

The SJ CSRA CC now meets at the South Aiken Presbyterian Church at 1711 Whiskey Road

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V.P. Garry Naples
Sec. Jim Mullaney
Treas. Chuck Goergen
Sgt. in Arms: Jim Sproull



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the Stephen James CSRA Coin Club, Founded in 2001
Monthly Newsletter

March, 2023

**Our next meeting will be held at the South Aiken Presbyterian Church on March 2, 2023
With Covid around, consider wearing a face mask while indoors!**

Collecting the Half-dollars of the United States, Part Two

2023 Club Meeting Schedule

Jan. 5	Apr. 6	July 6	Oct. 5
Feb. 2	May 4	Aug. 3	Nov. 2
Mar. 2	June 1	Sept. 7	Dec. 7

A charming 25 cent piece



A 1923 Standing Liberty Quarter graded MS-64 by PCGS
[Enlarge page to fill monitor screen to view details.]



My father at 22

In 1923, the editor's father had been living in New York City for three years, having arrived from Poland on these shores in 1920. Had he remained in the old country, he would have been drafted into the Polish army to fight in the Polish/ Ukrainian War against the Soviet Bolsheviks. The middle child of seven, his was met by his older brother, Jack who had arranged living quarters and a job for him.

Soon afterwards, he entered a school where immigrants were taught English. As a violinist he soon joined a small orchestra in lower Manhattan where he eventually met my mother--who also played the violin. By 1923 he showed no signs of a foreign accent, speaking English like any American citizen. It didn't take him long to understand the coinage of the United States and at that particular period, most of them were exquisite. Of the ten denominations then in circulation, only seven were struck in 1923. the Lincoln cent, Buffalo nickel, Mercury dime, Standing Liberty quarter, Walking Liberty half-dollar, also the Peace dollar and the \$20.00 double eagle. It's doubtful that my father handled the two highest denominations. In those days, the half-dollar circulated heavily along with the lower denominations. A quarter like the beautiful Standing Liberty specimen shown above had the purchasing power of \$4.00 in 1923 and could acquire various goods. As a young man, 22 going on 23, I wonder if he ever had any impressions of our coinage, especially the standing liberty quarter.

Collecting specific US Lettered edge Capped Bust Half-dollar types

By Arno Safran



An 1815/2 Lettered Edge Capped Bust half-dollar graded AU-55
(the Key date of the series)

[Enlarge page to fill monitor screen to view details.]

Between 1807 and 1836, the Philadelphia mint struck millions of half-dollars, known as the Lettered-Edge Capped Bust type for a total of thirty years. The reason for the large mintages of the half-dollar during this period was due to the suspension of our Draped Bust type silver dollar coinage after 1803 which was brought about by the public's need for lower denomination silver coinage that included the half-disme, disme, quarter and half-dollar although few basic goods were priced at even the half-dollar levels back then. As a result, the Capped Bust half-dollar was primarily used by banks and larger business of the period as specie, (hard-money) instead of (promissory notes) to back large business transactions which is why so many Bust halves grading VF-20 thru AU50 still exist at prices affordable by middle class collectors.

The reason the half-dollars produced from 1807 thru 1836 are called the Lettered Edge Capped Bust type is due to the words **FIFTY-CENTS OR HALF-DOLLAR** engraved on the edges of each coin, which did not appear on any of the lower denominations. Asst. Engraver John Reich designed both sides of the coin which displays lots of clarity and is just as attractive in its way as Scot's previous Draped Bust design in the opinion of the author. The reason for the small mintage of the 1815 half-dollar was due to the lack of silver available because the War of 1812 didn't end until 1815. In December of that year and early Jan. 2016, the mint used 1812 leftover halves, striking a 5 over the 2 in the date, releasing a total of 47,150 halves on Jan. 10, 1816 the day before a fire broke out thereby cancelling any further coinage for that year.

