

Cumberland Coins

The Volunteer Coin Club Newsletter

January, 2012

Next Meeting

Our December meeting will be held next Tuesday, the 13th at 6:30 pm. We meet at the 127 Senior Center on Highway 127 (Main Street) South of town. Doors open at 6:00.

This will be a regular meeting with probably a smaller group than normal. A number of our members will be at the FUN show in Florida next week. Nevertheless we will also have our normal business meeting, show and tell, the raffle, and the auction. I hope a number of you can make it to refute my prediction of a smaller turnout.

Coin Lore

Speaking of Barber Dimes ... by Bill Groom

Contrary to what some folks may think, the Barber dime wasn't named for those who cut folks' hair. A hundred years ago, a fellow could get a haircut for a dime. A modest meal could be had for about a dime, too. That's certainly not true, nowadays! Have you ever looked at a coin and wondered just how many different items it was used to purchase? Most Barber dimes that one sees in the marketplace are well-worn, indicating that these small silver coins were often spent. Sometimes seen with circular marks, punched into one side or the other and caused by then newly designed vending machines, Barber dimes were truly workhorses of our economy.

These Liberty Head Dimes, issued from 1892-1916, were designed by Charles E. Barber, chief engraver of the U.S. Mint from 1879 until his death in 1917. Born in 1840, Charles must have been a most dedicated public servant as he was then still working at age 77. As most collectors know, Barber's design was also used on then current quarters and half dollars. The Liberty Head Nickels, also a classic design, were a Barber product as well.

Among the central elements of Barber's designs is the insertion of the word *LIBERTY* in the headband. This element tends to be the area of his designs that first illustrates wear as a coin circulates. Thus, coin collectors often focus on that area when grading coins. Generally, the more letters that remain visible, the higher the assigned grade. If a full *LIBERTY* is visible, the grade will be "fine" or better. The outline of the *LIBERTY* headband will typically be full on a coin that's graded "very fine" or better. Coins grading "extra fine" or better will show, among other things, hair separation above Liberty's brow. What might you grade the coin below.



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Barber dimes were struck at four different mint branches between 1892-1916; those being Philadelphia, Denver, San Francisco and New Orleans. Assembling a complete date/mint set of Barber dimes today is doable, but it will cost many hundreds of dollars to achieve. This series contains a number of key date coins that, even in low grades, fall into the \$50-\$300 range. One coin, the 1894-S, is virtually unobtainable (do a Google search for “1894-S dime” to learn about this famous dime!). Among regular issues, the 1895-O is the most costly key coin. Assembling a set of Barber dimes in grades of “fine” or better, having a full *LIBERTY*, will cost thousands of dollars.

The year 1916 was the final year of issue for the Barber dime. That year saw the introduction of the “Winged Liberty Head” or so-called “Mercury” dime. Thus, there were two different types of coins issued during that one year. The same phenomenon had occurred in 1909 with the joint issue of Indian and Lincoln cents. It later occurred in 1921 and 1938 with the Morgan/Peace dollar and Buffalo/Jefferson nickel designs, respectively.

Back in the 1950’s, an occasional Barber dime could be found in change. If memory serves me correct, one such dime that I happened to find was dated 1902; then, having circulated for over fifty years! Mercury dimes were commonplace back then. Now, with silver hovering over \$25 an ounce, even the most common Barber dimes in low grade are worth more than two dollars, apiece. Among the most common dates of Barber coins, those graded “fine” and better tend to be scarcer than their higher mintage might have us believe. Summarily, collectors are well advised to seek out the better grades in all of the Barber coinage.

COINfucious Says: *“For many coin collectors, the carving of Hobo Nickels is a **bum** idea!”*

Area Coin Shows

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| January 14, 2011 | Knoxville Coin Show , Rothchild Conference Center, 8807 Kingston Pike (I-40 exit #378) |
| February 3-4, 2012 | Knoxville 48th Annual Coin Show , Rothchild Conference Center, 8807 Kingston Pike (I-40 exit #378) |
| March 2-4, 2012 | Chattanooga, Tennessee State Numismatic Society (TSNS) Spring Coin Show. Camp Jordan Arena, I-75, Exit 1 |
| March 10, 2011 | Knoxville Coin Show , Rothchild Conference Center, 8807 Kingston Pike (I-40 exit #378) |

For more information on any of these shows see <http://www.tsns.org/Tennessee Club Shows.html>

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This Month's Raffle Prizes

		Est. Grade
1916	Barber Dime	XF
1883	NC Liberty Nickel	XF
1956 & 1957	Roosevelt Dimes (Silver)	Proof
1864	Two Cent Piece	Good
1936 & 1937-S	Buffalo Nickels	VF & XF

The Door Prize will be a BU 1955 Double Die Lincoln Cent – Royal Oak Mint Copy.