



*We normally meet at the El Segundo Library on Mariposa Avenue, West of Sepulveda, South of LAX. Next meeting: Thurs., September 10th, 6:30PM*

## The Confederate Half Dollar



The US Branch Mint at New Orleans, as illustrated on September 11, 1858 by Ballou's Pictorial magazine.

At the onset of the war, there were three government mints operating in the South, located at New Orleans, Louisiana, at Charlotte, North Carolina, and at Dahlonega, Georgia. The New Orleans facility was by far the busiest, minting large quantities of gold and silver coins.

On January 26, 1861, the State of Louisiana seceded from the Union and shortly thereafter seized control of the New Orleans Mint. On March 7, Louisiana transferred control of the New Orleans Mint to the Confederacy. The Mint Superintendent, William A. Elmore, retained his position only after taking an oath of allegiance to the CSA. The mints at Charlotte and Dahlonega, seriously lacking a bullion supply, likewise came under the control of the Confederacy, but were quickly relegated to assay office status and never factored into the plans of the CSA.



Jefferson Davis, the first and only President of the CSA.

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## The Confederate Half Dollar

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Jefferson Davis and other leaders of the South envisioned minting coins bearing new CSA designs, to assert their newfound sovereignty and earn the respect and possible assistance of European powers. The New Orleans Mint, renamed the Confederate State Mint, was to be the major hub of coinage activity, as an ample supply of bullion was available to the Mint, at least initially.

While CSA Treasury Secretary Christopher Memminger was arranging for the creation of a Confederate half dollar design, minting of Union half dollars continued as before using the federal dies.

In total, 2,532,633 half dollars bearing the 1861-O date were struck, 330,000 by the authority of the US government, 1,240,000 in February by the State of Louisiana, and 962,633 under the watchful eye of the Confederacy. Since the same dies were used throughout this period, it is impossible to tell which 1861-O's were struck by whom. 17,741 gold double eagles were also issued at the New Orleans Mint during this time, and these too, are indistinguishable, as to which government entity.



Confederate Half Dollar, restruck in the 1880's by J. Walter Scott from the original Confederate reverse die, this restrike is nearly identical to the four authentic CSA half dollars.

In early April 1861, Memminger approved of a Confederate half dollar design. The obverse was to be made from the same Liberty Seated federal die, but the proposed reverse featured a new Confederate coat of arms, surrounded by cotton and sugar cane, important symbols of the southern economy.

Before full scale minting of the CSA half dollar could commence, the price of precious metals rose dramatically as the reality of war set in, causing coinage throughout all of America, both north and south, to disappear rapidly. Tangible assets, such as precious metal coins, were considered a safe harbor in stormy waters.

Moreover, bullion supplies at New Orleans were exhausted, with no hope of replenishment any time soon. Given these circumstances, Memminger concluded that releasing Confederate coinage would be futile, and ordered a suspension of minting operations.

Little was it known then, that before shutting down on April 30, four genuine CSA half dollars were struck by Chief Coiner Benjamin F. Taylor, one of which was presented to President Jefferson Davis. Taylor kept one of the half dollars for himself, while the other two went to local dignitaries. Taylor also retained possession of the dies.

## The Confederate Half Dollar

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North Carolina fractional Civil War currency, face value of 25 cents, issued 1864.

In the absence of circulating coinage, the Confederacy and several states printed paper money. In addition to printing notes of greater dollar denominations, fractional notes, also known as “paper coins” having faces values less than one dollar, entered the channels of commerce.

In April 1862, Union forces under the command of Captain David Farragut, captured the city of New Orleans. With the primary minting facility in the hands of the North, the goal of establishing a secure coinage system indicative of a self-sufficient Confederacy began to fade badly.

On May 10, 1865 Confederate President Jefferson Davis was taken into custody by Union troops at Irwinville, Georgia, marking the formal end of the Confederacy and the American Civil War. Four long years of widespread destruction and intense bloodshed, claiming the lives of over 600,000 Americans, had mercifully come to an end.

Writing publicly in early 1879, former CSA Chief Coiner B.F. Taylor revealed the existence of the four original 1861 Confederate half dollars. Responding to Taylor’s disclosure, Jefferson Davis admitted that at the moment of his capture in 1865, he was still carrying the Confederate half dollar given to him four years earlier, but indicated it was stolen at the time of his arrest.

Later in 1879, Taylor sold his Confederate half dollar and dies to E. Mason Jr. of Philadelphia, who in May resold both the coin and the dies for \$310 to J. Walter Scott, a New York coin and stamp dealer. In 1882 Scott sold the half dollar for \$870, but chose to hang onto the dies for the purpose of manufacturing restrikes. After refurbishing the old dies, Scott produced 500 white metal tokens, successfully testing the Confederate reverse, pairing it up with a homemade Scott Company obverse die.



