



The E-Gobrecht

**Liberty Seated
Collectors Club**

2015 Volume 11, Issue 12
December 2015 (Whole #131)

Club Activities in Baltimore at the Whitman Winter Coin Expo



- ▲ LSCC Regional meeting group image (for those attending on time).
- ▶ Dennis Fortier with Regional update.
- ▼ (Lower left) Gerry Fortin with club update.
- ▼ (Lower right) John Frost (Len Augsburger runs the slideshow) with double dime varieties update.



See details on page 3 of this issue.

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The *E-Gobrecht* is an award winning informal electronic publication of the Liberty Seated Collectors Club (LSCC). The LSCC is a non-profit organization dedicated to the attributions of the Liberty Seated Coin series. The LSCC provides the information contained in this email newsletter from various sources free of charge as a general service to the membership and others with this numismatic interest. You do not have to be a LSCC member to benefit from this newsletter; subscription to the *E-Gobrecht* is available to anyone. All disclaimers are in effect as the completeness and/or accuracy of the information contained herein cannot be completely verified. Contact information is included on the last page.



Auction News

by Jim Gray, LSCC #664

Many Thanks, Jim!

Help Wanted!

After almost ten years as the steady and dependable author of this column, Jim Gray's report will no longer be seen here. Due to a number of reasons, Jim is no longer able to keep this monthly commitment. With all the readers, I wish to express my sincere gratitude for all Jim's hard work, diligence, and dedication to the Liberty Seated Collectors Club and to the *E-Gobrecht*. Many thanks and be well, Jim!

If any reader is interested in taking up this task, please contact the Editor for details.

LSCC Calendar

December 3-5, 2015. LSCC Regional Meeting, Educational Programs, and club table, **Houston, TX**, Houston Money Show, George R. Brown Convention Center, Hall E, 1001 Avenida de las Americas, Houston, TX 77010, Friday, 9 AM, Room 370B. Dick Osburn and John Frost will co-host. Club table Thursday thru Saturday at Table A (front row inside Bourse area).

December 15, 2015. **Deadline and your final chance to order a LSCC polo**, a high quality polo shirt with the new club logo (imaged at right). Club officers have been seen at major shows, this fall, wearing this distinguished garment. Don't miss your chance to own one. Give yourself a little \$35 Christmas gift and contact Craig Eberhart, the LSCC Treasurer, per his contact information on the last page.



December 31, 2015. Deadline for paying 2016 LSCC membership dues.

January 7-10, 2016. LSCC Regional Meeting, Educational Programs, and Club Table, **Tampa, FL**, Florida United Numismatists (FUN) Annual Convention, Tampa Convention Center, 333 South Franklin Street, Tampa FL. More details in next month's issue.

- Special Gobrecht Medal display at club table—see page 11 for details.
- We need your help in staffing the club table—see page 4 for details.

February 1, 2016. Deadline for article and advertisement submissions to *Gobrecht Journal* Issue #125.



Regional News

by Dennis Fortier, LSCC #2016

Many people join a club and think it is something permanent. Like a monument in a park, they take it for granted. A club such as the LSCC is a living breathing thing.

Why do we join a club? Why did you join? To increase your knowledge, enjoy camaraderie with like minded collectors, make networking connections to help grow your collection? These are all fine reasons but they are personal or if we are honest, self-interested, reasons. There is nothing wrong with self-seeking reasons. We are all self-seeking when it comes to our personal goals. However, balance in life can be a beautiful thing.

Often in this column I have offered an open invitation to join us in our work promoting the club at club tables and educational seminars. This time I am asking for your help. We are joining with the Barber Coin Collectors Society as we often do and having a joint club table. If you are attending the FUN show in Tampa this January we need your help.

“Many hands make work light.” One hour is all we are asking to help staff the LSCC/BCCS club table at FUN. We are not asking for much; just an hour of your time. Please give back to a club that has given so much to you. Please take a look at the club table schedule and see if you can help. The club table sign up sheet which indicates open times that we need help is on page 4.

Benny Haimovitz will display some beautiful Gobrecht Medals at Fun. Photos and descriptions are included on page 11 in this issue of the *E-Gobrecht*.

Rochester, Baltimore, and Manchester; three weeks of busy shows and club activities last month. We begin with Rochester where Gerry Fortin displayed his incredible, award winning, dime collection. Twenty-five years of dedication to excellence and it shows. Educational seminars were conducted on Sat-

urday by Gerry Fortin, John Frost, and me. The Rochester folks were professional and gracious as always. We look forward to next year.

Baltimore was a buzz of club activity with the club dinner on Thursday night, club meeting Friday morning, and club table staffed Friday and Saturday. Jason Feldman organized the dinner and Len Augsburger hosted the meeting. John Frost detailed two new die marriages for the 1876 Philadelphia Twenty-Cent piece and Gerry Fortin gave a talk on the 1874 no arrows dime.

