

# A Review of the Complete Guide to Liberty Seated Half Dimes

by

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Al Blythe's long awaited update on the Seated half dime series is now in print. Blythe's book gives us a fresh look at the half dime series with new information on die varieties and rarities in the series. The new text is the latest in a series of numismatic reference guides published by David Lawrence, and resembles his other fine books in terms of format and quality. However, this book goes beyond some of his earlier guides in that it contains areas of information not previously included.

If you are a serious half dime collector, this book belongs on your numismatic bookshelf next to your copy of the Valentine reference on the series. Blythe updates and supplements the research work done by Valentine. The photography is a major improvement, and Blythe has included useful chapters on the history of the series and the grading of Seated half dimes. He also presents current information from surveys and grading service population reports. The LSCC Half Dime Survey is reprinted in the appendix and it is referred to many times throughout the book.

Blythe's comments on each date and major variety bring together his years of observations on the series. This book presents his research in the form of well documented variety attributions, includes notes on strike characteristics and provides rarity ratings for each date in the series. In fact this book represents the first attempt to establish rarity ratings for each date in the half dime series.

The novice half dime collector will find the book easy to use, and discover that it contains the most up to date accumulation of information on the series. This book brings together all of the most important information on the subject of Seated half dimes. The Valentine book is still needed however, as Blythe frequently draws from and references Valentine's work. Only the advanced variety specialist might be disappointed in that the book does not attempt to identify in fine descriptive detail every variety of every date in the series. Some high magnification photos are used to illustrate important features of certain major varieties, but pictures are not presented of every die variety. Publication constraints required that the book focus on the most important and well documented varieties in the series, with the reader referred to other sources of information for specific information on many varieties.

One minor problem that the reader may have in using the book is in understanding the data presented on Scarcity in the Year & Mintmark analysis section of the text. For the 1841-O date, the LSCC Survey Ranking is shown as "67 (13/21)." The key to understanding these numbers is given in the glossary under the term "Ranking". In this example 67 is the number of 1841-O half dimes reported in the survey, making it the 13th scarcest of the 21 dates reported for the New Orleans mint. The presentation of PCGS/ANACS/NGC population data follows a similar format. Keep in mind that the rankings for certified coins reflect only those graded MS-60 and above. A separate table of certified half dimes in circulated grades is presented in the appendix.

It is my belief that virtually all collectors and dealers interested in Seated half dimes can benefit from this book. This new text should enhance every collector's enjoyment of the half dime series, and be a useful reference for those who wish to enter the field of attributing half dimes by variety.

Thank you Al, for a job very well done.