Confederate Half Dollar Scott Obverse. Inscribed on the Scott obverse: 4 ORIGINALS STRUCK BY ORDER OF C.S.A. IN NEW ORLEANS 1861 REV. SAME AS U.S. (FROM ORIGINAL DIE SCOTT). Scott used his “front” side die while testing the manufacturing worthiness of the Confederate half dollar rev. die. Photo of a modern day replica of Scott token obverse.

## The Confederate Half Dollar

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Pleased by the results of the white metal tokens, Scott then proceeded to obtain from circulation 500 half dollars dated 1861 in various conditions and used these for restrikes. At first, he struck the Confederate die directly onto the reverses of a few of these half dollars, but some of the federal reverse was still visible. To overcome this problem, Scott then completely "shaved off" the reverse design from what remained of his 500 half dollars before continuing to make restrikes.

Today, the Confederate half dollar specimen originally belonging to B.F. Taylor is housed in the collection of the American Numismatic Society in New York City. Two of the other half dollars are also privately held. The fourth authentic 1861 strike was actually found circulating in New York late in the 19th century (perhaps the specimen stolen from Jefferson Davis?), and was sold on October 14, 2003 for an astounding \$550,000.

Prior to the 2003 sale, it had been many years since any of the four genuine Confederate half dollars were sold. Based on this high level of interest in Confederate-related coinage, we can safely conclude that J. Walter Scott's white metal restrikes could easily bring maybe \$800 to \$4,500, depending upon condition. Scott's half dollar restrikes are worth \$5,000 to \$11,500, again depending upon condition, although the small handful of his restrikes onto "unshaved" 1861 half dollars are very rare and command much higher prices. All of Scott's restrikes are easy to distinguish from the four genuine CSA half dollars because the obverses were distorted and flattened during the restrike action.

Four lonely Confederate half dollars are the highest profile survivors of a long-ago vision to establish a coinage system representing southern values. From President Jefferson Davis on down, the South's leaders believed distinctive coins, indicative of a self-reliant nation, would help them achieve independence. Many numismatists nowadays wish there were more CSA coins available to collect from the Civil War, the most crucial episode in America's past. Imagine how the road of history might have detoured from the path we know today had the Confederacy's desire to mint millions of its own coins been fulfilled. Who knows, the short-lived republic might not have been so short-lived after all.



## ***Club News From August***

The August meeting was called to order at 6:48 PM with 29 people present., 7 new guests and 3 old guests present. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by John F. The membership drawing for July was held belatedly with Jack vB winning \$3, which he took in tickets. The membership drawing for August was then held with John S. winning that \$3, which he also took in tickets. The minutes for July were approved, followed by the Treasurer's report.

The turnout of 29 people at the meeting once again set a new record for our coin club. Just last month the total was 28—wow, we are doing well. Many thanks to all for their attendance.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Garn A.—Reminded the members about the upcoming Van Nuys Coin Show 9/27 and the Long Beach Coin Show 9/10-12. Also the Golden State Coin Show & gold drawing on 8/22-23.

George S.—Told us about the Tool Collectors Swap Meet on 8/15 at 4020 Sepulveda Blvd. Culver City, CA 90230, 6 AM—Noon.

Jack vB.—Passed out a member badge to one of our newest members, Gordon Wilvang.

Garn A.—Started a lively round of stories from members that attended the ANA World's Fair of Money.

### **NEW GUESTS**

Art Winter—Friend of Bernie Malis. Collects Morgan dollars, various mint products such as proofs, mint sets, etc. He joined our club tonight.

Bill Chin—Heard about us at the ANA Show. Collects Morgan dollars, junk, UK & Canadian coins. He also joined our club tonight.

Bob H.—Started collecting when he was about 7 or 8 until he was 11. His dad had a steamer trunk that he went through that had a bag of beat up coins from various places he had been during the service. That got him going.

Eric Petersen—Friend of Jack vB and father of old guest, Ryan Petersen. He will be bringing Ryan to the meetings when he is able. Both Eric & Ryan joined the club tonight. They both attended the ANA Show and have a lot to tell the club about it next month. Ryan now has ten merit badges, including the Coin Collecting Merit Badge, which he earned this past month along with progressing from Second Class to First Class Rank.

Scott Stahler—Friend of Steve D. His father kept all of his change in margarine containers, never spending any of his change for 15-20 years. Scott went through the change and filled up most of the slots of folders for cents, nickels, etc. He finally finished up the sets of cents and "Walker" half dollars. He then got interested in "Colonials".

