

Cumberland Coins

The Volunteer Coin Club Newsletter

January, 2010

Next Meeting

Our first meeting of the New Year is on January 12. This meeting as well as February's will be held on the first floor of Building #1 at the Tennessee Technology Center on Miller Avenue near 10th Street. The room will open at 6:00 and the meeting starts at 6:30.

Our election of officers is in March. Most of the current officers have held the office for some time and want to offer the opportunity to others. A nominating committee will be appointed this month to solicit candidates for the offices. Please consider the opportunity to help make out club even better by becoming an officer.

The scuttlebutt is that there will be a couple of very interesting show and tell items this month. If you have new, old or just unusual numismatic items to show the group, please bring them in.

Coin Lore

The Marshall House Token by Bill Groom

Civil War tokens, of which there are around 11,000 varieties known, are generally dated between the years of 1861-64. There are some tokens, dated 1860, that have long been recognized as belonging to that collecting genre by virtue of their having been listed in books. Historical hairsplitting aside, there may never be a consensus of agreement among serious collectors as to what properly defines the fabric of a Civil War token.

For this writer's money, the 1859-dated Marshall House token fits quite neatly into any collection of Civil War tokens. As is the case with most Civil War tokens, the Marshall House token is cent-size copper, and given the well-worn condition of many survivors, it generally saw circulation as a cent-substitute. Lady Liberty is crowned with a Phrygian cap that has served as a symbol of freedom for over twenty-five hundred years. The engraver was Robert Lovett, Jr., a Philadelphian who subsequently utilized this design element on the famous Confederate Cent; and, many varieties of Civil War tokens as well. Beyond the obvious physical similarity of the Marshall House token to many varieties of Civil War tokens, history has indelibly linked this particular token to the Civil War.



The Marshall House, located in Alexandria, Virginia, still stands today, situated across the Potomac from Washington, D.C. In 1861, the owner, James T. Jackson, a diehard Confederate, saw fit to brazenly fly the stars and bars atop his hotel which was in view of the White House. This proved to be a more than mild irritant to residents of Washington; especially so, following the surrender of Fort Sumter in April.

On May 24, 1861, Colonel Elmer Ellsworth, then aged but twenty-four years, led his colorful Zouave soldiers across the Potomac to take possession of Alexandria. Colonel Ellsworth, himself, took a small detachment into the Marshall House, and he personally climbed a ladder atop the roof in order to strike the Confederate flag. Upon descending the stairway, flag in hand, Ellsworth was met with a shotgun blast to his breast, a mortal wound, fired by Jackson. Ellsworth's aide, Corporal Brownell promptly dispatched Jackson. Colonel Ellsworth thus became the first Union officer to be killed in the Civil War, and Corporal Brownell earned national recognition as the "Avenger." Ellsworth, whom Abe Lincoln regarded as a son, was mourned across the northern states. "Remember Ellsworth" became a familiar patriotic slogan. His biography, "Colonel Elmer Ellsworth" by Ruth Painter Randall, makes for interesting period reading.

It's estimated that less than five hundred specimens of the Marshall House token have survived, and they are rarely seen in condition that exceeds extra fine. The date, 1859, is typically weakly struck, possessing a faint "9" in comparison to other elements. Price-wise, these tokens have tended to sell in the \$30-\$50 range for midrange grades of fine. Yet, as knowledge of their Civil War connection spreads, and the sesqui- centennial of the Civil War looms on the horizon, collector interest and value will undoubtedly grow.

COINfucious says: *"Baker who carelessly drop his cents into dough may end up with penny rolls."*

Area Coin Shows

March 13, 2010 **Knoxville Coin Show**, Rothchild Center, 8807 Kingston Pike (I-40 exit #378)
NOTE NEW LOCATION!

March 5-7, 2010 **Chattanooga** Tennessee State Numismatics Association Coin and Currency Show.
 See http://www.tsns.org/tsns_show/events.htm for more information.

This Month's Raffle Prizes

		Est. Grade
1863	Civil War Token	VF
1894	Indian Cent	VF
1859	Indian Cent	VG
1957	Roosevelt Dime	Proof
1889 & 1901	Indian Cents	G/F

The door prize this month is an 1838 Liberty Seated Dime graded Good.

Look for These in this Month's Auction

		Est. Grade	Min. Bid
	double struck Lincoln Cent	BU	\$15.00
1980P	Roosevelt Dime	BU	\$18.00
1942	Ration Books #One, #Two, and #Three (partly used)		\$30.00
3 coins	Indian Cents (1881, 1895, 1898)	G-F	\$6.00
1923	Peace Dollar	XF	\$15.00
1862	Seated Liberty Dime	F	\$13.00
1921	Morgan Dollar	XF-AU	\$17.00
1864	Two Cent	Good	\$13.00

Note: If you have coins for the auction that you want to have listed in the Newsletter, email the information to mike.vcc@frontier.com no later than ten days before the meeting.