

The Summer Seminar:
“The New Orleans Mint Coinage and its History”
Reported by Craig Eberhart

This Summer Seminar course, at the American Numismatic Association’s 56th annual summer seminar, was developed by Craig Eberhart LSCC Vice President; Len Augsburger LSCC President and NBS President; and John Frost BCCS President and LSCC Education Director. The course covered the history of the New Orleans Mint, the chief engravers that designed the O-mint coins, and, of course, the New Orleans coins.

All coins series minted at New Orleans were covered including the 1851-O trime; the 1838-O and 1839-O reeded edge bust half dollars; Liberty Seated coins from half dimes to Seated dollars; Barber dimes, quarters and half dollars; Morgan dollars, gold dollars, the 1839-O classic head quarter eagle; Liberty head quarter eagles through double eagles, the 1854-O three dollar gold, and the 1909-O sunken relief half eagle. New Orleans coins were examined with each coin presentation.

Other topics included a presentation on the six unique New Orleans transitional coin die varieties, the few rare branch mint proof coins, rotated reverses, and the impact of the Civil War. In addition, attribution exercises were used to study the 1840-O and 1861-O half dollars. Everyone was able to identify many of the 1840-O die marriages and a few of the higher grade 1861-Os. The lower grade 1861-O half dollars were difficult or impossible to attribute. At the end of the final day, we held an entertaining “guess that coin” exercise by showing full or partial images of New Orleans coins.

Fifteen numismatists attended this course and everyone appeared to enjoy it especially the three instructors. I believe all eighteen of us learned more about the New Orleans Mint, its history, and its coinage.