The Gobrecht Journal Database

by

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For the last several months I have been developing a database which can serve as a quick reference to articles that have appeared in the Gobrecht Journal since its inception in 1974. The following paragraphs describe the database, the resulting capabilities, and the services that are available to LSCC members.

CONTENT

The database contains one or more lines of data for each article, letter, Editor's insert, or photograph which has appeared in the journal. A part of this listing from Volume Two is given on the next page. The individual data fields provided for each line are defined as follows:

1. DEN - This gives the denomination of the coin discussed in the article. The numbers 5, 10, 20, 25, 50, and 100 are used to indicate half dimes, dimes, twenty cent pieces, quarters, half dollars, and Seated dollars respectively. The number 101 is used to distinguish Trade dollars from Liberty Seated dollars.
2. DATE - This gives the date of the coin discussed in the article.
3. MINT - This gives the mintmark of the coin discussed in the article.
4. ARTICLE - This is the title of the article as it appears in the journal. Letters to the Editor are titled as such, with an appropriate descriptive title added to identify the subject of the letter.
5. SUBJECT - Usually blank, this is used to classify articles on a particular subject; for example, Errors, Counterfeits, or History.
6. JOURNAL DATE - This is the date of the issue in which the article first appeared.
7. AUTHOR - This is the author's name.
8. COLL VOL - This is the number of the Collective Volume in which the article was appeared.
9. PAGE - This identifies the first page of the article in the Collective Volume.
10. PICTURE - A "YES" indicates that the article included one or more pictures of the coin.

Most articles focus on a particular coin. Therefore, a combination of the DEN, DATE and MINT columns will describe all of the key features of this coin except the variety. If a reference is made to more than one coin within a single article, the entry is repeated until all coins mentioned within the article are listed in the database. By using this repetitive approach, I can ensure that any sort of the database on a particular coin will find all articles which reference that coin.

Many articles are generic with respect to one or more of the three key categories. The term "General" is used in these cases. For example, an article which discusses New Orleans coinage of 1854 would be listed as "General" in the DEN column while the DATE and MINT columns would be listed as 1854 and O respectively. The same article might also be represented by an entry for the 1854-O quarter if it contained information specifically describing that coin.

Gobrecht Journal Articles

Den	Date	Mint	Article	Subject	Journal Date	Author	Coll Vol	Page	Picture
10	1861	P	A Counterfeit 1861 Dime	Counterfeits	Nov-83	Editor	2	118	Yes
10	General	CC	Study of Reeding on Early Carson City Dimes		Nov-80	Ahwash, Kamal M.	2	119	Yes
10	1872	P	An 1872 Dime With a 2 Punched Into the Base		Mar-82	Ahwash, Kamal M.	2	121	Yes
10	1872	CC	A Fake 1872-CC Dime Seen	Counterfeits	Mar-81		2	121	Yes
5	1870	S	Dime Variety Discovered		Jul-83	Ash, Roy D.	2	123	
5	1864	P	Dime Variety Discovered		Jul-83	Ash, Roy D.	2	123	
25	1853	P	Dime Variety Discovered		Jul-83	Ash, Roy D.	2	123	
10	1873	P	Dime Variety Discovered		Jul-83	Ash, Roy D.	2	123	
10	1873	CC	Picture		Jul-83	Ash, Roy D.	2	123	Yes
10	1874	P	An 1874 Dime With Recut Date		Jul-83	Editor	2	124	Yes
10	1874	CC	The Exceptionally Rare 1874-CC Dime		Nov-80	McCloskey, John W.	2	126	Yes
10	1876	CC	Picture				2	128	Yes
10	1877	CC	A Die Gouged 1877-CC Dime		Nov-80	McCloskey, John W.	2	129	Yes
10	1890	S	The 1890-S Seated Dime		Jul-81	Cregan, Bill	2	132	
10	1889	S	The 1890-S Seated Dime		Jul-81	Cregan, Bill	2	132	
10	1864	S	The 1890-S Seated Dime		Jul-81	Cregan, Bill	2	132	
10	1869	S	The 1890-S Seated Dime		Jul-81	Cregan, Bill	2	132	
10	1884	S	The 1890-S Seated Dime		Jul-81	Cregan, Bill	2	132	
10	1886	S	The 1890-S Seated Dime		Jul-81	Cregan, Bill	2	132	
10	1890	S	Letter to the Editor - Dime Acquisitions		Nov-82	Blythe, Al	2	134	
10	1891	P	Letter to the Editor - Dime Acquisitions		Nov-82	Blythe, Al	2	134	
10	1862	P	Letter to the Editor - Dime Acquisitions		Nov-82	Blythe, Al	2	134	
10	1890	S	The Double Punched Mintmark on an 1890-S Dime		Mar-83	Stickel, Tedd	2	134	Yes
20	1876	CC	The 1876-CC Twenty Cent Piece		Nov-80	Johnsen, Montfort A.	2	137	
20	General	General	The 1876-CC Twenty Cent Piece		Nov-80	Johnsen, Montfort A.	2	137	
25	General	General	The Unappreciated Seated Quarters		Mar-82	Carpenter, Bill G.	2	145	
25	1839	P	The Unappreciated Seated Quarters		Mar-82	Carpenter, Bill G.	2	145	
25	1840	O	The Unappreciated Seated Quarters		Mar-82	Carpenter, Bill G.	2	145	
25	1841	O	The Unappreciated Seated Quarters		Mar-82	Carpenter, Bill G.	2	145	
25	1843	O	The Unappreciated Seated Quarters		Mar-82	Carpenter, Bill G.	2	145	
25	1845	P	The Unappreciated Seated Quarters		Mar-82	Carpenter, Bill G.	2	145	
25	1848	P	The Unappreciated Seated Quarters		Mar-82	Carpenter, Bill G.	2	145	
25	1853	P	The Unappreciated Seated Quarters		Mar-82	Carpenter, Bill G.	2	145	

