

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

Pres. William Myers
V.P. Arno Safran
Sec. John T. Attaway
Treas. Xavier Pique
Sgt. in Arms: Marvin Blalock
and Bryan Hoyt



Club Mailing Address
Augusta Coin Club
P.O. Box 2084
Evans, GA 30809
Web site:
www.augustacoinclub.org

Special Duties
Webmaster: Xavier Pique
Newsletter editor, Arno Safran
E-mail: arnosafran@comcast.net
Bourse Chairman, David Chism
Auction: David Chism & Glenn Sanders
Bids Recorder, Marvin Blalock

Volume 7, Number 9

THE AUGUSTA COIN CLUB MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

September, 2007

Our Next Meeting is Thursday, September 20, 2007 from 6:30 to 9:30 PM

Club President Bill Myers Returns, Show On track

Club Meeting Calendar for 2007

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

President Myers pays surprise return visit

In a surprise appearance, President Bill Myers returned a month earlier than expected at our August 16 meeting. At 7:00 P.M., Vice President Arno Safran turned over the gavel to Bill who then presided over the course of the meeting. It was good to see him back, looking his natural enthusiastic self.

Bill, a Colonel with the Army Reserve Medical Corps had recently concluded his second tour of duty in Mosul in northern Iraq, but unlike the four month stint in 2004-05, this deployment lasted slightly over a full year. During this span, Bill was involved as an orthopedic surgeon treating and operating on coalition troops, Iraqi civilians and captured wounded insurgents. He was also instrumental in the development of a new hospital facility. He reported on his experiences by sending 55 weekly logs via E-mail attachments to family, friends, fellow medical personnel and numismatic colleagues. In addition, he still had time to write and send articles on Iraqi Numismatics to our club newsletter and the Georgia Numismatic Association quarterly journal. (Bill is also an officer in the GNA.) During his deployment, his article on Military Challenge Coins, subtitled, "Take the Challenge" appeared in the April, 2007 edition of *the Numismatist*, monthly journal of the American numismatic Association. At our upcoming Sept. 20 meeting, Bill will be presenting Part One of a PowerPoint program on "Numismatics in Iraq". Welcome back, Bill!

Our Upcoming Show: Bourse Chairman David Chism reported that as of August 16 meeting, 26 tables had already been sold out of the 44 for a sellout. Publicity is currently underway for the Nov. 16-17 event which will take place at the Belair Conference Center, 4083 S. Belair Road in Augusta. (Exit 193 off I-20) one block south on right behind the Waffle House and Hampton Inn.)

(Club News continues on page 4, column 1)

Feast or Famine: The Coins of 1877: 130 years ago - An Unusual Year

By Arno Safran



An 1877 Indian Head Cent graded MS-66 Red by PCGS
(Courtesy of Heritage Auctions Archives)

The coinage year of 1877 is special in numismatic lore if for nothing else than for one of the most popular key dates of the 19th century. In that year, only 852,500 Indian Head cents were minted, the lowest single year output for that design type during the 19th century. Few were saved in mint state. Full red MS-65's or better exhibiting mark free surfaces are rarer still. A decade ago, a full Red MS-65 was selling for \$5,000. Today, it has quadrupled in price. One recently sold for \$20,700. Imagine then what an MS-66 full Red might realize. Thanks to Heritage Auction Archives' web site, we can satisfy our curiosity immediately. The coin pictured above was hammered down at a whopping \$149,500 at the ANA Convention held in Milwaukee this past August in an auction conducted by Heritage. Is it worth that much money? Only time will tell. Since most 1877 cents that surface grade between AG-3 and G-4, acquiring one in VG or better has been the goal of many a collector, but even circulated 1877 cents in VG are costly in today's booming market. A PCGS VG-10 specimen realized \$1,092 at another Heritage auction back in April of this year.

1877 is also known for being the key date for two other coin denominations. In that year (1877) and the next (1878) no 3¢ Coronet pieces or Shield 5¢ nickels were struck for circulation. If someone during that period wanted one, they had to buy one from the Philadelphia Mint, but not wait too long because only 510 proofs of each were struck in 1877. The low mintage availability has forced price increases over the past several years but not as dramatically as the 1877 Indian cent.

