

The SJ CSRA CC of Aiken, SC meets on the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of the month at the Aiken Public Library

Pres. Steve Kuhl  
V.P. Pat James  
Sec. Jim Mullaney  
Treas. Chuck Goergen  
Sgt. in Arms: Jim Sproull



The Stephen James  
CSRA Coin Club of Aiken  
P.O. Box 11  
New Ellenton, SC 29809  
Web site: [www.sjcsracc.org](http://www.sjcsracc.org)

Programs: Pat James  
ANA Rep.: Glenn Sanders  
Show Chairman: Steve Kuhl  
Photos: Steve Kuhl  
Publicity: Pat James  
Newsletter: Arno Safran  
E-Mail: [arnosafran@comcast.net](mailto:arnosafran@comcast.net)  
Auctioneer: Jim Sproull  
Web site: Susie Nulty (see above.)

Volume 15, No. 8

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

Aug. 2016

Our next meeting is Thurs. Aug.4 at the Aiken Public Library, starting time 6:45 PM

## September 10 Show One just month Away

### 2016 Club Meeting Schedule

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

### September annual Show Major Fundraiser for Club



Last year's show broke the dealers set-up and attendance record. Shown above are members Tucker Bledsoe, Sec. Jim Mullaney and Jerry Lipsky at Howard and Sonia Hillman's table

On Sat., Sept. 10, our club will be holding its annual coin and currency show. In 2015, we had a record number of attendees and with already over 32 tables sold, club President and bourse chairman Steve Kuhl expects even more dealers to sign up and hopefully, more public attendees from the Central Savannah River area than last year. As with past events, we will be needing helpers for the set up, manning the welcoming desk and the take down at show's end. We encourage members to buy or sell raffle tickets to the public with a chance to win one of three numismatic prizes, the first prize being a US gold coin.. The ticket prices are \$1.00 for each raffle or six for five. Those members who have acquired shirts with the club logo please wear them on the day of the show.

### Three Cents Plain By Guest writer Mark Abramson

As we all know, the penny used to go a lot further in bygone days. But, with the size and weight of U.S. copper coins prior to 1857, it took a lot more effort to get there. The necessity for a 3-cent piece grew out of modifications to the U.S. postal rate structure. Established in 1845, dual tier rates were 5¢ per half-ounce for distances up to 300 miles, and 10¢ beyond. Conveniently, pre-payment for America's first official postage stamps (1847) were covered by already existing coins – dimes and half-dimes.

Basic postal service prior to the Civil War only covered delivery from post office to post office. Door-to-door service was initially introduced in larger cities during the 1860's, expanding to rural free delivery (RFD), in the 1890's. In 1851, the Post Office cut the basic rate to 3¢ a half-ounce for distances up to 3,000 miles, a mixed blessing to be sure. While postal rates were simplified and reduced, a single coin transaction using fractional silver coins was no longer an option. Confronted by a logistical nightmare forcing both the public and the Post Office to conduct business with cumbersome copper coins, the government authorized the issue of a silver subsidiary 3¢ piece.



Although the silver coin, aka *trime*, met a very real need, it left much to be desired as a commercial tool. Physically, the coin measured only 14 mm in diameter and weighed only 75 to 80 grams, making it awkward to handle. Furthermore, the thin silver planchet left it vulnerable to damage from larger and heavier coins. Nonetheless, there were three design varieties and two alloy variations over its twenty-three year lifespan.

The introduction of copper-nickel in 1857 and bronze in 1864 offered opportunities to reduce costs with lighter weight and/or cheaper alloys. Even before the end of the Civil War, new 1 and 2-cent pieces were being produced in bronze to replace coins that had been hoarded since the start of hostilities.

(Continued on page 2, column 1)

**Three Cents Plain** (Continued from page 1)

With mintage of the *trime* having dipped well below 100,000 coins in 1863, resources were targeted toward the production of a replacement coin introduced in 1865 and struck in a reformulated (75/25) copper-nickel alloy.

By almost every standard, the copper nickel 3-cent piece was a third-rate product, with a single saving grace. Produced on an extremely underweight, smooth-edged planchet, the diameter of the coin was slightly smaller than that of the cent. Nevertheless, the coins saw considerable service, as demonstrated by the well-circulated specimen illustrated in this article.

Designed by James Longacre, the basic elements of the obverse echoed those of the Indian head cent – a portrait of Liberty surrounded by a legend reading “The United States of America” and date of issue.



Disproportionally large for the undersized planchet, the Liberty head was executed with better than average skill for

the era, and actually appears to have been modeled on a real person.

Longacre was not above recycling his artwork, especially on the reverse sides of his coins. This practice can be seen with the wreath lifted from 1 and 3-dollar gold pieces for use on the flying eagle cent. On the three cent piece, he adapted the wreath from the Type 1 Indian head cent to surround an oversized Roman numeral III, while bringing the entire design closer to the rim of the coin.

