

When I was recently invited to speak at the Northern California Numismatic Association's Coin Collectors retreat with the theme of "Collecting in Today's World", so many areas of note entered my mind that it was difficult to focus on only one. Knowing that a 30 to 40 minute program on numismatics is not going to fully educate anyone on one particular subject I decided to develop a program that would give the collector an expansive overview of today's numismatics and let the viewer investigate on their own a particular area that peaked their interest. So what was created was a program similar to "Mr. Toads Wild Ride Through Numismatics".

In today's collecting world many coinage issues are simply out of financial reach for many collectors. High value condition as well as absolute rarities could run into the thousands of dollars each. This does not have to affect our collecting spirit or relegate our choices to mid or low-grade material which may have little upside over time.

The purpose of this article is intended to bring a greater awareness of the many affordable opportunities that still exist for collecting numismatics in today's world. Also, whether for the beginning collector or the more experienced, discussed will be the knowledge and tools that are absolutely necessary before one starts their collecting adventure.

Today in our numismatic hobby, we all have the unique opportunity to leave our personal troubles, the troubles of our families, and the troubles of the conflicts in our world as it is today behind us. We can devote a few hours whenever we have the time to immerse ourselves in a hobby/endeavor that many of us have had since we were kids.....and just see, hear, speak, share, read, and learn about our shared adventure in numismatics.

First, some basics need to be established or learned by the collector before your hard-earned money is put on the bourse floor or sent to an online seller. The three most important, in my view are having reference material ie; Redbook, Greysheet, Numismatic News, Coin World, and others, and the next is acquiring a lighted magnifier, and the third is learning how to grade, especially the difference between AU and BU. Secondary to this, but no less important, is knowing how to recognize counterfeit as well as altered coins. Well, this all sounds like a huge task, and it is, nothing of benefit can ever be done without effort and labor.

I use as an example the many bullion purchasers/investors who attend coin shows only to buy bullion, which over time you may lose money or gain (silver in recent times has had a high of \$50 and a low of \$15). Bullion is easy to acquire ie; the price at spot plus whatever the sellers' points may be, no knowledge is needed. In acquiring numismatic material grading knowledge, time, reading, study, comparing, is needed and is much more time consuming than simply bullion purchasing, but over time numismatic material, if purchased wisely, will gain in value with little downside. Also, an adventure is experienced in numismatics in the areas of art, history, world events and people. One of the great benefits of all this effort is the gaining of lifelong numismatic friends.....what can be better than that?

The numismatics I refer to are not the Silver Eagles, not the colorized coins in fancy polished wood cases, nor the Silver Pandas, but traditional United States numismatics which reach all the way back from the Continental Currency or the Chain Cent to today's fairly recent issues like the Buffalo Nickel, Standing Liberty Quarters, Walking Liberty Half Dollars, Mercury Dimes and the Morgan/Peace Silver Dollars.

With the rapid appreciation of historic collectables like the newly discovered "Billy the Kid" photo purchased in a box of junk at a thrift store in Bakersfield and the Saddleback Ridge Hoard of San Francisco minted gold coins literally kicked up in a well-travelled walking trail by a dog, record values are being realized. Also, great appreciation has been realized for a GSA packaged 1885CC Morgan Dollar which had a bid of \$60.00 in one of the early GSA sales (late 1960's or early 1970's) which is now worth about \$1,200.00 in MS65, or a 1893S Morgan Dollar which for most is out of reach. It would seem today that the average collector has been priced out of the market with the increasing values of many better graded numismatic issues.

We should not become discouraged and say that our hobby of numismatics has become out of reach and our joy of collecting has been diminished. The truth is that there still are many highly desirable coins and series in numismatics which can be obtained at reasonable prices if you know where to look, purchase wisely, and with knowledge. A wise old Sioux Indian or was it a wise old Greek once said about opportunity unrecognized...."You have eyes but they do not see." This could be so true.....is it true with you? This article is also intended to give the reader a new pair of eyes powered by an increase in vision while still using the old eyes which "did not see".