Manchester was a bit unusual. Parking was limited due to other functions going on at the hotel. Many show attendees were forced to park where they had only a two hour limit. That left the show rather barren by noon on Friday. With the meeting at 2 PM, only a small handful of members were in attendance. It was good to catch up with the members we regularly see there.

A handful of new members were signed up at the three shows and several members took advantage of the opportunity to renew their membership at the club table.

This month we have The Houston Money Show on December 3-5. Dick Osburn and John Frost will host a club meeting on Friday at 9 AM in room 370B. The educational portion of the meeting should be interesting; John will give presentations on the Carson City Museum Exhibit as well as Liberty Seated and Barber counterfeits.

Thank you to those who help in Long Beach, Houston, Nebraska, Carolina, and other locations.

Happy Holidays to all.



LSCC-BCCS FUN Club Table Sign Up Sheet

If you are attending the FUN Annual Convention, please consider giving an hour or two of your time to support the club activities. We need your help in staffing the club table. If you have never done this before, it is simple. All you need to do is be at the club table and talk to visitors about the LSCC. Handouts and club information will be available to assist you. Everyone who has done this before enjoys the experience and finds the time passes quickly. Check the times below and if you can assist during an open time, please contact Dennis Fortier at the email address below.

Thursday 1/7	Friday 1/8	Saturday 1/9	Sunday 1/10
10:00-11:00 B. Haimovitz	10:00-11:00 B. Haimovitz	10:00-11:00 B. Haimovitz	10:00-11:00 B. Haimovitz
11:00- 12:00 B. Haimovitz	11:00- 12:00 B. Haimovitz	11:00- 12:00 B. Haimovitz	11:00- 12:00 B. Haimovitz
12:00-12:30 B. Haimovitz	12:00-1:00 B. Haimovitz	12:00-1:00 B. Haimovitz	12:00-1:00 B. Haimovitz
12:30-1:30 L. Faucher	1:00-2:00 Jeff Dunham	1:00-2:00	1:00-2:00
1:30-3:00	2:00-3:00	2:00-3:00 Tom Wagner	2:00-3:00
3:00-4:00 John Frost	3:00-4:00	3:00-4:00 Tom Wagner	
4:00-5:00 John Frost	4:00-5:00	4:00-5:30 D. Fortier	
5:00-6:30 D. Fortier	5:00-6:30 D. Fortier		

Blue font = LSCC member

Red font = BCCS member

Please reply to Dennis Fortier at ricajun@msn.com



Membership Dues and Kamal M. Ahwash Award Ballot

A Reminder from Craig Eberhart, LSCC Secretary-Treasurer

I would like to take this opportunity to remind all LSCC members that **membership dues are due by December 31st**. The dues notice was mailed with the Fall 2015 issue of the *Gobrecht Journal* as a separate enclosure that included the Kamal M. Ahwash award ballot on the reverse (or obverse). Many members have already renewed and have also used the newly included option to renew for more than one year. Dues are \$25 per year and should be mailed to:

**LSCC or Liberty Seated Collectors Club
PO Box 712
Los Alamos, NM 87544**

Payment can also be made to LSCCdues@gmail.com through PayPal. If you consider the Club to be your family or friends, please use the PayPal family and friends option. If you do send a payment through PayPal and need to submit an address change, please include a note to indicate any changes that are needed for your address.

For renewals received after January 1st, the renewal will, of course, be credited to you but the Ahwash award ballots will not be counted.

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The Curious Collector

by Len Augsburger, LSCC #1271

Delectable Quarters in Chocolateville

The opportunity to view a complete set of Liberty Seated quarters does not come often, so when dealer Rich Uhrich recently asked for assistance in evaluating a collection for sale, my only question was when and where. Shortly after the FUN show in January 2015, Rich invited me to Hershey, PA to look at a collection formed by a client, and, as I was going to be in Washington, D.C. on business anyway, the timing was optimal. I traveled by train from the capital via Philadelphia and then headed west into Amish country. On the train was a rather talkative Amish gentleman who spent the greater part of the journey conversing loudly on his cell phone in a strange mix of English and old German – known as Pennsylvania Dutch. The 19th Amish immigrants likely didn't have a German word for "roller coaster," and still don't (Google recommends "achterban"), and it turns out this person had just visited Disney World. While I pondered the logic of the horse and buggy set embracing modern technology, the train rolled into the land of chocolate (yes, Hershey really does smell like chocolate) and soon it was time to look at some coins.