A Typical Page in The Gobrecht Journal Database

SPECIFICATIONS

The database is maintained as an Excel 3.0 spreadsheet on an IBM-compatible personal computer(PC). The particular PC on which I've done the work is a 486/66 megahertz machine with 16 megabytes of memory, running Windows 3.1. Although I haven't specifically tried it, I believe the resulting file could be read by an equivalent IBM-compatible PC running Lotus 1-2-3 or by an equivalent MacIntosh PC running a compatible version of either Excel or Lotus. The spreadsheet will run, albeit at a much slower rate, with as little as 1 megabyte of memory.

CAPABILITIES

The most powerful feature of the database is not the fact that it contains information on all of the journal articles, but rather that it can be quickly sorted to find which articles contain information on a specific coin. For example, a sort could be requested to identify all articles discussing 1858 half dollars. This software however has the capability to sort on any column of the database. Thus, a sort could be obtained which identifies all articles which discuss errors by sorting on the SUBJECT column; or all articles by a particular author could be identified.

SERVICES

I want to make the information in the database available to all LSCC members at minimal cost. Initially I have established these services:

1. You can call me for specific limited requests. My telephone number is (713) 334-2476. The best time to call would be from 9:00 to 10:00 PM central time. Your only cost for a specific request would be for the long distance call.
2. Hard copy printouts, sorted per your instructions, are available at 10 cents per page to cover printing, copying and mailing costs.
3. An electronic disk containing the entire database is available for $1.00 to cover the cost of the disk and mailing. The disk can be either 3.5" or 5.25", formatted per the specifications discussed previously.

The easiest request to satisfy is Option #1. Sorts take only a few seconds to obtain once the computer is up. I already have the sort by denomination, date and mintmark set up and ready to go. If you call for a list of articles pertaining to a specific coin, I can read you the list of Collective Volume pages over the telephone. If I don't have the sort you request readily available, it will take me a day at most to set it up.

Hard copy printouts or an electronic copy of the database will give you a permanent record of the data, and will provide you with the information you need for structuring your reference list to write an article for a future issue of the journal.

FUTURE PLANS

I have already received numerous suggestions for improving the database. Several suggestions have already been implemented. Two that have not are discussed below.

It's been suggested that the database be expanded to include articles on Liberty Seated coinage from sources other than the journal. This is an easy expansion to implement. All that is required is the addition of columns which identify the source

of the articles. Now that all of the journal articles have been entered into the database, I plan to implement this suggestion. I just need a listing for an article to add it to the database. I have a couple which I will use as initial inputs. LSCC members are invited to provide articles for inclusion in the database to help expand the listed material on Seated coinage.

It has also been suggested that we make the database available via the Internet. I plan to talk to the ANA about using their web site to do this. I'll move forward with implementation if the talks with the ANA are successful and if the requests for database access are sufficient to merit the effort.

The work I've done to build this database has been both rewarding and educational. I hope that it proves to be useful to LSCC members. Suggestions for improvements in the database can be sent to: Dick Osburn, 17 Harbor Lane, Kemah, Texas 77565. I can be reached by telephone at (713) 334-2476.

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