(Continued on page 2, column 1)

The Coins of 1877

(Continued from page 1, column 2)



An 1877 3¢ nickel piece graded Cameo Proof-67 by NGC
(Courtesy of Heritage Auctions Archives)

The coin pictured above is a pristine gem and sold for \$6,037.50 as a PF-67 cameo at Central States Numismatic Society convention held in Saint Louis in May of this year. Compared with the \$149,500 that some wealthy individual paid for the business strike 1877 cent pictured on the preceding page, one might consider the 6K paid for an even higher graded coin with a far lower mintage represents the steal of the century but this is actually not the case. There are far fewer pristine survivors among coins intended for circulation regardless of the mintage compared with a limited number of proof only dates. This is because business strikes are intended to go into circulation to be used in commerce while proofs are sold primarily as souvenirs and are for the most part retained. So, more examples from even as small a mintage of 500 pieces trade more frequently compared with high-end BU survivors from a mintage as high as 800,000 pieces in which most wore down due to heavy circulation. This is not to say that 1877 3¢ proofs are cheap. According to the 2008 *Red Book*, Proof 63 specimens are still costly, selling for around \$1,700 to \$2,000. Even impaired proofs grading as low as VF-20 are listed at \$1,100.



An 1877 Shield 5¢ nickel graded PF-66 Cameo by NGC
(Courtesy of Heritage Auctions Archives)

As with the 3¢ piece, no business strikes were made in either 1877 or 1878

Shield nickels were struck from 1866 thru 1883 inclusive but the only way a collector can obtain the 1877 is to buy a proof of which only 510 were struck. No business strikes were made that year and again in 1878. This would account for the price of \$6,225.00 someone paid for the exceptional example of the 1877 proof Shield nickel shown above which was auctioned at Heritage's Long Beach California Signature Sale back in May.

There was another significant proof only denomination struck in 1877. This was the Liberty Seated 20¢ piece (1875-1878). The denomination seems to have been ill advised from the start. One of the casualties of the Coinage Act of 1873, (sometimes referred to as "the Crime of '73") was the termination of the silver half dime. Folks in the far west had preferred the silver 5¢ coin over the newer Shield 5¢ nickels (struck only in Philadelphia) and often were shortchanged (receiving a dime instead of 15¢) when they tendered a quarter for ten cents worth of goods. In 1874, Nevada Senator John Percival Jones proposed a 20¢ piece which surprisingly was enacted into law. The first 20¢ pieces were

struck in 1875 at Philadelphia, (mintage 36,910), Carson City, (132,290) and San Francisco (1,155,000); the last, obviously the most available to collectors. From the start, there were problems. The coin was too close in size to the quarter; 22 mm vs. 24.3 mm for the quarter. The second was the similarity of the design type. The obverse retained Gobrecht's Liberty seated features although for some inexplicable reason the word LIBERTY across the Shield was raised causing the letters to wear more rapidly. The reverse displayed Chief Mint engraver William Barber's Trade dollar rendition of the eagle, a marked improvement over John Reich's pterodactyl looking version. Mintage dropped heavily in 1876 with only 14,640 minted in Philadelphia, 10,000 at Carson City. (More on that later) and none being struck in San Francisco. In 1877, the Mint decided to strike only 350 Proofs for collectors and an additional 600 in 1878. After that the denomination was discontinued.



An 1877 20¢ piece graded Cameo PF-65 by PCGS

Only 350 of this proof only issue were struck.

The coin realized \$13,800 at the Heritage ANA Sale in Milwaukee, WI

An average PF-63 20¢ piece will sell for around \$4,000 to \$4,500 today. The coin pictured above was well above average; a PCGS certified cameo proof-65 specimen, and it realized \$13,800. With a mintage of only 350, 1877 20¢ pieces are not going to find their way into too many collectors' cabinets. That said the 1877 20¢ piece is not the "key" to the series. It is the 1876-cc. Despite a reported mintage of 10,000, most were melted with only an estimated 16 to 18 survivors known today.

