

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. David Chism
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Volume 10, Number 2

THE AUGUSTA COIN CLUB MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

February, 2010

Our Next Meeting is Thursday, February 18, 2010 from 6:30 to 9:30 PM

Readers with PCs, Check Out our Club Web Site

Club Meeting Calendar for 2010

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

Club News

If you own a personal computer, Windows XP and beyond or a Mac, when was the last time you checked out our web site, www.augustacoinclub.org? If you have, you know how much it contains which is to say, quite a lot, for the amount of numismatic data that's available is simply amazing. At the top of the home page there is a menu bar and another smaller list of items at the right such as Local dealers, up to date bullion quotes etc. Also featured are Club News, our medallion series, our upcoming Show and much more. There are also links to the American Numismatic Association, Internet dealers in all numismatic collecting categories and a number of search engines that provide other sources of numismatic information.

For members who have recently joined or those who have missed a number of meetings due to schedule conflicts, our site contains a large number of PowerPoint programs previously presented plus all of the newsletters going back to October, 2005. Look for these under PRESENTATIONS or NEWSLETTERS. The club owes a debt of gratitude to our webmaster Xavier Pique for providing an outstanding web site to our members.

To Snail-Mail readers: Making over forty copies and posting the newsletter for those members who do not own a personal computer is both expensive and extremely time consuming, so starting this month, the club is jobbing the distribution of the snail-mail version of the newsletter to Alpha Graphics of Martinez. Because of the expense involved in color printing, they will produce only black and white copies for mailing. There may be a silver lining. If you know a club member with a PC who would be willing to print-out a color copy from their computer and either mail it to you or bring a copy to the meeting, you will at least be able to receive an attractive readable copy with color photos of all the numismatic items.

(Club News continues on page 4, column 1)

The Origin of Liberty Seated Coinage

By Arno Safran



Lysimachos: Kingdom of Thrace silver Tetradrachm 305-281 BC
Obv. Head of Alexander the Great, Rev; Athena seated holding Nike in right hand with left arm on shield [Courtesy Apollo Coins]
[Use a 3x glass or magnify to 200% to see details more clearly.]

Every summer, the American Numismatic Association holds their World Money Show in a major US city. Back in 1997 the event was held in New York at the Marriott Marquis on West 45th Street just off Broadway's famed Times Square. Due to the confined space in midtown Manhattan hotels the show had to be held on two floor levels with US coins on the 5th and World coins on the 6th. Looking to add some more Latin American 8 *Reales* types to my collection, I took the escalator up to the sixth floor on the second day of the show. While there, I came across an extraordinary quarter-sized silver coin. It showed a man's head facing right on the obverse and a helmeted woman seated on a throne-like chair holding a winged figure in her right hand and a rod in her left with her left arm resting on a shield below. What struck me about the piece was the reverse's



Obv. Of 1836 Gobrecht \$1.00
[Use 3 x glasses or magnify to 200%]

resemblance to the obverse of our US Liberty seated coinage. The dealer explained that this was a Classical Greek *tetradrachm* from the Macedonian Kingdom of Thrace under the auspices of Lysimachos who ruled that territory between 305 and 281 BC. The dealer concurred that this type was the original ancestor of our Liberty Seated coinage design.

(Continued on page 2, column 1)

Origin of Liberty Seated Coinage

(Continued from page 1, column 2)



The obv of this *Denarius* shows Laureate Bust of Hadrian 117-138
The rev. portrays Roma seated on *cuirass* facing left holding
Victory and spear with shield behind.
The coin is shown actual 18 mm size.

[Use 3 x glasses or magnify first to 200%, then up to 500%]

My personal encounter with the Greek allegorical seated "Liberty" Athena aroused my curiosity further. I assumed that Rome issued coinage similar to the Greek Athena reverse. Indeed there were several. One of the earlier portrayals possibly starts with the Roman Emperor Hadrian, who ruled from 117 to 138 AD; also the Emperor Antoninus Pius (140-44 AD). The Hadrian *denarius* shown above (*a coin about the size of our dime*) portrays Roma, (*the Goddess of Rome and the empire*) seated, wearing a helmet and *cuirass*, (an armor plated vest). She is seen holding Victory with a shield behind her throne.



