulated more or less in rural areas across the western states, and it should not be too difficult to find a date in the condition of your choice.

However, one must not forget the option to

include one of the low mintage Philadelphia dates of the 1860's in your collection (and this can be said for any of the Seated series'). The coins and their mintages are directly linked to the events of the Civil War and there direct aftermath. It again is an issue to think about when collecting by date only, one of many as you have found out so far.

Mintages at both Mints increased again in the late 1860s and early 1870s when freshly minted small change was again needed in everyday commerce by the people, who were hoping they could now rebuild their country again and memorialize the many people who died in that long and bloody war. There is, however, one exception again, being the 1870-S (and not for the first time). No half dimes were reportedly struck in San Francisco that year, but more than 100 years after its mintage, one turned up at an ANA convention in a most unusual place: a dealer's jukebox. It just shows what can be found when you look hard enough, but of course you must be lucky.

The 1872-S shows two different types in the mintmark placement; within the bow of the wreath or beneath it. This is an interesting difference, but to the date only collector this will not be of much significance, especially when including a Philadelphia coin in your date-only collection.

The seated half dime series ended just like the dollar after the Mint Act of February 12, 1873. This ended a romantic denomination, first minted in 1792 as the first federal silver coin of the new United States and featuring several interesting design changes along the way, along with rare, unique and historic issues as is the case with all of the seated series.

Conclusion

My main purpose of this article was to show collectors one of the many possibilities when collecting any of the seated series. It turned out to be a bit

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Collecting Date-Sets of Liberty Seated Coinage, Part 2: Quarters through Half Dimes

more difficult than I expected when I started writing it, as many historic events had their influence on all American coinage of the discussed periods in the 19th century, the era these coins circulated throughout the United States.

To illustrate these certain periods in American History, every denomination includes some historic information on subjects not directly numismatic. I have done this to give the reader better insight what people and which events had influence of the coinage of the United States.

However, I hope that it has not become a boring story with nothing but facts in it but that it will actually prove to be a nice starting point to anyone who is interested in one of the seated series, but which is halted by the size and cost of these sets. Most of these date only sets are more or less easy possible to complete in some period of time and can be expanded to include more Mint issues and be build up to a complete date/mintmark and variety set or even more.

All of this leads to the conclusion that if the right choices are made when collecting seated coinage by date only, it can be fun and very rewarding, with a complete set of any series being a major accomplishment. As usual, search for the best grade you can afford, but remember that the grade on the holder is only an indication of the actually coin. Strike, color and luster needs to be seen by yourself to judge if that coin is worthwhile to add to your collection.

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Notice: Availability of past issues of the E-Gobrecht

Through the generosity of Gerry Fortin, the previous issues of the *E-Gobrecht* are readily accessible on his seated dime website at

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Information Wanted

I'm currently working on the large task of cataloging the known seated half dime errors known to collectors by date/mintmark. If you own any seated half dime errors, please send me an e-mail at the address below and provide the following information to make this survey as accurate as possible:

- Date and Mintmark of coin
- Type of error
- Grade
- Certification service if graded
- Photographs of both sides of the coin (if possible)

Information about any known errors including blank planchets is welcomed. The results will be published in an article at the end of this year. Dennis Hengeveld, qeagle88@gmail.com"

Subscriber Correspondence

From **John Merz**: Hello Bill, Do you know of anyone in the LSCC community who has published information (in the last ten years or so) about the relative scarcity of the Type 1 and Type 2 obverses and reverses of the 1875 and 1876 Trade Dollars? Thanks and best regards, John Merz

From **Dick Osburn**: The Long Beach show ended last Saturday. It was another show that clearly demonstrated the strength of the current market. Our table was the busiest it's ever been at Long Beach. All coins were in demand, but particularly the rare dates. I can't really point to the hottest series. Halves were probably the biggest movers, but they were closely followed by all the other series. We sold a bit of everything.

The auctions were wild. I heard that Heritage had guaranteed the consignor of the copper collection in their auction at least \$1.6M. That part of the sale totaled \$11M. I wasn't there for it since I don't handle copper, but apparently the bidding was unbelievably fierce and competitive. I was able to watch a large display of the auction progress during that part of the sale. They were doing about 75 lots per hour where they normally move at 150-250 per hour. I talked to many collectors the following day who were shut out by the unbelievably fierce bidding. The rest of the auction wasn't quite that wild, but scarce and rare dates were selling at very strong prices, and as with the copper the bidding was very competitive.

I didn't attend the pre-show auctions, but I was shut out of most of my absentee bids, so they were apparently very strong also.

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- 35th Anniversary of the LSCC - 2008
- *Gobrecht Journal* Issue #101 published - March
- Deadline for submission of your seated dollar census - March 15th
- Regional meeting of the LSCC - April 18th, 9 AM, at the Central States Convention in Chicago
- LSCC annual meeting at the ANA Convention, Baltimore - July (Details TBD)
- LSCC Trade Dollar census - 2009

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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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