After the preceding four denominations, most of the remaining 1877 Liberty seated silver coinage (excluding gold) had large mintages including the Carson City issues for the dime quarter and half. One of the common dates is the 1877-S Liberty Seated 50¢. An AU-58 is valued at only \$275 in today's market.



An 1877-S Liberty Seated Half Dollar graded AU-58 by PCGS

With a mintage of more than 5.3 million, this is considered a common date.

[Magnify to 200% to see the coin's details.]

Of all the 1877 silver denominations, it is the 50¢ size coin that best reveals Gobrecht's original obverse, unaltered except for the 13 stars absent on the 1836 Gobrecht dollar coin. The motto, IN GOD WE TRUST, inserted in 1866 on the quarters, halves and dollars added a much needed artistic touch to the reverse. All in all, 1877 was an interesting coinage year containing some renowned rarities along with moderately priced silver issues.

A Bounty of US Mint Offerings for 2007



The 2007 Silver Proof Set is now on sale for \$44.95

Between 1955 and 1982, collectors avidly looked forward to the Mint's release of the annual proof and mint sets. During those barren years, that was all they had reason to expect. Now the Mint issues several packaged versions of its annual proof offerings; a *clad* proof set; a silver proof set (shown above), a statehood quarter *clad* and silver proof set and a Presidential dollar set of four pieces. The regular clad proof set this year includes the 2007 Memorial cent, Jefferson nickel with the 2006 portrait, Roosevelt dime, Kennedy half dollar and Sacagawea "golden" dollar along with the five 2007 statehood quarters, Montana, Washington, Idaho, Wyoming and Utah. It also features the proof "golden" dollar coins featuring our first four Presidents, Washington, Adams, Jefferson and Madison. The Mint is asking \$26.95 for the *clad* set and \$44.95 for the silver set which includes .900 fine silver versions of the Roosevelt dime, all five statehood quarters and the Kennedy half dollar but none of the others.

In 1982, after a hiatus of some 18 years, our commemorative coinage program was resumed. Now in its 25th year, two new commemorative anniversaries are being celebrated; the 400th anniversary of the Jamestown, VA colony and the 40th anniversary of the Little Rock Central High school Desegregation. The Jamestown anniversary is represented by a gold \$5.00 issue and a \$1.00 silver issue in unc. and proof versions.



The 2007 Jamestown 400th Anniversary \$5.00 gold coin
The unc version (shown) is priced at \$245, the proof, \$255.
 [Magnify up to 500% to view details more clearly.]



The 2007 Jamestown 400th Anniversary Uncirculated Silver \$1.00
Uncirculated version, \$35.00 (shown), Proof version \$39.00

For older collectors the struggle for Civil Rights seems like "yesterday" but younger collectors may not have been born when then Governor Orville Faubus of Arkansas refused to allow minority students to attend classes at Little Rock Central High School back in September of 1957. President Dwight David Eisenhower ordered Federal troops to escort the students into classes on Sept. 4 of that year. The \$1.00 coin and accompanying copper medal shows headless students marching into school.



Obv. of \$1.00 coin. showing headless high school youths walking to class and rev. of bronze medal depicting full figured students ascending the steps of the high school. The set is priced at \$40.

In 1986, the Mint began producing annual bullion coins in the weights of 1 oz silver eagles and 1 oz, 1/2 oz, 1/4 oz and 1/10oz gold eagles. In 1997, they added Platinum coins to the mix and in 2006; they started striking replicas of our Indian Head/ Buffalo nickel on to 1 oz \$50 value gold bullion coins.



The 2007 1 oz .999 fine gold Indian Head/ Bison bullion issue. The Mint priced the coin at \$825.95 for the proof version shown above.

This year the Presidential dollar series was begun accompanied by a first spouse bullion issue of 1/2 oz gold coins priced at \$410.95 for the unc. version and \$429.95 for the proof. Four of these will be issued on an annual basis. Some Presidents were either widowed or unmarried, so the coin one will receive will portray a replica of our first chief engraver Robert Scot's adaptation of Miss Liberty in place of an actual person.

