

Collectors Forum

A group of collectors meeting on the fourth Monday of each month at the North Richland Hills Library. This is a casual meeting with no specific format, but with a topic for each meeting (suggestions are welcome) and the conversation is allowed to flow freely. The next meeting will be held on Monday, June 26th.

This meeting is open to anyone interested, and is not associated with NETCC. There are no dues, no membership rolls, just fun. If you or someone you know is interested, contact Kevin Kell: kevinkell@1scom.net.

Bicentennial Coinage

Congress established the American Revolutionary Bicentennial Commission in 1966 to plan the 1976 bicentennial of American Independence. The Commission in turn proposed production of a commemorative half dollar for the Bicentennial, later calling for special designs for all denominations of US coinage for the Bicentennial.

While this appeared to be a popular concept, the US Mint strongly opposed the program due to the abuses in the commemorative programs in the 1930's. Therefore, Congress failed to pass any program authorizing Bicentennial coinage.

A compromise was finally hammered out which called for circulating coins. The obverse of current quarters, halves and dollars would continue to bear the likenesses of Washington, Kennedy and Eisenhower to be struck in 1975 and 1976. Regardless of when struck, each coin would bear the double date 1776–1976. No coins dated 1975 of any of the three denominations were to be minted. Circulation pieces would continue to be copper nickel clad.



A nationwide competition was conducted, resulting in submission of some 900 designs. After an exhaustive year-long process, the winners were announced on *The Today Show* in early 1974. Jack L. Ahr's design featuring a colonial drummer, with a torch of victory surrounded by 13 stars was selected for the quarter. Seth Huntington's image of Independence Hall was selected for the half dollar while Dennis R. Williams' Liberty Bell against the moon was successful for the dollar. Williams, at age 21 the youngest person to design a US coin, was an art student who had originally created his design for a class assignment.



Soon after the announcement, Ahr was accused of copying his drummer from a 1973 stamp by the stamp's designer, William A. Smith; however, it became obvious that both artists had been inspired by Archibald Willard's 1876 painting *Spirit of '76*.

Congress also mandated 45,000,000 partially-silver pieces be struck for collectors. These coins would be placed in 15 million 3-coin sets by the San Francisco mint – 11 million sets in uncirculated and 4 million in proof. The issue prices were \$7 and \$15, respectively.

Once striking began, the Mint found that the copper nickel clad dollar was striking indistinctly, a problem not seen with the silver pieces. The Mint modified the dies; the most noticeable change is that the revised Type II coins have narrower, sharper lettering on the reverse. All silver pieces (struck only at San Francisco) are Type I; all three mints struck both Type I and Type II copper nickel clad pieces. All dollars included in 1975 proof sets are Type I; all those included in 1976 proof sets are Type II. Bicentennial coins for collectors were not delivered until after July 4, 1975. The Bicentennial pieces, in clad metal, were included in 1975 proof sets and mint sets together with 1975-dated cents, nickels and dimes.

All three coins remain common today due to the quantity struck. The US Mint had feared that had it allowed 1975-dated coins to be produced, widespread hoarding would occur. In a bit of irony, the public loved the designs and hoarded them anyway. It is estimated that 250 million of the quarters (approximately one-third of the total mintage) never circulated and are still held by the public today.

Special Meeting Activity Calendar

- June** – Youth Night
- July** – Weenie Roast
- September** – Show and Tell Night
- November** – Veteran's night,
Officer/Director elections
- December** – Christmas party

We need volunteers to give programs in 2017. Contact Kevin Kell if you have an interest.

Upcoming Local Coin Shows

- June 2-4** – TNA Coin and Currency Show, Arlington Convention Center. \$3 or free with TNA membership.
- June 9-10** – Five State Coin & Currency Show, 3310 Troup Hwy., Tyler. Free.
- July 7-9** – Texas Coin Show, Grapevine Convention Center. \$3 or free with NETCC membership.
- August 4-6** – Cowtown Coin Show, Forest Hill Civic/Convention Center. \$3.
- September 9** – Waco Fall Coin Show, Bellmead Civic Center, Bellmead. \$2.

May New Members: Byron Behrens.

May Time Visitors: Bryon Behrens.