The final design sacrificed much of what we take for granted in our current coinage. Despite the coin’s debut between the 2-cent piece of 1864 and the 1866 Shield nickel, the slogan of the day, “In God We Trust” went conspicuously missing. “E Pluribus Unum”, never a feature of minor coinage anyway prior to the Liberty head nickel, was also excluded, as was the unit of value.

Using statistics quoted in the *Red Book*, the coin weighed only 1.94 grams, far less than the copper-nickel Indian head cent last produced in 1864. Although the c/n ‘penny’ contained a mere 12% nickel, with 88% copper, each of the metals weighed .5604 and 4.1096 grams respectively, as opposed to .4850 and 1.4550 grams for the 3-cent piece. Closely following the debut of the 3-cent piece, the new 5-cent copper-nickel coin weighed in at a hefty 5 grams.

Interestingly, the copper-nickel 3-cent piece could not be used to purchase pre-Civil War stamps. In order to keep the Confederacy from using currently existing stamps, including those captured from Southern postal facilities, the U.S. government demonetized everything issued prior to the outbreak of hostilities.



1861 1869 1870

The illustration represents the most common varieties of half-ounce rate 3-cent stamps issued between 1861 and 1883.

While the government would have been justified in covering its debts by raising rates in the aftermath of the war, the basic postal rate remained unchanged for the remainder of the 1860’s, through the 1870’s and into the early 1880’s.



1887

In 1883, the rate was reduced to two cents per half-ounce, and four cents for a full ounce. This change was an early step in the evolution of larger envelopes and heavier First-Class content. Most members of the American public would not again see a four-cent per ounce rate in their lifetimes.

Having already reduced the price of First-Class stamps by 33%, the Post Office deepened the discount still further in 1885 by decreasing the rate to two cents per ounce.



1883

Among collectors of U.S. postage stamps, it is a well-known fact that the price of domestic First-Class postage fluctuated between 2 and 3 cents, in response to certain national emergencies. In 1932, the Great Depression pushed the rate up to 3 cents, where it remained until the 1958 increase to 4 cents.

Perhaps it was a coincidence (or perhaps not) that the reverse designs of the short-lived 1, 2 and 5-centavo copper-nickel coin series, issued from 1882 to 1883 by the Mexican Republic, incorporated a wreath and Roman numeral motif, also without statement of value.



### Three Cents Plain

(Continued from page 2)

With all its deficiencies, the copper-nickel 3-cent piece survived for a quarter century, even beyond postal rate changes that rendered it irrelevant for its primary purpose.

The silver *trime* met its demise in 1873, along with the bronze 2-cent piece and half-dime. The copper-nickel version of the 3-cent piece was cancelled in 1889 joining the fate of the gold dollar and three-dollar gold piece and putting an end to the era of U.S. oddball denomination coins. ■

The author, **Mark Abramson**, is a collector of coins, tokens and medals and a member of the **Watchung Hills Coin Club** located in north-central New Jersey just north of the US Rte. 20 and south of the I-78 corridor. He has been the editor of the club's monthly newsletter known as the *Hills Numismatist* since 2010.

## STEPHEN JAMES CSRA COIN CLUB

### Minutes

Regular Meeting July 7, 2016, Aiken County Library

President Steve Kuhl called the regular meeting of the club to order at 6:45 p.m.

Jim Sproull reported that there were 26 members present and 1 guest. Jim announced information concerning several upcoming coin shows in the vicinity.

John Kolmar won the drawing for the members' door prize, a 2016 Silver Britannia.

A motion was made by J.J. Engel, seconded by Jerry Lipsky, and passed to dispense with the reading of the June 2016 minutes. A copy will be on file with the other club records, and a copy will appear in the club newsletter.

Treasurer Chuck Goergen reported that the Club's bank balance was \$2,495.00.

Steve Kuhl presented a belated thank you award to Jerry Lipsky from the 2015 coin show.

Steve Kuhl thanked the volunteers who had supported the Coin/Currency Identification Day that was held at the Aiken Library on June 11<sup>th</sup>. This item was an opportunity for available club members to help 40 members of the public gain information about any coins or currency they have that they would like more information about. The club gave away several 2016 *Red Books* as door prizes. Steve

also thanked the Aiken Standard for publishing articles prior to and following the event.

Steve Kuhl provided an update on the club's September coin show. We are on track to have more dealer tables sold than ever before and are looking forward to another successful show.

The August 4 program for our club meeting will be part two *the Coins of North Eastern India* by David Cashin.

Arno Safran informed the club that the Augusta Coin Club meeting on July 21<sup>st</sup> will have a program discussing "Date rarity vs. Grade rarity".

JJ Engel, John Kolmar, Arno Safran, and Jerry Lipsky shared show & tells with the rest of the club.