Rich stores all his coins at the bank and we quickly got to work. Most of the coins were in PCGS holders with about a fourth of them in other holders or raw. There were over 300 coins in all, representing a complete set of quarters with many duplicates. The collector clearly had a few favorite dates (this collection had six examples of the 1864-S, seven 1884s and nine 1887s), and no doubt felt these were undervalued. Hindsight is always 20/20 on these things. When I first started collecting Liberty Seated quarters in the early 1990s, I started on the low-mintage late dates first, because I figured I could always get the more common coins later. The situation is, of course, more nuanced than that. Yes, these coins do have low mintages, but they also have

high survival rates because collectors were already active at the time of issue. Conversely, much of the branch mint coinage was ignored – few collectors were active in San Francisco in the 1850s, or Carson City in the 1870s. I should have been accumulating those coins instead, but anyone can make the right picks looking backwards. The good thing about a whole set is that you are diversified and have at least one of everything.

We divided all the coins into three groups – those strong for the grade, average for the grade, and weak for the grade. Rich and I did this independently and then compared grades. Usually we agreed but had to review a coin in a few cases. David Hall says that PCGS graders agree with each other about 75% of the time (the "finalizer" decides the final grade) and by those standards we were doing pretty well. Once we had the "A," "B," and "C" piles, Rich assigned a percentage based on the current price guides and strength for the grade (I will not reveal the precise numbers, except to say that the client was happy with the final offer). For the most expensive coins (about a dozen key dates), we took a lot more time to come up with the pricing. Recent auction results were strongly considered, and, of course, we had to do some interpolation since for these coins no two examples are really alike. Pricing these is something of an art. I cannot compare an 1870-CC quarter with a Picasso, but the fact is, each one is different in some way and stands on its own. The particular example here was in PCGS VG8 holder, which of course is a great starting point as many of these won't slab. A coin like this is the highlight of nearly anyone's collection. Conversely, the coin had a few hairlines, so you can't get too aggressive on pricing.

This individual focused on VF/XF coins, with obvious exceptions (the four early CCs ranged from G4 to VG8), and this was clearly a "collector grade"

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set. The major varieties were present (the 1840-O With Drapery Large-O was in a PCGS VG10 holder), but clearly this was not an attempt to build a comprehensive set of die marriages. This seems very typical of Liberty Seated collectors – getting all the dates and mintmarks is challenge enough with adding hundreds of minor varieties. This was a remarkable collection in that it was largely built on mail order purchases – this is a hard thing to do when you are not attending the major shows and are not getting exposed to a large number of coins in person. The seller lived in a remote part of the country and travel to large shows was a significant undertaking. Thus, there was a good deal of persistence in this collection, as the buying opportunities were not so numerous. This collector obviously built relationships with dealers and kept at it for a long time.

It is fascinating to look at such a group formed over many years and to compare another collector's buying decisions with one's own. For example, I have few duplicates as I always wanted to free up funds to chase the next coin in the set. This set tended to have more common dates in higher grades (an

1858 in AU58) and tougher dates in lower grades (the 1853 NA in G6). The reverse situation is uncommon, but not impossible. And there is always the question of favorite dates. This collection had eight 1873 NA Open 3 coins. I've always considered that a better date and had trouble filling that hole in my own collection. Another example is the 1871-S, of which there were four examples – we can all agree that is a most desirable group of coins and, in general, there were quite a few duplicates of the 1860s San Francisco coins.

Getting to look over this set for a few hours was quite a treat – how often do you get to see 300 Liberty Seated quarters in one place? For most of us the next best opportunity is to attend an auction lot viewing, but these are random assemblages of collector and dealer consignments. This was an actual collection and I congratulate the seller for completing a challenging task over many years – it was a pleasure to work on these coins. In the months since, this collection has been dispersed into the marketplace – not every collection goes en masse into an auction, many are quietly bought and sold and it was fascinating to get an inside view of one such transaction.

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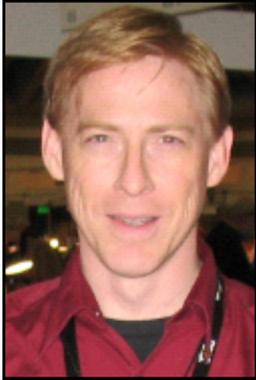
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Quarter of the Month

by Greg Johnson, LSCC #1460

The 1860-S Quarter Dollar

Collectors Corner recently featured an 1860-S quarter PCGS MS61/CAC with a \$76,950 price tag. It apparently got some attention from collectors frequenting the site and an acquaintance asked if I had ever seen the coin before. I have indeed seen it, and its photographs, a few times. It is the finest known of the issue, recently sold as part of the Eugene Gardner Collection and it has a reasonably well-documented history. The question got me thinking that perhaps others would be interested in a quick review of the coin's recent past.

I am not aware of the coin's pedigree prior to September 1989 when it was sold at Auction by Stacks as Lot 1126 in their Sept 7-8 sale. LSCC Hall of Fame member James Gray wrote about the coin and the sale in his 2005 *Gobrecht Journal* article when describing the building of his collection (1).

