

The Augusta Coin Club Meets on the 3rd Thursday of the Month at America's Best Value Inn on Washington Road

The Augusta Coin Club since 1959

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THE AUGUSTA COIN CLUB MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

October, 2012

Our next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 18 from 6:30 to 9:30 PM

Gold flirting with \$1,800 again but is the coin market improving?

Club Meeting Calendar for 2012

Jan. 19	May 17	Sep. 20
Feb. 16	June 21	Oct. 18
Mar. 15	July 19	Nov. 15
Apr. 19	Aug. 16	Dec. 21

How strong is the Coin Market?



A 1908 No Motto Saint-Gaudens \$20.00 graded MS-64 by PCGS
[Use 3X power magnifier or click 200% on top menu board to view details.]

With gold flirting near the \$1,800 an ounce once again, the price of a common date Saint-Gaudens Double Eagle grading MS-64 is back around \$2,000. Is this a good sign for the coin market? When gold was under \$300 an oz in 1999, there was little interest. Most middle class collectors were actively acquiring key dates or early US type coins which were reasonably affordable back then. The population of these collectors tripled between 1999 and 2008 thanks to the Statehood quarter program. This resulted in the tremendous rise in the value of scarce to rarer obsolete US type coins. Unfortunately, the upside to US type had its down side. By 2008, dealers were finding it virtually impossible to restock their inventory with certified replacements of the same quality frustrating collectors who were now unable to add to their collections. At the same time the economy went into a tailspin. Gold, already rising in value since 2008, began to take off, skyrocketing to \$1,800 in 2011. Most dealers switched from stocking type they couldn't find or sell to common bullion items which they couldn't acquire fast enough to an even larger group of new buyers. Then, later in 2011, Gold fell back to around \$1,600 and stagnated thereby driving away the speculators. Meanwhile quality type coins in the mid to higher circulated grades are still tough to locate and the recent rise in gold to near \$1,800 but not above it seems to be settling once more.

Collecting a Basic Half Cent Type Set

By Arno Safran



A 1800 Draped Bust Half Cent, Cohen-1 graded Vf-30
The copper coin was 23.5 mm in diameter and weighed 5.44 grams
[Use 3x magnifying glass or magnify page to 200% to view details.]

The US half cent denomination has been referred to as the large cent's "Little Half Sisters" by Roger Cohen, JR. author of the standard attribution book on the series (1982). Unlike the large cent that was coined in every year with the exception of the 1815 date, the half cent series, which occupied the same time frame (1793 thru 1857) had a number of lapses including a fourteen year period between 1811 and 1825 when none were minted at all. Our smallest denomination had only five main obverse types, the one year only 1793 Liberty Cap facing left which is very rare and extremely expensive in all grades, (*See pic on the bottom of page 3.*) the Liberty Cap facing right (1794-1797), the Draped Bust, facing left (1800 thru 1808), the Classic Head (1809 thru 1836) and finally the Coronet type (*but with the Mature Head sub-type only*) (1840 thru 1857).

Compared with the large cent, the mintages for the half cent were generally smaller but due to a lower collector demand, a half cent with a mintage of less than 100,000 is not considered rare or overly expensive compared with that of the large cent having a similar output. The mintage of the 1800 half cent shown atop this column was reportedly 202,908 and is listed at \$150 in Fine-12 and \$300 in VF-20 according to the 2013 *Red Book*. By contrast, the 1800 Large Cent with a reported mintage of 2.8 million grading Fine-12 is listed at \$225 with one grading VF-20 at \$550. Collectors seeking a type set of half cents should try to select specimens that exhibit attractive coppery color with smooth surfaces free of unsightly marks.

(Continued on page 2, column 1)

Collecting a Basic Half Cent Type Set

(Continued from page 1, column 2)



A 1795 Liberty Cap Half Cent, with lettered edge, C-1- graded VG-8
 [Use 3x magnifying glass or magnify page to 200% to 500% to view details.]

Of the Liberty Cap half-cent types, the 1795 dated Liberty Cap facing right half cent is arguably the least expensive date of the four year type (1794-97) for the moderate income collector to acquire, but even then, the condition will probably be on the lower end of the grading spectrum as shown above. There are six known die varieties for the date. This is the C-1 variety, known as the lettered edge (*not seen in the photo*) with pole. On most varieties of the Liberty Cap half cent a pole can be observed extending diagonally down below the Bust towards the rim. On some strikes it appears rather weak but there are die varieties of the date where the pole is missing altogether. This coin has nice color, along with fairly attractive surfaces despite the amount of wear. It was acquired back in 1995 as part of a goal of assembling a complete set of 1795 dated US coins (*excluding gold*.) Even in VG-8, the coin is somewhat pricey. Today, the 2013 *Red Book* lists this 1795 half cent variety at \$800, almost twice the price the coin fetched seventeen years earlier.



