



Quarter of the Month by Greg Johnson, LSCC #1460

December 2021 Column Review & Update

The year 2021 ended with what felt like a combination whirlwind and avalanche. Personal and professional (non-numismatic) objectives and deadlines collided in a mad scramble that featured spending the last two weeks of the year overseas. A trip that was planned and booked prior to the first mention of Omicron turned into an unintended adventure featuring government travel restrictions placed by both the United States and United Kingdom, extra airline rules, sparsely scheduled flights, many throat and nasal swabs, long layovers, wearing a face mask for 27 consecutive hours, and physically and/or mentally absent airline employees. I feel most fortunate to be home again without falling ill or getting stranded outside the US; and cannot recommend international travel as a worthwhile activity at this time.

There are two numismatic angles to this adventure. First, I had the opportunity to visit the Scottish National Museum in Edinburgh which includes an amazing display of coins from the years 1300 – 1700 (see large image next page). It is well worth a visit if you are in the neighborhood, even with mask mandates and incessant hand sanitizing. Second, last month's column was both hastily prepared and, in my opinion, as well as some others, rather incomplete. In addition to a simple lack of time to devote to the effort, the deficiency stems from a failure at one of the first tasks of a writer. Know your audience. Admittedly, that is difficult with respect to this column because there is so little interaction or feedback from readers. All the more reason to pay careful attention to feedback that is received.

Last month the column included an image of a counterfeit 1873-CC quarter that sold on eBay raw. Having looked at tens of thousands of Liberty Seated quarters at this point, as well as dozens of 1873-CC (with arrows) examples, it took only one quick look for my brain to “just say no.” I did not take the time to think about and list the specific things wrong with the piece that give it away as a counterfeit. The feedback I received was that saying that it was counterfeit and showing the images was fine for experienced collectors, but that I did not describe the specific features that give it away as counterfeit for the benefit of folks newer to the hobby and/or the series. Interestingly, those making that observation and reaching out to me were quite experienced numismatists who did not personally need such an explanation. They were, however, doing a better job than I did of placing themselves in the position of a less experienced reader and asking some questions.

So, let's consider the specific differences between genuine examples and this counterfeit quarter in the interest of being more thorough, reviewing the important points for myself and other experienced collectors, and demonstrating the features for which to look at for collectors newer to the series. The most obvious differences to note on the obverse are the shapes of the stars and the date position. Note the misshaped stars on the counterfeit, especially along the left side of the obverse. Also, the date position of the genuine example is notably left of the counterfeit date position. The similar “red flags” for the reverse involve the mintmark, for which both size of the C's and their position are different. All genuine 1873-CC with arrows quarters were struck using the same reverse die and have precisely the same mintmark size and location. Another specific feature of the counterfeit reverse that is not obvious until one has looked at a number of lower

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grade examples of this specific issue is the wear pattern. Genuine coins have certain parts of the design that are in higher relief and wear first. Areas of the counterfeit have quite complete detail in areas that would be first to wear on a genuine example. Note specifically the eagle's right wing, left leg and the arrow feathers.

I hope this has added useful information, and perhaps insight, to last month's column. I am always looking for topics, questions, comments or suggestions with respect to this column. Please reach out to the editor with any of the above.