(Continued on page 2, column 1)

Collecting specific US Lettered edge Capped Bust Half-dollar types

(Continued from page 1, column 2)

Some key over-date issues



An 1811/10 Capped Bust half-dollar, Overton O-101, R2, A U-50
[Enlarge page to 200% or to fill monitor screen to view details.]

The coin pictured directly above, the 18.11/10 overdate half-dollar is one of two varieties of the date that displays a dot in the date. The 1811 half was the second actual overdate of the series preceded three years earlier by the 1808/7, not shown. The reported mintage for the 1811/10 was 1,203,644. Even the large cent, did not come close to the number of half-dollars coined that year since the reported mintage for the “penny” was only 218,025 and the cent was the workhorse of our coinage during the early years of our nation’s independence.



An 1817 Capped Bust half-dollar, O-103, R2 certified AU-50 by IGC
[Enlarge page to 200% or to fill monitor screen to view details.]

The author acquired this unusual variety of an 1817 half-dollar with a dot between the 1 and the 7 at a ANA regional show held in Charlotte, NC back in March, 2007. The coin appears well struck with darkish but still has attractive toning.



An 1818/7 Capped Bust half-dollar, O-101, R1 graded AU-53
[Enlarge page to 200% or to fill monitor screen to view details.]

This example of the 1818/7 is an extremely well struck with the top of the seven clearly seen over the top of the eight. Every feature of the coin’s design appears sharp; the stars, the wrinkle on the cap, the date, Miss Liberty’s hair, and on the reverse, the motto as well as the eagle. Only the top portion of the shield is slightly weak. The coin was certified AU-58.



An 1820/19 Capped Bust half-dollar, O-102, R1 with small curl base
2 in the dat. The coin was graded XF-40 by PCGS

Overdate coins were fairly common during the late 18th and early 19th century and the Cap Bust half type has a plethora of them. Upon increasing the size of the page, the reader will observe this particular variety of the 1820/9 overdate shows the high point tip of the 1 inside the 2 and the 9 inside the 0 in the date. On some dates **the 2 in the date is curled instead of being flat** on the base of the date.



An 1823 Capped Bust half-dollar, O-112, R1 graded XF-40 by PCGS
With the 23 in the date larger than the 18.

The coin shown above cataloged O-112 is a fairly common variety. The 3 in the date is larger than the 2 while the first two numbers; the 1 & 8 being slightly smaller. The author acquired both this pieces and the 1820/9 above it from the same dealer who was extraordinarily knowledgeable regarding subtle changes in die varieties. Actually, the 1823 half had a number of different varieties in which the numeral 3 was struck and they have names such as the normal 3, the broken 3, the patched 3 and one called the ugly 3. The current 2023 *Red Book* shows close-ups of each variety atop page 205.



An 1828 curl base 2 with hooked 2 and square base knobbed 2
[Enlarge page to 200% or to fill monitor screen to view details.]

Occasionally, two different stylized twos in the date would appear on the Capped Bust halves. This occurred in both 1827 and 1828. The images of the obverses of the 1828 Capped Bust halves display the **curl based two** with the tiny hook at the upper left of the digit while the coin at the right shows a **flat based 2 with the upper curl knobbed**. Collectors who specialize in collecting Capped Bust half-dollar types enjoy acquiring these subtle varieties.

(Continued on page 3, column 1)

Collecting specific US Bust Half-dollar types

(Continued from page 2, column 2)

The Transitional Dates of the Capped Bust Halves



**The final date of the Lettered Edge half over the Reeded Edge half
The lettered edge graded VF-30 and the Reeded Edge, XF-45
[Enlarge page to 200% or to fill monitor screen to view details.]**

From 1828 thru the early 1830s the close collar device was attached to the screw press in order to establish a specific diameter for each denomination. In each case, the size of the denomination had been slightly decreased. With the introduction of the steam press in 1836, the Reeded Edge half-dollar--shown underneath the large size lettered-edge half-dollar was struck in small numbers estimated from 1,200 to 5,000; this after over 6 million of the Lettered Edge half-dollars were coined for the last time; thus creating a transitional date as a new type for collectors to consider. The 1836 reeded edge was designed by Christian Gobrecht, not Reich who retired in 1816. Due to the small amount produced, the 1836 Reeded Edge type is scarce and expensive.