An 1805 Draped Bust Half Cent, C-4 R2 grading VF-35
 [Use 3x magnifying glass or magnify page to 200% to 500% to view details.]

The Draped Bust half cent series was struck from 1800 thru 1808 with the exception of the 1801 date. For type, the 1804 with over one million made, is by far the most common date. That said, almost all the dates of this short series are affordable up thru VF except the scarce to rare 1802 issues. The reported mintage for the 1805 was 818,464, the second highest. Varieties for the date show three different size 5s on the obverse known as small, medium and large. Some reverses have no stems attached to the wreath. The variety shown is C-4, R2, a rather common variety showing the large 5 on the obverse with stems along the lower part of the wreath on the reverse. A collector coming across an 1805 half cent with a stemless wreath reverse unbeknownst to the dealer will have garnered an extreme rarity. Since many early US copper coins still remain uncertified, such cherry picks by knowledgeable collectors are indeed possible. The coin was acquired over a decade ago at the FUN show in January, 2002 and is still reasonably priced considering the low survival rate of quality early US copper coinage in any grade.



An 1825 Classic Head Half Cent, C-2, R1 grading XF-40
 [Use 3x magnifying glass or magnify page to 200% to 500% to view details.]

If a collector is to acquire one specimen of a half cent, it is likely to be one from the Classic Head type issued intermittently from 1809 thru 1836. When John Reich was brought in as Asst. Chief Engraver to Robert Scot in 1807, his charge was to redesign all of our coinage. For this awesome task he was hired at a salary of \$600 a year. For the copper portion of his assignment, he chose a variation of the Capped bust silver design for the large cent, known as the Classic Head (or Turban Head) beginning with the 1808 issue. In 1809 he engraved the same design on the half cent. Mintages were plentiful and for the type collector, the most often seen dates are the first year of issue, 1809 or 1835, the final year circulation strikes were made. After 1811, demand for the half cent declined and the Mint suspended the coining of the denomination for fourteen years. In 1825, at the request of some Baltimore businessmen, the half cent was resurrected. By this time, John Reich had long left the Mint in 1817 having failed to receive a pay raise during his ten year tenure. Chief Engraver Scot had died in 1823 and the new Chief Engraver William Kneass was now in charge of making our coinage. In 1825, Kneass made minor changes to Reich's Classic Head half cent design. Only 63,000 were reported minted for the date yet the 1825 half cents is not rare compared with the key 1811 issue having virtually the same mintage with a reported 63,140 produced. The 1825 coinage of half cents and those that followed appear more sharply defined than the first three years of issue. With the exception of the 1831, (with only 2,200 minted), all of the remaining Classic Head dates intended for circulation are considered common and relatively inexpensive up thru XF-45. The 1836 was a proof only issue.



An 1849 Coronet "Mature head" half cent graded AU-55
 [Use 3x magnifying glass or magnify page to 200% to 500% to view details.]

The ½¢ denomination was briefly suspended until 1840 when an undisclosed small number of original proofs were struck in consecutive years thru 1848 using engraver Gobrecht's Mature Head Coronet large cent design. (*See last month's issue on the Large Cent types*) In 1849, circulation strikes were resumed. To distinguish those from the proofs, the date was enlarged. Only 39,864 ½¢s were struck for circulation that year but, the date is available for a modest price thru AU. With the exception of 1852 Proof only, the Coronet ½¢ type was struck thru 1857 after which the denomination was discontinued forever.

(Continued on page 3, column 1)

Collecting a` Basic Half-Cent Type Set

(Continued from the preceding page)



An 1837 Half-Cent Hard Times Token, HT-73, (Low-49) grading XF
[Use 3x magnifying glass or magnify page to 200% to 500% to view details]

One of the anomalies of the *Red Book* is the inclusion of a half-cent token as part of the half cent coinage series. The publication clearly indicates that it is not a coin under the photo yet lists the suggested retail prices alongside it under the corresponding grades from Good-4 thru MS-60. The obverse of this token portrays a spread eagle not unlike John Reich's reverse design appearing on the silver coins of the period. The inscription reads US STANDARD WEIGHT AND VALUE. The central device on the reverse is a wreath with thirteen stars circling around it. Inside and below the wreath are the words, HALF CENT WORTH OF PURE COPPER.