While looking through the catalogue for the Stack's sale of September 1989 I came to an 1860-S quarter in AU and almost fell out of my chair. The next day I called Scott Mitchell and asked for a description. He said it was a solid AU with a nice look and no impairments. I instructed Julian Leidman to bid up to twice the current Trends price of \$1,500. He did, someone else bid \$3,100 and Larry Briggs bid \$3,200. He won the lot for \$3,520 including the buyer's fee. He labeled it the finest known and offered a reward to anyone who could produce a finer piece. I purchased the coin from him in early 1990 and, only then, did I publish my article on the rarity of the 1860-S quarter in Issue #49 of the *Gobrecht Journal*.

The coin remained in Mr. Gray's collection until it was sold for \$48,300 in July 2004 as Lot 2240 of Bowers and Merena Auctions' "Jim Gray's North Carolina Collection." The catalogue description of the coin reads:

2240. 1860-S Breen-4028. Briggs 1-A, the only known dies. MS-61 (NGC). This is one of the rarest coins in this sale. The surfaces are softly frosted with a mostly even overlay of golden-gray patina. All focal features are sharply struck, and both sides while not abrasion-free, appear uncommonly smooth for the designated grade. Two tiny ticks in the obverse field before Liberty's toe are mentioned solely for pedigree purposes.

The 1860-S (56,000 pieces produced) is virtually impossible to obtain in Mint State preservation. In fact, the example offered here is one of, if not the finest known, and it is at the top of the Condition Census ranking. Augustus Heaton recognized this as a scarce date in his groundbreaking 1893 book *A Treatise on Coinage of the United States Branch Mints*. More than a century later, the 1860-S quarter dollar is still recognized as a rarity. Larry Briggs conducted a survey among members of the Liberty Seated Collectors Club that established the 1860-S and 1872-S as the rarest S-mint Liberty Seated Quarters. James Gray, in a 1990 article in this club's publication, labeled the 1860-S as the most underrated Liberty Seated Quarter issue, a significant statement given the competition (2).

The coin was most recently sold at auction by Heritage in October 2014 as Lot 98372 in the Eugene Gardner Collection II for \$55,812.50. The Heritage cataloger offered the following (3):

1860-S 25C MS61 NGC. CAC. Briggs 1-A. The surfaces are even, light gray with soft, frosted mint luster easily visible beneath the toning. There are a few tiny abrasions on each side, as one would expect from an MS61, the most obvious and easily usable one for pedigree purposes being a vertical mark to the left of the date.

Variety: Briggs 1-A, the only variety.

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Figure 1. 1860-S Quarter PCGS MS61/CAC Photo Courtesy of Eugene Gardner.

Population Data (7/14): After 28 years and multiple millions of coins certified by both of the major grading services, this piece still remains the sole 1860-S quarter in Mint State. In all grades only 80 certification events have occurred, again combining both of the major services' data.

Heritage Commentary: It is noteworthy that the two most prominent collectors of Seated coinage of the past generation have owned this coin: Jim Gray and Gene Gardner. Even though 56,000 quarters were produced of this issue, the story is the same as it is for many other S-mint issues from the 1850s through the 1870s, high attrition because of the demand in the West for hard currency. Many S-mint issues do not have a single remaining coin in Mint State. We can only speculate about the circumstances surrounding the preservation of this coin. In the November 1990 edition of The Gobrecht Journal, Jim Gray pointed out, "the most underappreciated and undervalued of all Seated coins is the 1860-S quarter, particularly in higher grades."

Consignor Commentary: One of the toughest dates in the series, this coin is the only coin graded Mint State by both services. In fact, the date is rated High R.6 in AU. The most noticeable mark is one high on Liberty's right leg.

It seems clear from the cataloger's commentaries that this is a most interesting and important coin. I expect any serious Liberty Seated quarter collector would concur with what they have written.

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- (1) James C Gray "The Best of Times: Recollections of a Dedicated Seated Collector". Gobrecht Journal Issue #92, March 2005 pages 3-14.
 - (2) Bowers and Merena Auctions Catalogue "Jim Gray's North Carolina Collection" July 8 & 9, 2004.
 - (3) Heritage Archive (<http://coins.ha.com/itm/seated-quarters/quarters-and-twenty-cents/1860-s-25c-ms61-ngc-cac-briggs-1-a/a/1214-98372.s?ic4=ListView-ShortDescription-071515>).



The Strike Zone

by Rich Hundertmark, LSCC #2347

LSCC Sharing at the Baltimore Show The 1843 V4 Shattered Reverse Half Dime

Modified fly fishing proverb of the month:

After all these years, I still feel like a boy when I'm at a coin show.