Jim Kelley—Went to the ANA Show and found a flyer about us there. He has been collecting for years and is now ready to sell.

Lynda Richard—She is a past President and Secretary of our club but hasn't been attending for a long time. She has been very active in many coin clubs and activities for many years. She is moving from one residence to another and she found some very nice plastic coin set holders for birth sets in the process. She donated a box full of the holders to the club to do with as it wishes. Many thanks to Lynda for her donation.

### **SHOW AND TELL**

Jack vB.—A 1917 \$2 note that he purchased on eBay. He had a problem with the seller after he gave negative feedback.

Eric A.—Three British type coin sets in folders. He told a story about the tradition of changing the direction (left or right) of the monarchs depicted on the British coins. He told us why one of the monarchs did not switch directions on his coinage.

## **August Club News-Continued**

### **SHOW AND TELL (continued)**

Valentijn R.—An advertisement for 12 golden dollars for \$34.95 from the Danbury Mint.

John F.—Metal detecting finds. He went on a Colorado Hunt where he earned two 2 peso gold coins for he prowess. He went to a ghost town and found a pre-WWI quartermaster pin, some bullets like mini-balls and a silver necklace marked 14K. (There is no such thing as 14K silver.)

Steve D.—He went to the ANA show and while there purchased two UHR gold coins for \$1,289 each. While there he got the Mint Director, Edmond C. Moy, to autograph the Statement of Authenticity and also the booklet that comes with the coin(s).

Steve R.—Brought in a rolled penny he bought at the ANA Show along with a 100 Rupee note.

### **MEMBER SPOTLIGHT—Bernie Malis**

Bernie started collecting as a child. His dad took the family on a trip to Ohio and along the way they stopped at the grandmother's house. She gave Bernie and his brother each a gold coin—a quarter eagle to his older brother and Bernie received a \$1 gold coin. After he got into coin collecting he found out that the \$1 coin was a Louis & Clark commemorative coin that was worth much more than the quarter eagle his brother got.

In 1959 at 9 years old he started putting away BU Franklin half dollars. He sold some of his collection over the last few years, but he filled up his Jefferson and Buffalo nickels folders.

He collected coins until he was about 18 years old and then got more interested in girls.

He started working for Hughes Aircraft in 1970 and in 1972 purchased a 1909-S VDB cent from a Hughes fireman at the Fullerton facility. He bought a coin magazine that had an advertisement for a coin dealer in Westchester that was 10-12 blocks from his house. He ended up buying all the coins he could afford, but last year he start selling. He attended the Playa del Rey coin show and sold a lot of items. While there he purchased some paper money.

Then he started going after Carson City Silver Dollars—and 1883-CC in MS-63 and a 188?-CC in MS-65. He is now interested in increasing the quality of his collection and decreasing the quantity. He brought in his Civil War Collection, Bald Eagle Set and some Silver Strikes that he purchased at a swap meet.

### **BREAK TIME**

The Rosselots, Valentijn & John—Brought the refreshments—Chocolate cake, lemon/raspberry sponge cake, a veggie tray along with sodas. Wow, that was a great layout—thanks go out to the Rosselots. Jack vB. brought a load of home-made banana bread to add to the feast.

### **COIN AUCTION**

We had 24 lots from four groups that were auctioned off with lively bidding on several lots.

### **COIN RAFFLE**

- |                                  |                                      |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1.) 1930-P—Buffalo 5c-Jack vB.   | 8.) 1928-P—St. Liberty 25c-Steve D.  |
| 2.) 1908-P—Buffalo 5c-Clint McG. | 9.) 1956-D—Wash. 25c-Anthony L.      |
| 3.) 1948-D—Lincoln 1c-Steve D.   | 10.) 1948-P—Walker 50c-Art W.        |
| 4.) 1943-D—Jefferson 5c-Steve D. | 11.) 1918-P—Barber 50c-Art W.        |
| 5.) 1928-P—Mercury 10c-Steve R.  | 12.) 1968-D—Kennedy 50c-Gordon W.    |
| 6.) 1948-S—Roosevelt 10c-Lou B.  | 13.) 2009-Proof Set—Terr. 25c-Bob H. |
| 7.) 1909-P—Barber 25c-Anthony L. |                                      |

### **WANT LIST**

There were no entries this month.

Six new members signed up tonight—bringing our membership total to 32!!!

***President's Message***  
**SEPTEMBER 2009**

As I subscribe to the Numismatic News, I have seen quite a bit of controversy in letters to the editor about the \$6 admission price for non-members attending the ANA Convention. The majority of people are blaming low attendance figures on the \$6 admission plus parking as too high a price to pay in this economy. While we are throwing blame around, let's add in another \$10 for snacks and drinks purchased from the Convention Center food vendors...a total of \$20 to \$30 that is taken out of attendee budgets instead of spending it on coins.