The era of Hard Times began with the Panic of 1837 a few weeks after Martin Van Buren took the oath of office as 8th President of the United States on March 4. The Recession brought about by multiple bank failures continued thru 1844. However, the series known as Hard Times tokens actually began as far back as 1833 shortly after Andrew Jackson was elected to his first term as 7th President. Many of these mostly large-cent sized tokens were of a` political nature but even larger number represented advertisements (AKA store cards) accepted for a cent's value for goods or less depending on the amount of copper or size of the token. A small number were made in different sizes and alloys. The famous 1837 half cent token is approximately the size of our half cent. Since no half cents were officially struck in 1837, the token shown above--while not legal tender--was accepted for half cent's value in commerce by many merchants of the period. Collectors of half cents have added this one year non-legal tender type as part of their half cent collections.



Relative sizes of 1805 Draped Bust 1/2¢ and large cent
[Use 3x magnifying glass or magnify page to 200% to view details]

The dates of the coins selected for this article are among the many common dates of the half cent series available to the collector. With the exception of the 1793 Liberty Cap facing left, the 1796 Liberty Cap facing right, the 1802 Draped Bust, the 1810, 1811 and 1831 Classic Heads, all the remaining dates are common enough for a collector of half cents to select any one from each of the four basic types for a type set, even adding the 1837 half cent token for good measure..

While not as popular as the large cent series, the half cent does have a dedicated collector base including some who aspire to assemble every date and in a number of cases, every die variety from all of the design types (1793 thru 1857). There are a few collectors who have added all the scarce to rare proof issues although, due to their cost such a project would be more for the manor born than for the moderate income collector to pursue. Numismatic scholars consider the "little sisters" to be an underrated series and only time will tell if they are right.



The obverses of the previously shown half cent types
[Use 3x magnifying glass or magnify page to 200% to 500% to view details]

Origin of the Half Cent

Why did the US government authorize the half cent denomination? Both Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson recommended that we adopt the decimal system for our coinage units as opposed to the British and Spanish systems. A cent was to be valued at 1/100 of a dollar and was worth close to an English half penny. The half cent was made nearer in size to a farthing and worth 1/200 of a \$1.00 which in 1793 had the purchasing power of \$1.15. As such, it had some significance. Another factor may have been the Latin American silver dollar-sized 8 *Reales*. It was divided into eight units; one *real* being equivalent to 12 1/2¢. A half-cent could be useful in making change for the *Real* which circulated in the US at the time.



The rare and expensive 1793 Liberty Cap 1/2¢ facing left
At 22 mm it was a tad smaller in diameter than the 1794-97 type.
Courtesy of the 2013 *Guide book to US Coins*, (AKA the *Red book*)
[Use 3x magnifying glass or magnify page to 200% to view details]

Junk Box Finds

By Bill Myers

I was going through a dealer's junk box and found three tokens which were unknown to me. Since it was an investment of 60 cents, I bought them. After researching them I was rewarded with more than my money's worth in knowledge.

The first piece is a 23 mm brass token with a centaur in the middle and POUR LA CONSOMMATION around the edge. Both sides are the same except one side has E KATZ PARIS along the bottom in small letters. The text is in French and means "for consumption" and E Katz is either the maker or engraver, I found conflicting information about this. My purchase is a token for a drink. I was unable to locate at which establishment it is from but I assume their symbol was a centaur.



The next token is a 26 mm aluminum token with CHIPS FREE HAMBURGER on both sides. Each letter of CHIPS is in a diamond and the "I" has two vertical lines capped with a dot. CHIPS are the name of a southern restaurant chain from the 1960s. Its headquarters was in Rocky Mount, NC. It went bankrupt in the mid-1960s and sold its franchise rights, and some of the locations became Hardees's. I assume the token was from some sort of promotion, but have not been able to determine that.



The last item is a thin 19 mm aluminum token. One side has a right facing head of a cowboy with PLAY MONEY across the top and FALSA PECUNIA across the bottom. The other side has the numeral 5 in the middle with a small "w" above it and UNCLE SAM 1953 PLAY MONEY around it. I found that the Grimland brothers left Florida when they declared bankruptcy and moved to Texas and created the Wacotex Co. They began producing copper and aluminum money and marketed it as Bag-O-Dough. It was used to teach children to recognize coins, make change, play store and other games. The "w" is a mintmark which stands for Waco. Perhaps the Spanish on the coin is due to the fact that the company was in Texas and they did not want the Spanish speaking population to be deceived into thinking it was real money.



A Play Money Token

[Use 3x magnifying glass or magnify page to 200% to 500% to view details]

I found that these tokens had an interesting story to tell even though they were relegated to the junk box.

Thanks, Bill for another interesting article on Exonomia.

References used by Bill Myers for his article are available from the Editor.

Club News

In the absence of President Steven Nix, 2nd Vice President Howard Black called to meeting to order at 7:00 PM. The Minutes by Secretary John Attaway was waived, a copy to be kept on file. Treasurer Mike Joesbury reported a balance of \$11,238.98. There was no up to date report on the Show but Bourse Chairman expects to sell at least 50 tables for the event scheduled for November 9 & 10 at Patriot's Park.

