

New Reference Book on Liberty Seated Half Dollars Now Available

Randy Wiley and Bill Bugert released their book "The Complete Guide to Liberty Seated Half Dollars" to the numismatic public during July 1993 just prior to the ANA Convention in Baltimore. This book is a major new reference work on Liberty Seated coinage and contains plenty of new information not previously available on Seated half dollars. There is no doubt that this book will stimulate interest in the collecting of Seated half dollars by variety and provide a standard reference for the series for many years to come.

The most striking feature of the new book is the abundance of large clear pictures showing many varieties with recut digits in the date, and others showing extra date digits scattered just about everywhere around the lower quarter of the obverse dies. There are also many large pictures showing mintmark placement, mintmark size and mintmark style. These pictures alone contain better reference material for the identification of varieties than has been previously available for the Seated half dollar series.

But, make no mistake about it, this book is much more than a picture guide to the Seated half dollar series. This work contains the results of an extensive research effort by the authors on this series. For each date they indicate the number of obverse dies identified, the number of reverse dies identified, the number of die marriages that have been identified and give an indication of how extensive their research has been on that date. This information gives the collector a good idea of how many varieties exist for each date and whether it is likely that additional discoveries will surface in the coming years. The authors also provide a complete reed count for each date in the series, information that can be very useful in identifying the mint of origin for a specific specimen and assist in the detection of counterfeit specimens. Measurements are also provided on each date for coin diameter, again to help in counterfeit detection.

Other features of the book include a rarity listing for each variety of each date in four different grades from G/VG to mint state. This information should certainly help the reader identify the rare varieties and alert him to the varieties that he should be watching for at numismatic conventions. The book also contains a price guide for each date in eight different grades from Good to MS-63. The authors provide pricing information from the standard price guides and then present their own prices reflecting their extensive experience with the individual dates in the series.

The new guide to the Liberty Seated half dollar series by Wiley and Bugert contains enough new information to expand the collecting interest of even the casual collector of Seated half dollars. It is must reading for anyone interested in the Seated half dollar series and makes a giant leap forward in the available information on the Seated half dollars of the 19th century. I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate the authors on an outstanding contribution to the numismatic literature on Seated coinage.

The Editor

