

# Cumberland Coins

## The Volunteer Coin Club Newsletter

November, 2015

### Next Meeting

Our next meeting will on Tuesday November 10<sup>th</sup> 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 will have the usual business meeting, show and tell, raffle, member prize drawing and the auction at the meeting.

We have some lively auctions at the meetings. Members may put as many items in the auction as they wish and can put a reserve on the item so it doesn't sell too low. If you have anything you'd like to sell bring it to the auction and see what our members are willing to pay for it.

### Coin Lore

#### A Macabre Pair of Counterstamped Coins

*by Bill Groom*

Knowing my affinity for counterstamped coins that are often telling of early American times, a dealer friend of mine had long ago set aside a pair of coins that had come his way in an estate purchase. He knew that, when I next paid him a visit, I'd be seeking such pieces for my collection. Eventually, he proudly handed me the pair of 1876 Liberty Seated Quarters pictured below. Although in near mint state condition, they were both holed and bore but simple initials. Nothing special, it seemed ....



Attractive and curious as this pair of coins was, counterstamps that offer something of a story line are typically what I seek. Then, my friend produced the envelope in which these came. Upon it was simply scrawled in pencil, "These coins rested upon our dear Mother's eyes." Now, there's a story of sorts!

There's no telling just who these siblings, **A.P.** and **M.P.**, were, and their dear Mother's name will thus forever remain a mystery. It's clear that these two, newly minted coins were neatly holed to be used as keepsakes; likely, prepared and punch marked as such by a jeweler. This may have been done either before or following the family wake. In addition to being lifelong keepsakes for the children, these two coins experienced more immediate use in keeping the decedent's eyes shut during viewing. Nowadays, the eyelids are reportedly glued shut. Pleasant thought, huh? Personally, I'd prefer the old way, coins!

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In contemplating this practical but somewhat macabre use of coins, I seemed to recall, in my mind's eye, that there was some mythical purpose behind the practice. Sure enough, my memory intact and laptop at hand, I quickly found the explanation. The ancient Greeks believed that, when somebody died, their soul had to cross the River Styx which connected the Earth to the Underworld, the land of the dead. The ferryman, Charon, charged two silver coins (note that the two quarters are silver) to transport souls into the Underworld. So it was that the placement of two silver coins upon the eyes of a deceased person became steeped in tradition.

In the words of the immortal Paul Harvey, "Now you have the rest of the story." Hopefully, a paper copy of this humble article will accompany this pair of coins as they find future owners. Then, it will be their responsibility to keep the story afloat. In the meantime, these coins will be laid-to-rest in a coffin-like coin box and tucked into the mausoleum that I simply call a safe.

**R. I. P.**

### Area Coin Shows

November 7 **Knoxville;** Coin Show, Rothchild Conference Center, 8807 Kingston Pike (I-40 exit #378).

November 13 -15 **Chattanooga;** Tennessee State Numismatic Society (TSNS). Fall Coin Show.  
Camp Jordan Arena, I-75, Exit 1.

December 5 **Knoxville;** Coin Show, Rothchild Conference Center, 8807 Kingston Pike (I-40 exit #378).

February 5-6, 2016 **Knoxville;** 52nd Annual 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>

### This Month's Raffle Prizes

		Est. Grade
1924	Mercury Dimes	VF
1864	cn Indian Cent	Good
1858 sl	Flying Eagle Cent	VG
1931-S	Buffalo Nickel (semi key)	Fine
1943-S	Washington Quarter	BU (MS-63 +)

The door prize is a 1913 Barber Dime - VG.