In several of my President's Letters this year, I have been an advocate of our members attending coin shows as often as they can. More and more coin dealers are going out of business and we need to support them if we want to preserve our pipeline of coins flowing into the hobby. But with the ANA and the LA Convention Center taking such a bite out of a person's spending budget, it makes it very hard for people to attend.

One could make the same arguments about the upcoming Long Beach Coin Show. Over the years, most who live in the LA area have grown accustomed to paying admission and parking and incidentals to attend the show for a day. But at each Long Beach show I have attended this year, I have continued to hear dealers complain about low attendance. The number of dealer booths that are closed on Saturday mornings of the shows seem to be alarmingly higher with each show. Something needs to be done to reverse this trend.

If you are on their mailing list, the Long Beach Coin Club sends a postcard to you with a \$2.00 off admission coupon on the card. You can also print the same \$2.00 off coupon from their website ([www.longbeachexpo.com](http://www.longbeachexpo.com)). Or, you can get this discount at the counter by showing your Culver City Coin Club membership card. These discounts have always been available so, while appreciated, are not enough of an incentive for people to attend. With this economy, something more dramatic needs to happen.

One of the letters to the editor of the Numismatic News was from the Bourse Chairman of the Missouri Numismatic Society show in August. His letter states that they had a record attendance at their show despite the economy. The reason was that they did whatever it took to get the public to come, including free admission and free parking. Their dealers were extremely happy, which makes it better for the future of the shows. Why can't our local show sponsors and venue managers be as smart?!

Oh, and FYI—The Long Beach Coin Show will be held on September 10<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> at the Long Beach Convention Center. As our next meeting is scheduled for the Thursday, September 10<sup>th</sup>, not many of us will have had a chance to attend the show before our meeting. If any of our members are able to attend the show on Thursday, I would appreciate a quick update of your thoughts on the show. Until then...

***Collect Early and Often***

*Garn*

**Treasury Redeems Dirty, Shredded & Burned Money**

(article submitted by Lou Block)

The U.S. Treasury Department's Mutilated Currency Division has a job that's often smelly and more challenging than a huge crossword puzzle.

You probably haven't heard about it unless you have lost cash, usually through fire, flood, exposure to chemicals, rodent or insect infestation or deterioration if buried.

Each year, the Treasury exchanges unusable currency for new money. It fields about 30,000 claims and redeems about \$30 million every year to some very relieved people.

In one case, a farmer dropped his wallet in a field and a cow ate it.

He slaughtered the cow and sent its stomach to the Mutilated  
*(Continued in Column 3)*

**REFRESHMENTS**

September—Carol Craft  
October—Richard Navarro

**MEMBER SPOTLIGHT**

September—John Sherman  
October—George Gill

**COIN SHOWS**

**Sep 10-12 Long Beach**  
45th Annual Summer Long Beach Coin, Stamp & Collectibles Expo. Long Beach Convention Center Hall A, 100 S. Pine Ave. ADM

**Oct 10-11 Buena Park**  
Buena Park Coin Show, Retail Clerks Hall, 8550 Stanton Ave.  
Hrs: Sat. 10AM-6PM, Sun. 10AM-4PM ADM

**Treasury....** *(Continued from Col. 1)*

Currency Division. Though identifying the money was not a pleasant task, the farmer got his \$600 back in the form of a check.

In another case, a dog had eaten a lady's money, and it ultimately came out the other end in pieces. Identifying the money was smelly detective work, but she got her money back.

Money buried in a dry climate can petrify, making it difficult to pry apart to determine denominations. Money buried in wet climates can turn into a mass resembling oatmeal. The Treasury has tactics to identify the bills and will redeem them. Sometimes the sender has to sign an affidavit for a claim.

Note that if you have currency that is damaged but more than half of the bill is intact, any bank will exchange it for new money.

Any items of interest for this newsletter can be mailed or emailed to:

CCCC Journal  
c/o Jack von Bloeker III  
5714 Apia Drive  
Cypress, CA 90630  
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The Culver City Coin Club normally meets on the second Thursday of every month in the El Segundo Library on Mariposa Avenue, West of Sepulveda, South of LAX.  
Next meeting Thursday, September 10th @ 6:30 PM

Take the 105 Freeway West to the end, go about a mile or so to Main Street, turn left, the Library will be on your right after a right turn on Mariposa.  
  
We will be in the Meeting Room downstairs.



**2009 OFFICERS**

President  
Garn Anderson

Vice President  
Richard Navarro

Secretary/Editor  
Jack von Bloeker III

Treasurer  
George Gill

