

The Gerry Fortin Liberty Seated Dime Collection Sale – Thoughts as the Sale Date Approaches by Gerry Fortin, LSCC #1054

[Editor's Note:] With the upcoming sale of the most important reference collection of Liberty Seated Dimes of our time, it was felt vitally important to record at this time Gerry Fortin's recollection and thoughts about how he not only began the collection from the very start, but how the collection evolved and grew over time. This Top Registry Set collection became the foundation for Gerry's highly respected Liberty Seated Dime Variety Web-Book. The Web-Book will forever be considered the definitive reference for it thorough documentation and images of every known die marriage, late die state and variety by date and mintmark for Liberty Seated Dimes struck for the years 1837-1891, The series became the primary circulated dime denomination of the 19th century. (Of course there were also Bust and Barber dime series struck in the 1800's, but we are of course Gobrecht' Liberty Seated design enthusiasts here.)

Gerry: The decision to sell a lifelong numismatic collection was not taken lightly, rather being part of a long-term hobby/dealer progression which must lead to divestment at some point. As is often heard, "we can't take it with us" and this also applies to coin collections. Funding a comfortable and "playful" retirement is becoming center stage as the big "70" is in plain sight. I feel like my life will be moving towards new ambitions and activities within several years. Therefore, the time has arrived to divest my Seated Dime collection in a manner that provides a well-earned victory lap for the entire GFRC online platform, a vehicle that has grown so popular with the Liberty Seated collector community.

This piece of commentary is being composed on the Saturday before the 2025 Winter FUN show. At this point the sale of my collection, and that of the magnificent Newtown Liberty Seated half dollar collection, arrives in just a few weeks. The end goal is within sight but there remains one last flurry of activity to market these collections. Soon, the January 19th sale session will take place, and the winning bids will be known along with who the new custodians of these rarities will be. Full cycle closure from the initial spark, assembling this collection, followed by documenting the achievement in a personal auction catalog is at hand. Exercising "accountability" became an exclusive responsibility to ensure that fair market value was attained.

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How I will miss a host of my former dimes that have memorable back stories. Let's remember that the die variety research, that led to the publishing of The Definitive Resource for Liberty Seated Variety Collectors web-book, and the construction of a high grade collection is indicative of a goal-focused personality. Once committing to a substantial goal, the passion that fuels the journey can be considered intense. Intensity is necessary to stay focused on long term goals as distractions are plentiful in and outside of numismatics. That intensity therefore brings sacrifices too.

Who would have known that Mrs. Ann Theriault's (Diane's widowed mother) thoughtful Morgan dollar Christmas gift would bring about such a profound return to numismatics after leaving the hobby as a teenager. A single roll of Morgan dollars was the spark that lit the fuse to a renewed hobby coupled with fate bringing about the acquaintances of John McCloskey and Brian Greer. By now, everyone should know of the story whereby I contacted John McCloskey to join the Liberty Seated Collectors Club and was promptly introduced to Brian. Brian was conducting a population survey and needed admin assistance. By volunteering to help, the scope of Greer's die variety research became apparent and soon brought about substantial "gravitational pull". By 1993, the year after Brian published his DLRC Press printed Guide to Liberty Seated Dimes, the purchase of much of his reference collection was made. Afterwards, I was operating in Brian's circle of numismatic friends that included David Kahn, Chris Pilliod, and David Finkelstein. Chris Pilliod was instrumental as a mentor given his professional career in the metals industry. Chris understood the visual and mechanical characteristics of original silver and shared that knowledge during the mid-1990s. Knowledge acquisition was paramount before committing ever growing financial resources into my expanding hobby projects.

As I frequented more and more coin shows to conduct Liberty Seated dime die variety research, dealer contacts grew including a special relationship with Jim O'Donnell. Jim was tough to negotiate with but the consummate storyteller. I became a fan of Jim's stories, and he reciprocated by teaching me the individual Seated Dime date rarities in Mint State grades. By 1998, I was taking on two goals in parallel. First was the die variety research which was then augmented by assembling a high-grade Mint State set.