- Jimmy Carter

One of the major benefits of the LSCC is the sharing of knowledge and “the hunt” with fellow collectors. At the recently concluded Baltimore Show, I was able to share with Alan Welty, LSCC member #2169, who is currently focused on Half Dimes. As background, I should mention that I had first corresponded with Alan a few years back as members of the NGC Registry and we have continued to correspond through both clubs. Further, my interest in half dimes is not nearly as keen as Alan's but I am in the process of assembling a representative type set that is supplemented by a few key variety examples.

At the conclusion of the Baltimore LSCC meeting, I showed Alan a recently acquired 1843 LDS shattered reverse Half Dime that I knew would be of interest as he was now adding Late Die State and other key half dime varieties to his collection. Alan mentioned that he had also just acquired a Valentine-4 example in the same MS63 grade from the recently concluded Gardner Sale and it was due to arrive in the mail shortly.

We then went our separate ways on the bourse, but hours later, to both our surprise, we ended up at the same dealer table with Alan in the process of examining another 1843 shattered reverse half dime. Since I had my example with me, we quickly compared both coins and concluded that this newly found example was struck earlier in the die state progression, subsequently described by Alan to me as follows:

- The first crack goes up from the (DI)M(E) thru (H)A(LF) and into the wreath, but not up to or past T3 (the second T in STATES)
- The 2nd crack goes from the rim at K2 (2 o'clock) through A2 and wreath to upper right of (HAL)F but not through LF to meet crack 1
- There is no crack extending below (DI)M(E) or

past ribbon.

- The obverse shows the rim cud diagnostic at star 9.

Based on the above, Alan's new find appears to be between die state progressions 2 and 3 as defined in Steven Crain's “The 1843 Shattered Reverse Half Dimes” article in *Gobrecht Journal* Issue #122.



Pictured above is Alan's reverse of the Gartner Sale 1843 V4 LDS. His NGC Collector's Society Member Board Journals on this topic can be found in articles titled “Shattered”, “Shattered – Part 2” and “Shattered – Part 3.”

Thanks for reading, here's hoping everyone has both Happy & Safe Holidays,
Rich



Christian Gobrecht Medals at the FUN Show LSCC Table

by Benny Haimovitz, LSCC #2454

Christian Gobrecht was an accomplished and respected engraver and die sinker long before his employment at the U.S. Mint in Philadelphia. These are examples of his medallic art that will be on display at the January 2016 FUN Show LSCC table.

Franklin Institute Medal, 50mm. Gobrecht engraved this obverse design in 1825 and was paid \$100 by the Franklin Institute upon completion. The 1824 date on the obverse is the founding date for the Institute. The dies were provided to the U.S. Mint which struck the medals. This piece is a bronzed-copper example with a "Second Premium" reverse (not of Gobrecht design) issued in 1874 to the American Machine Company, for their Crown Clothes Wringer. Interesting to note that this example also appears to be overstruck on a reverse of the Franklin Institute Reward of Skill and Ingenuity medal.



New England Society for Promotion of Manufactures and Mechanic Arts Medal, 63mm. Gobrecht's largest medal and often considered his most impressive and beautiful design. Sometimes called the "Archimedes Medal" due the obverse. The 1826 date on the obverse is the bounding date of the Society. Gobrecht himself was awarded the first of these medals for his skill and excellence in the creation of the dies. This medal was also struck by the U.S. Mint and is the only one of Gobrecht's medals that is punched with C.GOBRECHT.F on both obverse and reverse. It is considered a scarce and important U.S. Mint medal. This piece is a silver example issued in 1839 to Mrs. Edward Brooks, for her embroidery.



Massachusetts Charitable Mechanic Association Medal, 39mm. Perhaps the longest used of Gobrecht's medal designed, issued by MCMA from 1837 until at least 1892, all were struck by the U.S. Mint. It is an interesting 'seated' design from the Gobrecht Dollar period, with a similar diameter and C.GOBRECHT.F punched on the obverse design. This piece is a silver example awarded in 1844 to Mrs. Coindreau, for her specimen of embroidery.





LSCC Member in the Spotlight:

Bill Bugert, LSCC #455

by Tony Barreca, LSCC #2151

Tony. *When did you first become interested in coin collecting and numismatics? Was there a specific experience or set of experiences that triggered it? What series did you start collecting when you did?*

Bill. As near as I can remember, it was about 1960 when I was 10 years old that I started collecting coins. I initially collected stamps but, in hindsight, I am delighted I changed to coins. I started filling Whitman blue folders with Lincoln cents, Jefferson nickels, and Mercury dimes from circulation. I mowed lawns, did chores, and helped others with the goal of earning enough to purchase coins from the many local coin shops in Toledo, OH.

Additionally, my parents, aunts, and uncles would gather on Saturday nights and play poker. The coins they had in their poker boxes interested me and I expanded my collecting to Liberty Head nickels. I was able to get a number of them from my relatives who were eager to help me.