The club's July program was a presentation by Tony Chibbaro on Exonumia, "Cool Stuff". The presentation included two groups of items that Tony had obtained over his years of collecting. The first group included several athletic medals won by Charles J Bacon shortly after the turn of the last century, including an example of one of the few Olympic gold medals made of solid gold from the 1908 London Olympics. The second group consisted of an 8 karat gold medal presented to one of the over 300 people who had claimed to shoot



down the zeppelin L15 over London in March of 1916. The medals were awarded by Sir Charles Wakefield, the Lord Mayor of London. A photo of a medal similar to the one in Tony's presentation is below.

Following the auction, President Kuhl adjourned the meeting.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
*Jim Mullaney, Secretary*

**Pictures taken at the July 7 Meeting**  
(courtesy of Pres. Steve Kuhl and Sec. Jim Mullaney)

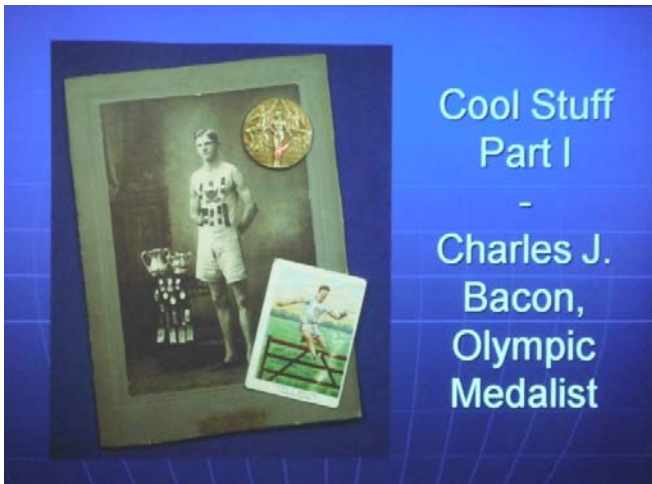


Tony Chibbaro speaking on the Medals of athletic medals won by Charles J Bacon shortly after the turn of the last century,

**Show & Tells**



John Kolmar displaying a medal commemorating the sesquicentennial anniversary of the US Army Picatinni Arsenal (1812-1962) with VP Pat James looking on. see coin below left, also a Greater Irish New York Athletic Assoc. medal at right



Close-up of PowerPoint program title of Tony Chibbaro's presentation



Jerry Lipsky displaying coins with fish on them



President Steve Kuhl, left presenting speaker Tony Chibbaro, right with club Appreciation Award



J.J. Engel displaying a counterfeit "sterling" 1 lb, silver plated eagle The picture of the bullion coin is reduced to fit the page.

**Show & Tells** (continued)



Arno Safran brought in US Coins minted 70 years ago, a 1946 Brilliant Uncirculated P, D and S year set housed in three Capital Lucite holders

**Kindly Patronize our Advertisers**

**Augusta Coin Exchange**  
FINE RARE COINS

Buying U.S. Coins • Currency • Gold & Silver Bullion

**Larry Lucree**

Ph: 706-210-5486      Hours: Mon - Fri 10:30am - 4:00pm  
Toll Free: 877-210-5485      Sat. 8:00am - 1:30pm

4015 Washington Rd • Martinez, GA 30907  
www.augustacoinexchange.com

ANA-54767 (Since 1965)      Cell 941/228-5590  
IBNS-7997

**DAVID C. AMEY**

US & World Numismatics For Over 40 Years  
Buying & Selling World Coins, Paper Money & Tokens

Box 346 • 262 Eastgate Drive • Aiken, South Carolina 29803  
E-mail: ameyworld@aol.com

**Kindly Patronize our Advertisers**

For the serious and casual collector

**COINS, STAMPS & CURRENCY**

P.O. Box 1739      Patricia James  
Aiken, SC 29802      143 York Street  
(803)-643-9957      Aiken, SC 29801

*Thru Time & Ages - LLC*  
218 York St SE      P.O. Box 2587  
Aiken, SC 29801      Aiken, SC 29802  
803-226-0611      888-689-1210  
Tom Misiag - thru\_time\_and\_ages@yahoo.com

Antiques, Antiquities, Art, Coins, Jewelry, Indian  
(Artifacts, Jewelry, Pottery, Rugs), Religious items  
Buy & Appraise Estates & Collections  
Buy Coins, Jewelry, Precious Metals  
**COFFEE / TEA HOUSE**

Since 1941

**Clein's Rare Coins**

3830 Washington Rd., Ste. 32 Martinez, GA 30907  
Buying & Selling U.S. Coins, Currency & Confederate  
- ALL GOLD & SILVER BULLION -  
(Eagles, K-Rands, Maple Leafs & Pandas)  
COIN APPRAISALS

**STEVE DAMRON**  
Ph: (706) 755-2249  
Fax: (706) 755-2461  
Tue-Fri 10:30 AM - 4:00 PM  
Sat. 9:30 AM - 1:00 PM

**ANA**  
LIFE MEMBER

**Engel Group LLC**

Gold & Silver  
Buy & Sell

**JJ Engel**  
105 Basswood Drive  
Aiken, SC 29803  
803 648-0982