The construction of a top-rated Liberty Seated dime collection began during 1995 with three overriding selection criteria. Each potential acquisition was inspected in terms

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of: (1) strict originality, (2) complete strikes, and (3) marketable eye appeal. A host of certified high-grade candidates were excluded from the acquisition process when not meeting these screening requirements. The set building status was shared during 2010 when publishing an article entitled "Patience and Persistence, Building an Award-Winning Liberty Seated Dime PCGS Registry Set" in the Fall 'Gobrecht Journal' edition of that year. Readers should be able to locate this article on the Newman Numismatic Portal website.

I've rambled along and wish to close this article by embellishing my personal collection. Foremost is the fact that I pursued coins and not labels. This concept cannot be stressed enough as collectors are indeed purchasing the coin whether raw or certified. One needs the necessary skills to evaluate and purchase coins on their own merit, without the "firm" guidance of a grading service. Once that threshold has been reached, collectors are in a superior position to judge the coins first followed by checking the grading service opinion.

It is with this approach that the frontline Liberty Seated Dime Collection was primarily constructed between 1995 to 2005 followed by a round of upgrading during the years of operating GFRC. The earlier period allowed cherry-picking superior coins for the certified grade given my strict acquisition parameters. The 2014 visit to CAC validated the strict selection criteria as 200 pieces, from both the frontline and die variety collection yielded an 83% approval rate with 21 Gold beans. Those who have taken the opportunity to view my collection immediately note that many pieces are undergraded against existing standards. Frankly, there is nothing I like better as a dealer than to see conservatively graded coins in TPG holder. The Fortin Seated Dime Collection is a breath of fresh air in a marketplace saturated with average coins and/or in 'max'ed' out holders.

The Gerry Fortin Liberty Seated Dime Collection has been documented via a GFRC Online Auctions catalog that can be downloaded at the link below:

<https://www.seateddimevarieties.com/Auction/GFRC%20Online%20Auctions%20-%20Gerry%20Fortin%20Liberty%20Seated%20Dime%20Sale%20-%20January%202019%202025.pdf>

In addition, a showcase gallery has been assembled for those that enjoy scanning through some serious eye candy. The gallery can be found at the link on the next page:

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<https://www.seateddimevarieties.com/FortinLibertySeatedDimeCollection.htm>

A sincere thank you goes out to LSCC President Len Augsburger for his professional marketing support and resource allocation via the Newman Numismatic Portal and to Paul Kluth for publishing this article.

Be well!

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Double Dimes – a look back, and a look forward to 2025 by John Frost, LSCC # 2005

Sentiment in the twenty-cent piece has had its ups and downs over the years. Only a few years ago, I would routinely hear from dealers that “They aren’t moving” except for the occasional type coin sale. This, however, seems to have turned around in recent years. Now I mostly hear “I can’t keep them in stock – as soon as I get one, it sells.” And I have run into a number of people who want a copy of our “Double Dimes” reference book, only to find it has been long sold out. At a recent show, a dealer saw my display copy and mentioned that he has a copy, but he paid \$250 for it on eBay, because he could not find one anywhere else. So, interest seems to be on the rise.

On the more technical side, I have made a couple of discoveries that answer some questions Lane Brunner and I had in the past. And finally, armed with Lane’s large reference collection along with my own, work has begun in earnest on the 2nd Edition of the book. Added to that are some new discoveries on Chief Engraver William Barber (which were published in the Journal of the Barber Coin Collectors’ Society). All in all, it has been an exciting year for the double dime.

The new year started out with a bang, with Lane’s entire double dime collection exhibited for the first time in its entirety at FUN 2025. It was a great tribute, with over 750 pieces on display, including rare mint errors, love tokens, counter-stamped pieces, and other

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