Tony. *How did you initially become interested in Liberty Seated (LS) coins? Which LS denominations do you focus on currently? Previously?*

Bill. Knowing my interest in coins, my maternal grandmother gave me an 1858-O VG Liberty Seated half dollar around 1967. I still have that coin and that one coin sparked my interest in Liberty Seated half dollars. To this day, I am still collecting and researching them and I think my grandmother would be very pleased with what she started.

Tony. *Within the series of LS coins you focus on, do you consider yourself a variety collector? If so, what is your approach to variety collecting?*

Bill. I am definitely a variety collector or, more specifically, I collect Liberty Seated half dollars by die marriage including the third die, the collar. I have an extensive reference collection of them (all in the bank,

of course, so I have taken a multitude of high-resolution images of many of them.)

Tony. *How long have you been an LSCC member? In your opinion, what are the main advantages of belonging to the club?*

Bill. I joined the LSCC when I was stationed in (West) Germany in 1978. I saw an announcement of the *Gobrecht Journal* in *Coin World* and wrote President John McCloskey to join. Interestingly, I found that same letter in the club files a few months ago.

I value the social camaraderie and huge knowledge base as the primary benefit of being club member. Being able to meet with and to converse with collectors of similar interests has huge merits. Talking with other collectors and dealers about similar interests actually motivates me.

Additionally, John McCloskey introduced me to Randy Wiley in 1982. That introduction sparked a life long bond between us. Randy and I have almost exactly the same collecting interests and we have been able to share knowledge, friendship, and a lot of good times.

Tony. *Do you ever participate in Club activities? If so, which ones? Have you ever visited the Clubs message boards? Attended a meeting in person? Which activities could you see yourself participating in at a future time? Have you ever actively recommended that a collector friend join the LSCC? If not, why not?*

Bill. I am not as active on the club's message boards as I should be but try to balance my numismatic time with other demands. I have attended many club meetings over the years and will actively participate in club functions for as long as I am able. I was the LSCC Vice President for 6 years and, for the past year, have been the editor and publisher of the club's printed publication, *The Gobrecht Journal*. I am also the editor of the *E-Gobrecht*, the LSCC's monthly electron-



LSCC Member in the Spotlight Continued from page 12)

ic newsletter, and have been since its founding almost 12 years ago.

Tony. *If you could change one thing about the LSCC, what would it be?*

Bill. The new officers of the LSCC and especially the president, Gerry Fortin, have aggressive plans for the club and providing unprecedented club activities and member support. The officers cannot absorb the additional workload we envision so we need many volunteers to help meet the LSCC goals. If interested, please let me know.

Tony. *In your collecting career, what was the greatest coup you ever pulled off when purchasing a coin? Your biggest mistake?*

Bill. Shortly after the November 1979 issue of the *Gobrecht Journal* was published (which detailed known examples of the 1873 No Arrows Open 3 half dollar), I went to a coin show outside Atlanta, GA and found an unattributed Fine example, my first major cherry pick.

In recalling mistakes over the years, I passed on many purchases because they were not “just right.” I later came to realize those blunders in not buying them, especially die marriages, because I may have or may never see them again.

Tony. *Do you think of the hobby as being a form of investment as well? If so, how do you approach your use of coins as an investment vehicle?*

Bill. My primary goal was never coins as an investment but something to enjoy and revere. I am hoping to enjoy my coins and collecting for many more years but attain a small profit when the appropriate time comes.

Tony. *While we don't want to make anyone uncomfortable by getting too personal, it would be a real opportunity for your fellow club members to get to know you a bit if you'd also answer one or more of these optional questions.*

Tony. *What is/was your work/career?*

Bill. I am retired; actually, I retired twice. I was in the U.S. Army Signal Corps for 23 years and then worked for a company called TASC (we were bought out three times while I was there, the last time by Northrup Grumman) as a systems engineering manager for reconnaissance satellite systems until I retired again. I consulted on my own for a year and then decided to concentrate on my half dollar books.

Tony. *What other hobbies/interests do you have besides numismatics?*

Bill. Amateur Radio (since 1969 – I prefer Morse code), clockmaking and repair, woodworking, U.S. military history, and home improvement projects.

Tony. *Is there anything about your family or family history that you'd like to mention?*

Bill. I have plenty of military in my family including both Union and Confederate soldiers during the American Civil War and, tragically, there is another William (actually Wilhelm) Bugert in the German U-176 on the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean.

Tony. *What is your greatest or most memorable personal achievement?*

Bill. I ran seven marathons each under 4 hours including one I ran in boots with weapon and 55-pound rucksack in the desert that I did not know I was going to run when I started.