**The more common 1837 Reeded Edge half-dollar showing 50 cents
on the reverse and the 1838 showing HALF-DOLLAR**

Both the **1837** and **1838** coin types struck at the **Philadelphia Mint** and are affordable for most collectors. The **1837** Reeded Edge half was graded **AU-58** and the **1838**, **AU-55** by PCGS.

The Beginning of a New silver coinage Era



**The 1839 Reeded Edge & the Liberty Seated no drapery and
with Drapery Liberty Seated Half-dollars**

In 1839, the half-dollar's Capped Bust Reeded Edge half dollar was struck for the **last time** with a mintage of 1,392,976 at the Philadelphia Mint. The example shown at left was certified AU-58 by PCGS. The New Orleans Mint--with only 116,000 made--not shown--is much more expensive. The two Lib. Std. halves on the right represent another tale.



**Christian Gobrecht's original 1836 Liberty Seated dollar design
Certified AU-58 by NGC**

In 1836, Engraver Christian Gobrecht struck the first Liberty Seated dollar shown directly above. Problems later on occurred involving the soaring eagle on the reverse which didn't strike up as well, so because of time issues, it was replaced by Reich's spread eagle. **In mid 1837**, the Capped Bust type on the Cap Bust half-dime and dime were replaced with the Lib. Std. obverse while the eagle on the reverse was replaced by a Laurel wreath. **In 1838**, it was the quarter's turn but by then, it was decided to slightly alter Gobrecht's original obverse. As it turned out, a recently arrived English engraver named Robert Ball Hughes was asked assist which resulted in flattening out the obverse design on the quarters struck in 1838 and starting in **1840**, the dollar as well. Regrettably, Reich's spread eagle replaced the soaring one. Back to the top! The two Liberty seated halves of **1839**, however use Gobrecht's original concept with stars added on the obverse. Due to the emptiness under Miss Liberty's elbow, drapery was added in that area later in the year which appears on the Lib. Std. half-dollar on the far right.

(Continued on page 4, column one)

A Last Harrah!

The Most interesting Lettered Edge Capped Bust Half-dollar of them all; “the Bearded Goddess”



An 1807 Lettered Edge Capped Bust half-dollar, (Rare!) O-111B, R5, Large Stars with 5/2 reverse graded AU-50 by PCGS Sold at a Heritage Auction back on April 25, 2019 [Enlarge page to 200% or to fill monitor screen to view details.]

Of all the Lettered Edge Capped Bust half-dollars collectors would like to possess it is the famed “Bearded Goddess” shown above. Its name is the result of a huge die crack which starts directly under Miss Liberty’s chin and stretches not only to lower part of her neck below but further down to her chest. Die cracks appear on many of our early US coins and come in various stages from types representing the first stage of deterioration--which doesn’t show much--to late stages, such as the example shown above. In order to observe the coin’s qualities, the reader is advised to enlarge the page on your computer screen sufficiently to view not only the die crack under Liberty’s chin but the denomination error on the bottom of the reverse engraved as **20/50 C.** on the reverse as well. As for the value of this amazing coin; it cost the winning bidder \$26,400 who acquired it four years ago, quite a bit less than the \$45,000 retail price currently listed on PCGS’ COINFACTS.



1807 Lettered Edge Capped Bust 50c, O-112, R1 (common) [Enlarge page to 200% or to fill monitor screen to view details.]

This 1807 Capped Bust half-dollar is a common variety and by comparison, cost the author just \$650 at a major show held over thirty years ago back in 1990 although today it retails for \$2,500 according to PCGS’ COINFACTS; but that’s still a lot lower than *the Bearded Goddess* variety bearing the same date.