There is so much verbal hyperbole and mass marketing in numismatics today that if we time warp back to the 60s, 70s, or even the 80s these marketing efforts did not exist. If one said back then that there would one day be a multiplicity of television shows of great length devoted solely to the selling of coinsyou would not be believed!! So, in today's collecting world we do have television shows dedicated not just to the selling of coins but also art and jewelry. What could possibly be next?

In my view the hosts/moderators of these shows seem more like they're selling used cars or soy bean futures than coins. Thankfully, there is one exception to this and that is RCTV hosted by Rick Tomaska.

On this television program you are able to have many mini-presentations on U.S. Numismatics multiple times a week in your own home. Rick is an expert in numismatics and specializes in U.S. Halves and has written a number of books on coin topics published by Whitman Publishing Company ie; "A Guide Book of Franklin & Kennedy Half Dollars". Just listen to his presentations on TV and you will learn. If you have a HD television the coin photos and close ups show in minute detail what you should be looking for on a coin. The best part of this television show is that it doesn't cost one red cent or a Buffalo nickel to watch....just some time.

No, I am not getting an endorsement fee for mentioning RCTV, just a self-reward by pointing you in one of the right directions for expanding your knowledge base in numismatics.

ALTERED & COUNTERFEIT COIN SUMMARY

The 1909 S VDB Lincoln Cent is historically the most altered and counterfeited U.S. coin and it can show us an example of what to look out for on any other issues. The "S" mintmark can be embossed or also glued to the obverse of a genuine 1909 VDB cent or an outright counterfeit coin can be struck using very good dies

The genuine "S" mintmark of this series has a squared off top and bottom of the serif. Counterfeit mintmarks have a rounded off as well as slanted top and bottom of the serif or in some cases a haze or what appears to be dirt surrounding an added mintmark.



SHORT SETS THAT REMAIN AFFORDABLE

1943 PDS Lincoln Steel Cents



2009 PDS Lincoln 100th Anniversary Reverse



1857-1858 Flying Eagle Cent, about \$400 in AU50



1934-1938 Buffalo Nickels, about \$500 in MS60



1942-1945 Silver Jefferson Nickels, about \$140 in MS63

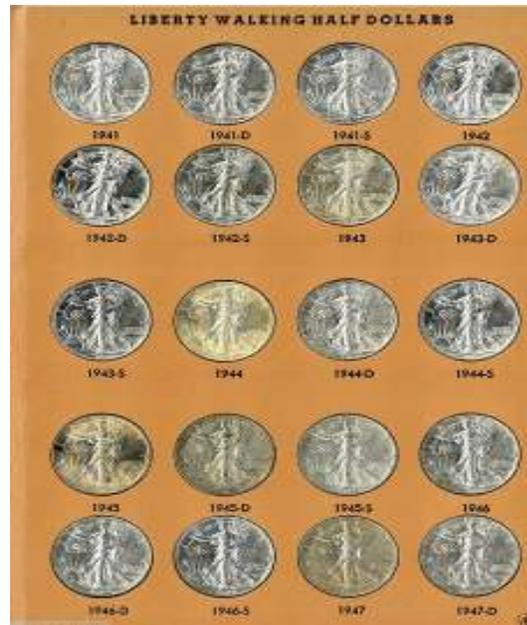
1941-1945 Mercury Dimes, about \$150 in MS63



1878S-1882 S Mints Morgan Dollars
About \$325 to \$400 in MS63



1921 to 1935 Peace Dollars by Date
About \$900 in MS60



1941 to 1947 Walking Liberty Half Dollars
About \$850 in MS60 or better

CURRENCY : Very affordable and interesting!

Occupation CurrencyFrance, Germany, Italy, Austria & Japan of WW II

Philippine Guerilla Notes or Emergency Provincial Notes of WW II

NOTE: Your frame and matting to display these issues will probably cost you more than the notes in Crisp Uncirculated condition themselves!!



Austria Occupation Notes, Series 1944



Mechanical Hub Doubling.....interesting to look for;

Flying Eagle, on beak and top of UNITED Buffalo Nickel, on profile of Indian



CREDITS & RESOURCES

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3. Wikipedia
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5. Josef Klaus, Occupation Notes
6. Michael Butler, Mechanical Hub Doubled Buffalo Nickel
7. Great Southern Coins, photo
8. Lloyd Chan, photos
9. Dave Davis, photos