Obv. Marcus Aurelius 161-180 AD *Denarius*/ Rev. Concordia seated
Shown actual 19 mm size [Use 3 x glasses or magnify to 200%]

From the reign of Marcus Aurelius (161-180 AD) is another example of a seated allegorical female on a silver *denarius*. It shows the Laureate Bust of the emperor at left with Concordia on the reverse. She was the Goddess of agreement, understanding and marital harmony. In art, Concordia was often depicted sitting, wearing a long cloak and holding onto a [patera](#) (sacrificial bowl), a [cornucopia](#) (symbol of prosperity), or a [caduceus](#) (symbol of peace.) She represented the opposite of Discordia, (*Eris in Greek*), the Goddess of strife, discord and stress.



A late Roman copper *follis* type from Constantine I (307-337 AD)
The reverse shows a helmeted *Roma* seated left on shield holding a
long scepter. Victory is seen on the globe in her right hand.
The coin is 19.8 mm and is shown approximately actual size.
[Use 3 x glasses or magnify first to 200%, then up to 500%]

Some think Anastasias I (491-518 AD) was the first actual Byzantine emperor while others believe Constantine I was because it was he who moved the central government from Rome to Constantinople (*Istanbul, Turkey today*) in the 4th Century AD. The obverse shows the Laureate Bust of Constantine I facing right. The reverse shows *Roma* fully armed seated and facing left emblematic of nationalistic fervor continuing in the tradition started by the Greeks.



Roma on *antoninianus*
Of Gordian III (enlarged)



Britannia on 1805 Geo. III
silver Proof 1/2 penny

It was during the reign of Roman Emperor Claudius I that Britain was finally conquered and occupied by the Romans. Claudius' son by Messalina was named Britannicus. While the allegorical figure of Britannia is first seen on a Roman coin issued by Hadrian it would not be placed on an English coin until 1762 when it appeared on the copper farthings and half pennies of King Charles II.



1762 Half Penny of Charles II
The copper coin was 28 to 30 mm in diameter.
[Use 3 x glasses or magnify to 200%]

Over the centuries the depiction of Britannia has changed and improved. Below is a half penny of George III.



1807 Half Penny of George III, Britannia seated facing left
[Use 3 x glasses or magnify to 200%]

Through the reign of King George III, the representation of Britannia is artistically improved but is still seen facing left.



An 1825 Proof Penny of George IV
Showing a more regal Britannia facing right
[Courtesy of Wikipedia]
[Use 3 x glasses or magnify to 200%]

(Continued on page 3, column 1)

Origin of Liberty Seated Coinage

(Continued from page 2, column 2)

This brings us up to 1835, two years before Victoria became Queen of England. United States Mint Director William Maskell Patterson was tired of the old Capped Bust style on our coinage and wanted the central device of the newly proposed dollar coin to be fashioned in the manner of Britannia seen on the British copper penny of then reigning monarch, King George IV. He asked renowned American painter Thomas Sully to come up with a sketch which is shown below alongside the penny of George IV.



Left: Geo IV Britannia; right: Sully sketch of seated Liberty

In 1836, the new Chief Engraver Christian Gobrecht produced a Liberty Seated dollar with a Soaring Eagle in a sea of stars reverse that is today regarded one of our most exquisite coins.



An 1836 Gobrecht \$1.00, J-60 original graded Proof-62 by PCGS [Courtesy of Heritage Auctions Archives] [Use 3 x glasses or magnify to 200%]

The 1836 Gobrecht Liberty Seated \$1.00 coin shown directly above is one of 1,000 proofs struck by the Philadelphia Mint and placed into circulation on December 31, 1836. It recently sold for \$21,850 in the Heritage Auction held at the FUN show in January of this year. While this may seem like a lot of money, this particular specimen appears far more pristine and lustrous than one would expect for a MS-62. Even up to 500% magnification there are only a slight number of small specks but I suspect the coin has the slightest bit of rub across the eagle's breast on the reverse which theoretically makes it an AU-58 for nitpickers that may have prevented the grading service from awarding it a MS-63 or higher.

This Liberty obverse design would come to be placed on the obverse of all our silver coins through 1891 although it would be modified considerably over the years it saw service, often not for the best. There are many dates from which the collector can assemble a type set for all denominations.