As a rule collectors enjoy collecting the first and last dates of a series, especially when they occur in the same year. The reported mintage for the **Draped Bust half** was **303,076** and the **Cap Bust half shown directly above** was **750,500**. Add the two together and total number of 1807 half-dollars struck that year comes to **1,051,576**. Apparently, both types of the 1807 halves were saved as the final and first dates of a series thereby creating a *transitional date* paring that many collectors savor.

STEPHEN JAMES CSRA COIN CLUB Regular Meeting Thursday, Feb 2, 2023

President J.J. Engel, called the regular meeting of the coin club to order at 6:50 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall of the South Aiken Presbyterian Church (SAPC). There were 18 members and 1 visitor in attendance.

Jim Sproull reminded members of upcoming coin shows in the region.

A motion was made by Willie Simon and seconded by Marion Engel to dispense with the reading of the Minutes of the January 2023 meeting, a copy to be kept on file along with the other club records.

Treasurer, Chuck Goergen reported the Club’s bank balance was \$1408.88 , however \$285 is from coin show income that will be returned to dealers since this year’s show was cancelled.

New Business:

President J.J. Engel reminded everyone that election of club officers will occur at the March 2nd meeting. Anyone interested in becoming a club officer please contact any of the existing officers.

Show and Tells:

Sgt. In Arms, Jim Sproull shared some odd dimes that had been found in a recent collection at his church. They were US Roosevelt clad dimes from around 2020, but they had no reeded edge, and the rims appeared to be slightly raised. The coins edges clearly showed a copper-colored band between the cupro-nickel faces. There were several theories on why the coins appeared as they did, but none stood out as obviously correct.

The Program:

Member, **Walt Kubilius** gave this month’s program entitled “**The Coins of Britain 1816-1900**”.

This would be Walt’s seventh presentation to the club over the last several years and everyone found it very interesting and informative – as we had regarding Walt’s six previous programs.

Walt presented an excellent overview of the of the British coin denominations following the coin reformation of 1816. He pointed out that Great Britain was typical of several countries, including the United States, that struggled with a excess number of coin denominations during this period.

Minutes from the February 2, 2023 Meeting

(Continued from the previous page)

Walt covered a number of topics, including the origin of abbreviations for key denominations (pound - £, shilling – s, and pence – d) going back to the system set up by Charlemagne based on Latin terms (Libra, solidus, denarius); Britain's failed attempts at decimalization for the pound in 1849 by issue of a florin with a value of 2 shillings (one-tenth of a pound); standard Latin inscriptions; and zymology.

Walt's presentation contrasted some silver coinage of King George III & George IV where the designs were so unpopular that they were replaced after a single year by the young Queen Victoria's silver coinage – which kept the same obverse up to the 50th year of her reign.

JJ Engel, assisted by Jim Mullaney, conducted the monthly club auction.

*Respectfully submitted,
Jim Mullaney, Secretary*

**“Buddy, Can you spare a Dime?”
But what if it was this dime or the one below?**



A Uncirculated 1902 Barber dime with dark toning
[Enlarge page to 200% or to fill monitor screen to view details.]

During the Great Depression in 1932, a hit song, called “Buddy can you spare a dime” was used in a Musical Revue that was written in a minor key and was based on an old Jewish Lullaby. It turned out to be one of the great hit songs of the 1930s and would later be recorded by Rudy Valley and Bing Crosby as representing the *Anthem of poverty* during the decade.



A 1931-S Mercury dime graded MS-65 by PCGS
[Enlarge page to 200% or to fill monitor screen to view details.]

In 1932 and 1933, **no nickels or dimes were struck** but suppose the individual who was in dire straits asked for the favor **90 years later in 2022** and the person who had among his or her change handed the poor fellow the gruffly looking **Barber** dime shown above, the good Samaritan would be out \$200 since that is what a **1902 Barber dime** graded MS-63 is worth today despite the example's darkish color while a **1931-S Mercury dime** graded MS-65 is worth \$275.

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