



The Curious Collector

by Len Augsburger, LSCC #1271

Of Fake Gobrecht Dollars There Is No End

Among my duties as LSCC president is to check our email daily. Most emails are routine matters dealing with membership renewals, etc. A recent email asked about the illustrated piece.

The writer took care to describe it as follows:

- a) No 'C. GOBRECHT F.' engraver's name at the base
- b) Plain edge
- c) No Stars & Date on Obverse side
- d) Muscular looking Lady Liberty
- e) Likely struck during early 1836 as the Arm of Lady Liberty is similar to the 1st batch of 400 pieces struck during early December 1836
- f) The Reverse side has a 1859 James B. Longacre 'Oak Wreath and Shield' design and 'ONE TROY OUNCE SILVER .999' wordings in the center



A quick glance reveals the piece to be a cheap knock-off and a rather crude one at that. The head is poorly formed and the proportions within the figure of Liberty are totally off. Clearly this was struck from a custom die that was not produced using a genuine coin. Gobrecht dollars seem to be popular among counterfeiters, and an e-bay search readily reveals a wide variety of examples.

One wonders the rationale behind this poor copy. One would be better starting off with one of the many better-executed copies and producing a die based on that. The end product would be a counterfeit of a counterfeit, but it would still be a better reproduction than this weak attempt.



Hanover Numismatic Society
Gobrecht Medal Series
(1966-1981)



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The Hanover Numismatic Society Gobrecht medal series (1966-1981) went one step further – they used an actual Gobrecht dollar for the production of their pieces in 1966 and 1967. The rendering of the eagle is better than that of Liberty (presumably the dies were retouched before striking), but the end result is clearly superior to the obvious fake submitted for our review.

As usual, the best defense is education, and beyond this collectors have multiple levels of defense:

- Look at enough coins to understand what a genuine coin should look like.
- Only buy from trusted dealers.
- Purchase coins certified by a major grading service.

I'll throw in one final idea – buy only coins that are cheap enough that there is no incentive to counterfeit them. There are plenty of interesting U.S. coins that can be had for \$100 or less, but no one is going to waste their money producing counterfeits of things like VF/XF half dimes unless they are rare dates.

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