Some Half-dollar Stories that made it into the News 1866-1877 by Jim Laughlin, LSCC #876

Here are a few general newspaper stories from the liberty seated period that mention “packets” or “rolls” of half dollars. While I attempted to locate similar stories for other Liberty Seated denominations, I had little luck finding any of interest. I was also looking for reference to canvas coin bags and how they were sealed per Paul Kluth’s article and query in last month’s *E-Gobrecht*, but did not find anything related to Liberty Seated coinage. If one switches from Liberty Seated coins to Morgan dollars, starting about the mid-1880s, there are a considerable number of articles relating to mint thefts, dollar transfers, and the counting of vaults when Mint officers were replaced. Unfortunately, there are so many I can only read a few, but the few I did read mention that the \$1000 Silver Dollar canvas bags were all tied and “tagged”. However, I did not see any reference that the Mint sealed coin bags with wax seals.

The following are all from period California newspapers that give a brief glimpse of the life and times during the 1866-1877 period.

May 24, 1866, Sacramento Daily Union (California)

The New Counterfeit Coin—The San Francisco *Alta* gives the following description of the new bogus coin, lately referred to in the *Union*:

We have been shown by Wood, of the firm of J. G. Jackson & Co., Pier No. 2, Stuart Street wharf, a new counterfeit half dollar, which is better executed and better calculated to deceive than any other we have ever seen. It is of the date 1866, with the “S”, indicating that it was coined at the San Francisco Branch Mint, and the sides are perfect facsimiles of the genuine coin. The milling around the edge is slightly imperfect, and there is a very slight roughness on the surface of the whole piece, as if it had been thrown into quick-silver or subject to the effect of some powerful acid for a few seconds, but this would only be noticed by the expert while examining it for defects. The color is a mere trifle darker than the new genuine half dollar, and there is a different weight of about a pennyweight against the counterfeit, but the ring is very nearly equal

to that of the genuine. This fine specimen of the “queerist’s” art is composed of a fine, soft white metal, which cuts alike all the way through, and when subjected to the test of acid turns black only, showing no trace of copper in its construction. The practice of paying out and receiving half dollars in packages of ten dollars each, which is almost universal here, affords the greatest feasible facilities for counterfeiters to work off their stock undetected: but this specimen of their art does not require to be put up in packages, as nineteen men but twenty would take it if offered by itself, and the twentieth would be in doubt as to whether to take it at once or run the risk of showing his ignorance by questioning its genuineness.

Thus, San Francisco merchants in 1866 apparently were so used to sealed \$10 packets of half dollars being used in day to day commerce, they didn’t bother to open the seal and count or look at the coins inside.

March 4, 1869, Daily Alta California (San Francisco)
<an advertisement>

A New Idea! Examine Each Roll of Silver. Some are “short”, some contain spurious coin. The only safeguard is the new COIN WRAPPER, which is easily opened, contents examined and returned. Try the new wrapper and no more losses will occur.

Sounds like this may be a commercially produced coin roll like we know today. I suspect the glues and pastes of the day made it inconvenient to open a sealed packet of coins (as used in 1866) and then try to reseal the same, thus the “New Idea!”

January 18, 1870, Marysville Daily Appeal (California)

We extract the following items from yesterday morning San Francisco *Bulletin*:

The treasury department of the Chinese theater of Jackson Street was robbed some time on Sunday morning before daylight. The treasurer occupies a small room in the building adjoining other rooms, in which some of the actors sleep. The thief gained en-

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trance by passing over the roof. He succeeded in obtaining \$100. On his retreat he dropped a \$20 roll of half dollars on the roof. The coin fell and made considerable noise. All the inmates of the building were aroused, and a lively commotion was created. The building was searched, but the thief escaped. When one of the police arrived, the Chinamen were all armed with iron spears—in use on the stage—and the state of excitement was such that had the thief been caught, a genuine tragedy would have been enacted...

Here we have reference to a “roll” of half dollars from 1870 (as well as a possible Ninja sighting). Many of us growing up in the 1960s and 1970s may recall that half dollar rolls were \$20 face. At some point during the Kennedy clad half dollar period, the banks and armored car companies have switched over to \$10 rolls for half dollars.

The following literary story is a bit tedious; but it interesting to contemplate why the story was composed back in 1872. Washington at Leavenworth in San Francisco is a few short blocks from where the Central Pacific big four (Stanford, Huntington, Crocker, Hopkins) either were planning to or had just built their mansions. The area became known as Nob Hill.

March 4, 1872. Daily Alta California (San Francisco)
Bull Run

Armed with a Roll of Silver Coin

The scene of our “item” is laid on Washington Street, near Leavenworth. The hour was late—past midnight—one day last week. A gentleman was wending his way homeward thoughtfully calculating how much was left of that money he collected during the day. “Fifty cents for cigars; theatre and extras (treats counted in) four dollars; new hat, ten dollars; fourteen dollars and fifty cents—yes, fifty cents for those extra car tickets. That just makes fifteen dollars. Eighty dollars collected—yes, here’s two twenties and a five in this pocket—here’s a roll of half dollars in the other—that’s just right—sixty-five dollars. I’ll just give—“

“Sixty-five dollars! Well hand over the cash, sir, and don’t be long about it!”