Coins of the Month



An uncirculated 1853 Liberty Seated Quarter with arrows and rays Shown actual size [Use 3 x glasses or magnify to 200%]

After gold was discovered in California in 1848 and the subsequent gold rush that followed, the price of silver rose in relation to gold. Silver coinage soon virtually disappeared from circulation. To deal with the problem Congress passed the Mint Act of February 21, 1853 which decreased the amount of silver in our Liberty Seated coinage save for the dollar. The Mint had arrows placed alongside the date on the four lower silver denomination coins and rays on the reverse of the quarter and half dollar to signify the change. The Philadelphia Mint then proceeded to produce more than 15 million 1853 arrows and rays Liberty Seated quarters, a record for that period. This one year type has since become the most popular date of the series.



An 1859 Liberty Seated Quarter grading AU-55 shown actual size. [Use 3 x glasses or magnify to 200%]

Over 1.3 million Liberty Seated quarters were struck at the Philadelphia Mint a little some 150 years ago, so the 1859-P is considered common and moderately priced up through AU. The above specimen is nicely toned, especially on the reverse and upon magnification up to 200% the details of the coin show very little wear with lots of underlying luster remaining.



An 1873 with arrows at date Liberty Seated Quarter grading XF-45 shown actual size. [Use 3 x glasses or magnify to 200%]

This is also a common Philadelphia Mint date with over 1.2 million struck. The motto, IN GOD WE TRUST first appeared on Liberty Seated quarters above the eagle in 1866. This time the arrows were placed around the date signifying an increase in the weight from 6.22 to 6.25 grams. This was done in an attempt to introduce the metric system but according to the late numismatic scholar Walter Breen, the weight differences were so miniscule as to be virtually meaningless. The arrows would remain through 1874 making the two dates a two year sub-type that are also popular with collectors.

More Club News

(Continued from page 1, column 1)

President David Chism reported that dealers are signing up to do our May, 2010 Show at a faster pace than the previous one held in November. Treasurer Xavier Pique announced that our club had given a contribution of \$504.69 to the Columbia County Library for magazine subscription renewals which includes Numismatic News. With these additional funds these subscriptions would have been dropped due to budget constraints. The library was extremely grateful. Xavier also mentioned that as a result of the devastating earthquake that struck Haiti in January we have donated \$1,000 to the Haitian International Child Care Organization. Our current Treasury balance is now \$8,917.27. 2nd VP Glenn Sanders performed the annual audit and found the books in perfect order. Thank you, Glenn! **Dues Reminder:** A red 09 on your mailing envelope indicates 2010 dues (\$12.00) is still due. The deadline is Apr. 1.

Perfect Attendance: A record 21 members were awarded 2009 Proof Sets for perfect attendance at our meetings in 2009. These included John Attaway, Bob Cunningham, Glenn Sanders, Brian Hoyt, Joe Bert, John Mason, Carl and Sylvia Clark, James Clark and Carolyn Clark-Smith, Lynn Jennings, Gary James, Joan and Leonard Sienkiewicz, Grady McWaters, John Lefler, Charles White, Xavier Pique, J.C. Williams and Calvin and Diane Warren. Congratulations all!

The Program: Vice President Arno Safran presented a PowerPoint program on "Models of Liberty on US Coins" relating some of the stories of the artists, engravers and the women who posed as Miss Liberty over the past 200 plus years our coinage program have been in existence. For those who missed it, this program and many other past programs now appear on our club web site. For our February 18 program Xavier Pique will give a PowerPoint presentation on "Measuring the Weight of 18th Century Gold Coins".

The Prize winners at the January 21 meeting were Richard Owen and Hale Prothman, each winning a silver eagle in the attendance drawing. Jason Marshall took the 50/50; a whopping \$88.00. Congratulations gentlemen! Our next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, Feb. 18 at America's Best Value Inn. Bring in something for Show & Tell. Look forward to seeing you there.

Incident at the Meeting Site

A minor disturbance was brought to the attention of President Chism that was probably a misunderstanding but could have had serious repercussions regarding our club and the management of America's Best Value Inn. The Innkeeper on duty reported an unpleasant exchange occurred after some persons found that the entry doors had been locked when they were leaving the meeting. She explained that due to safety requirements she must lock the main entrance doors at night at a specific time. President Chism asked the editor to put this item in the newsletter and to request that from now on, any member who has a complaint with an employee of the Inn should direct this to him or a member of the Board before taking the matter into their own hands.

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