More Club News (Continued from page 1, column 1)

Show & Tell: Chris Young brought in a Short-Snorter that his Dad carried with him while in the service. A short-snorter is a string of bank notes taped together. Chris' father collected the notes from different countries and had them signed by fellow soldiers. Chris explained that short-snorters were treated much the same way as military challenge coins. When a challenge was called by one of the group, the men had to display their short-snorters or buy a round of drinks for the crew.

Program: Arno Safran presented a PowerPoint talk on the US Coins of the early Years of the Great Depression. He discussed the lower mintages of our coinage as a direct consequence of the loss of jobs and weakening commerce. He also displayed Mint sets from 1930 thru 1935 which he personally assembled that were Uncirculated or close to it and supplemented these with photos of major events of the era from Bobby Jones' 1930 grand slam to snapshots of soup kitchens, bread lines, skyscrapers and FDR's inaugural address of March 4, 1933.

Treasurer Xavier Pique reported a balance of \$5,627.92 with all expenses paid. President Myers welcomed guest Bob Cunningham, a US coin collector. **Prize winners** were Robert Anderson and Charles White who won the 2007 silver eagle attendance draw and Glenn Sanders who won \$61.00 in the winner take all 50/50 drawing. Congratulations gentlemen.

The next meeting will be Thursday, Sept. 20 at America's Best Value Inn starting at 7:00. Early arrivals should check out the auction lots and browse what some of our dealers have brought in for sale. President Bill Myers will present a PowerPoint how on Numismatics in Iraq. General Show Chairman David Chism reports that as of this edition of the newsletter 34 tables for our Nov. 16-17 show have been sold. Way to go, Dave! Raffle tickets are being prepared for distribution at our next meeting. Hope to see y'all then.

Coin of the Month



An Uncirculated 1910 Mexican Caballito Peso
[Magnify to 200% to observe details]

The coin shown above was issued by the Mexican government to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the start of the War of Independence from Spain (1810-1822). It was designed by French artist Charles Pillet and struck from 1910 to 1914. With a mintage of more than 3.8 million, the 1910 issue is by far the most common and the least expensive of the short run series. The coin is .902.7 silver and 39 mm in diameter.

The sobriquet, "Caballito" received its nickname based on the allegorical figure of Liberty on horseback. The *Caballito peso* was struck only at the Mexico City Mint and was the last .900 fine or better silver *Peso* (i.e., of \$1.00 size equivalent value in US dollars) struck for general circulation by Mexico.

Notice the rays emanating from the ground outward behind the figure on horseback. The ray on the lowest left is shorter on the 1910 and some of the earlier struck 1911 pieces and longer on the later issues of 1911 through 1914. On the 1911 issues only, the shorter ray at left is the much scarcer variety. At one time collectors tried to cherry pick the 1911 short ray variety before it became well known by dealers outside Mexico.

The *Caballito Peso* is arguably one of the most beautiful Mexican coins since the country won independence from Spain. It was struck only in the "dollar" denomination, is popular with collectors of foreign coins but is common enough to remain available at modest prices.

The Newsletter Welcomes Members' input in the form of numismatic articles, also numismatic Want, Trade and Sell classifieds and feedback on its content.

E-mail to the editor at arnosafran@comcast.net

And thanks!

Kindly Patronize Our Advertisers

	Clein's Rare Coins 1255 Telfair St. Augusta, GA 30901 between 12th and 13th Streets Buying & Selling U.S. Coins, Currency & Confederate -ALL GOLD & SILVER BULLION (Eagles, K-Rands, Maple Leafs & Pandas) COIN APPRAISALS	
ANA LIFE MEMBER LM-4691		WAYNE DAMRON Phone & Fax (706)-722-9945 T-F 10:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. Sat. 9:30 A.M. to 2:30 P.M.

	Augusta Coin Exchange Fine Rare Coins Buying US Coins, Currency, Gold and silver Bullion	
Larry Lucree PH 706-210-5486 Evenings 706-339-7275	4015 Washington Rd. Suite L. Martinez, GA 30907 between Columbia and Flowing Wells Roads	ANA Member #R-21285 Mon-Fri. 10:30 am-4:30 pm Sat. 8:00 am-1:30 pm