Our capitalist was started from his reverie by these words uttered in a sort of growling and deter-

mined manner by the midnight stranger. He trembled from head to foot—stood stock still and looked with terror at the robber.

“Come, now, hurry up! Fork over the cash! No fooling! Now you can’t leave here till you pass in the checks!”

This second appeal to his pocket and his life awoke the victim to consciousness of his dreadful situation.

“Ah-h, lemme go! I—you—what d’you want?”, he muttered, while trying to pass on. One hand was clutching the dear twenties and the five; the other was fast to the roll of silver.

“Come, now! Out with your pockets! Come down with the cash!”

It was evidently a case of life or death. Cash would appease the villain. A lucky thought: “Yes, that’s it. I’ll give him this roll of silver, and he won’t think I’ve got any more.”

Then to the robber with excited tone: “Here’s what you want—take that.” The right arm was suddenly drawn from his pocket, and the roll of silver was extended toward the robber, while the unfortunate man shrunk into an attitude of holy terror and holy hope.

The roll was pointed at the robber’s breast—the poor fellow who was yielding his earnings looked desperate in the dim light. One look, and that was enough.

“Oh! Don’t shoot! Don’t shoot! I don’t want your money.” The brave road agent was skedaddling down the street and was soon around the corner, before our friend could realize the altered position that affairs had taken. With the muzzle of that ominous roll of silver extended before him he safely reached his home, and has since concluded that his presence of mind was wonderful and that it was a bright idea to frighten off his assailant by so good a strategy.

Here in 1872 is another reference that Liberty Seated half dollars were handled as “rolls” of \$20 face value. Interesting that money at that time was called “cash” and you “passed in the checks” when you handed over your money (if you were unlucky enough to be robbed). In the small pistol arms race of the period, there was a small vest gun known as a pepper-box. Unlike a gun having a single barrel; here a short

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solid cylinder was bored multiple times to create in essence a four or five barreled small vest gun that allowed multiple shots [See image below]. The barrel was about the diameter and length of a \$20 roll of halves.

April 6, 1872, Red Bluff Independent (California)

New Dodge to get rid of bad coin—The Marysville *Appeal* says: People resort to many ingenious expedients to swindle their neighbors. The latest we have seen consists in putting a bad half dollar in with a roll of good pieces, and paying them out together. Yesterday we saw a \$20 package of silver, which upon being opened, was found to contain a spurious half dollar, and one so poorly executed that the variest tyro in handling coin could not but detect it. We hear of many cases of this kind, and it would be well for those who handle such packages to examine them before receiving them.

Here is another reference to a “roll,” but later called it a “\$20 package.” (A “tyro” is a beginner or novice.)

April 27, 1876, Los Angeles Heard (California)

San Francisco News...

...The bogus roll dodge is being played in the city, lead pipe of the exact size and weight being put in rolls instead of half dollars. Various banks and money brokers have received stiffed rolls. The Pacific Bank took in about \$200 of lead pipe and Donahoe & Kelly received a couple or rolls from E. Newbugher & Co., who on being notified at once redeemed the leaden tubes. Hopkins & Haley, money brokers, received several rolls from Donahoe, Kelly & Co. among a draw of silver to pay the London and San Francisco Bank. The

bank discovered the fraud and the spurious rolls were immediately returned through the channels by which they had arrived. The Nevada Bank counted all its silver rolls on Monday, but no bogus ones were found. That the swindler has confederates is probable as many brokers have been victimized....

November 3, 1877, Pacific Rural Press (San Francisco)

Coin Wrappers—Rodger L. Ryan, S.F.

For convenience in handling silver coin it is usually made up in rolls in specific amounts, and when a large amount of money is paid in silver these rolls pass current for the supposed amount contained, as it would be a severe task to unroll and count the coins in each package. Unscrupulous persons take advantage of this fact and sometimes insert counterfeit coins or make the package short or introduce pieces of base metal of equal weight. To obviate this the improved coin wrapper is made. This is so constructed that it exposes the edge of each coin in the roll and the entire face of the coin at each end. It is more convenient than those now in use.

Here in 1877, the new “improved” coin rolls were being introduced. To expose the edge of the coin, the paper used must have had some small short slits (windows) placed at intervals that overlapped, so as one turned a filled coin roll, one could see the edges of all the coins at some point during the rotation. I have misplaced a similar story, where the paper used for the rolls had been perforated with small round holes, allowing viewing of the contents without having to remove the coins.

Newspaper Source:

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