As there were no Show & Tells offered, President Pro-tem Howard Black asked Arno Safran to present **the program** for the evening. Arno gave a PowerPoint presentation on collecting a Basic Large Cent type set. He explained that with the exception of the three 1793 issues which are low mintage items and considerably expensive, a collector of modest means could assemble a large cent type set by acquiring a specimen from one of the following obverse types: Liberty Cap (1794-96), Draped Bust, (1796-1807), Classic Head (1808-1814) and Coronet (1816-1857) which he divided into three sub-types, the Matron Head (1816-39), the Petite head (1839-1843) and the Mature head, (1843-1857). The speaker presented some background on the large cent series, especially with regard to the early years when most of our copper blanks had to be shipped from England. He mentioned the importance of eye appeal regarding the collecting of these copper pieces citing that finding examples with natural chocolate color, smooth surfaces with a minimum of blemishes and full rims were more important than the actual grade of the coin.

The prizewinners at the Sept. 20 meeting were Brian Hoyt and Rick Heise, each winning a 2012 silver eagle and Mac Smith who garnered \$80.00 in the 50/50 winner take all drawing. Congratulations, Brian, Rick and Mac.

Our next meeting is scheduled for October 18. There will be a business meeting, an update on the coming show, also, Show and Tells for any who bring a numismatic acquisition they would like to share with the members, a program and our regular monthly auction. **As a reminder, the Pizza Party meeting is scheduled for the November 15 meeting starting at 6:30 PM; not the upcoming meeting.**

**The South Carolina Numismatic Association
Invites you to attend their**

**40th Annual Coin & Currency Show
October 26, 27 & 28, 2012**

Friday & Saturday 10AM-6PM, Sunday 10AM-3PM

TD Convention Center

(Formerly Carolina First Center)

1 Exposition Drive, Greenville, SC 29607

FREE Admission & FREE Parking

Educational Programs:

Sat. Noon - Tony Chibbaro - "The Tokens of Greenville, SC"

Saturday 1PM - Young Numismatists Program (Ages 8 to 18)

Coin of the Month



A 1799 Draped Bust/ Heraldic Eagle Bust dollar, BB-151 (B-13), R6
 [Use 3x magnifying glass or magnify page to 200% to view details]

Every coin has a tale to tell and this particular specimen is one of them. At a coin club meeting in Trenton, NJ back in 1992 one of the dealers was attempting to remove a large coin from an old Anacs white holder. Using only a pen knife in a dimly lit meeting hall, I asked my dealer friend Dave why he was attempting to impale himself. Dave explained that he was trying to get a better look at the coin in order to attribute the die variety. At that point he showed me the 1799 dollar. With a reported mintage of 423,515, the 1799 Bust \$1.00 represents one of the commoner dates of this short series. I asked Dave how much he was asking for this VF specimen He quoted me \$550 *(which was around wholesale Bid at the time)* admonishing me that the coin would be priced higher if it turned out to be a rare die variety. Unable to satisfy his curiosity at the meeting, he told me to phone him the next day and he would let me know the results.

During the early years of our nation's coinage, dies were made by hand with some wearing out sooner than others. A coin produced from a die with a shorter life span would naturally be scarcer than one that enjoyed a longer life span. Dave had the reputation as an honest dealer and an excellent grader of coins. The following evening I called Dave and asked him what he discovered. He explained that the variety turned out to be a Bolender 13 (named after the foremost attributer of Bust dollars up to that time) and was designated a Rarity 6 - extremely rare. This was a year before Q. David Bowers' two volume tome on US dollar coinage was published. Dave said, "That's the good news. The bad news is that the coin will now cost you, \$650." "Done!" I responded because I knew his price was fair under the circumstances. A week later I brought the coin to the New Jersey Numismatic Society meeting for Show & Tell. This was no ordinary local club. Most of the members were advanced numismatists and knew the ins and outs of die varieties and die states of our early coinage. One of the members looked at the coin and offered me \$1,500 on the spot. Needless to say, I decided not to accept his offer because I liked the coin's appearance and needed it for my type set.

Years passed and I realized that when Dave cracked the coin out of the Anacs holder, the 1799 dollar lost whatever grading guarantee it had, so in January of this year I submitted the coin to PCGS and was gratified to see it housed in a VF-30 holder along with the attributed variety listed on the label. The value for a common Rarity 1 variety is around \$2,500 today.



The 1799 Bust dollar graded VF-30 by PCGS and attributed with the old Bolender and new Bowers variety numbers
 [Use 3x magnifying glass or magnify page to 200% to view details.]

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