

Cumberland Coins

The Volunteer Coin Club Newsletter

May, 2016

Next Meeting

Our next meeting will on Tuesday May 10th starting at 6:30. The meeting is will be held at the 127 Senior Center on Highway 127 (Main Street) South of town. Doors open at 6:00.

We have a number of new members join in the past two month. If you see them give a warm welcome to Dan Kington, Dennis Wittenberg, Sallie and John Garvey, Arlene Mills, and Marilyn Good. It's great to see our small club growing.

This month we will have the usual business meeting, show and tell, raffle, member prize drawing and auction.

Coin Lore

Confederate Coins (Part 2)

By Dave Meisky

The Confederate States, as an independent nation, wanted to produce their own coins, not just copy US coins, so it was decided to mint Confederate silver half dollars. The first thing everyone recognized was that Miss Liberty was a southern belle, not a Yankee, so her image as it appeared on the US half dollar could also appear on the Confederate coin, meaning that a new die would not have to be created. Manufacturing the die was the hardest and most technical challenging aspect of coining. A new die was created for the reverse side of the coin and four of the coins were struck and given to four individuals. The idea was that the coins would be examined and a decision made as to wither production would continue with that design. The fall of New Orleans in the spring of 1862 ended Confederate control of the New Orleans mint so no more of these coins were produced.



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These four Confederate half dollars have an interesting post-war history. They were out of sight for a number of years in private hands but over the course of time they reappeared in public view. The first surfaced in 1879 when the man who had initially received it, Mr. B. F. Taylor, the chief coiner of the New Orleans Mint in 1861, sold it along with the die for the reverse, Confederate, side of the coin. This coin is now in the American Numismatic Association's collection. The next, which had been given to Dr. E. Adams of New Orleans, did not appear until 1910 when a collector found it in a wrapped roll of half dollars he received from a bank. It is now the property of the Newman Numismatic Education Society. The third has the most interesting history. It was given to the mint superintendent, William Elmore, who sent it to Secretary of the Treasury Christopher Memminger who in turn passed it on to President Jefferson Davis. It was with Davis when he left Richmond on April 2, 1865, and was in his wife's luggage when he was captured in Georgia. On the boat trip to Fortress Monroe the luggage was searched and the coin was pilfered. When it reappeared at an auction in 1938 it was being sold as a Scott restrike (more about them later) although its authenticity as one of the original four was later established. The last came to public view in 1971 after passing through several owners starting with the 1861 New Orleans Postmaster John Riddell. The Davis and the Riddell coins were both sold in separate auctions several months ago with the Davis coin commanding a high bid of \$881,250 while the Riddell was a steal at \$646,250.

The first of these Confederate half dollars was sold, along with the die, in 1879 to John W. Scott. The die was not in the best condition but Scott cleaned it up and decided to produce some restrikes. Since he didn't have a die for the Miss Liberty face of the coin he produced 500 tokens with the Confederate side and a message on the front that this was a restrike from an original die. This worked well so he decided to produce 500 coins resembling the originals. Since he didn't have the other, Miss Liberty, die he obtained 500 original 1861 half dollars, shaved the backs smooth, and then used the Confederate die to strike an image on the shaved surface. The result was a real 1861 US half dollar that appears to be a Confederate half dollar although of slightly less weight due to the shaving of the back and with a slightly flattened Miss Liberty image because of pressure during the restrike. As previously mentioned, when the original Davis coin appeared in 1938 it was first thought to be one of these restrikes. Mr. Scott then defaced the die so there would be no more restrikes, thus helping to maintain the value of his coins. The die went through several hands until some years later when the listed owner stated he had donated it to the Louisiana State Historical Society. The Society checked their holdings and could not find the die nor could they find any record that they had ever received it. Keep your eyes open because somewhere out there in the land of auctions, flea sales, and antique stores may be the Confederate half dollar die.

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(The conclusion of this article will be in next month's newsletter.)

Area Coin Shows

- May 7 **Knoxville;** Coin Show, Rothchild Conference Center, 8807 Kingston Pike (I-40 exit #378).
- May 21 **Cookeville;** First annual Upper Cumberland Coin Show, Hyder-Burkes Pavilion, 2390 Gainesboro Grade, Cookeville.
- May 20-21 **Gallatin;** Coin & Currency Show. Gallatin Civic Center, 210 Albert Gallatin Ave.
- June 4 **Knoxville;** Coin Show, Rothchild Conference Center, 8807 Kingston Pike (I-40 exit #378).

For more information on some of these shows see <http://www.tsns.org/Tennessee Club Shows.html>
Many other east coast shows from Florida to North Carolina are at the BRNA site - [BRNA Show Calendar](#)

This Month's Raffle Prizes

		Est. Grade
1852	Large Cent	FINE+
1894	Barber Half	G/AG
1919, 1934-D & 1936	Mercury Dimes	VF
1918	Buffalo Nickel	Fine
1898-S	Barber Quarter	G/AG

The door prize is 1909 & 1912 Liberty Nickels (F-VF).