

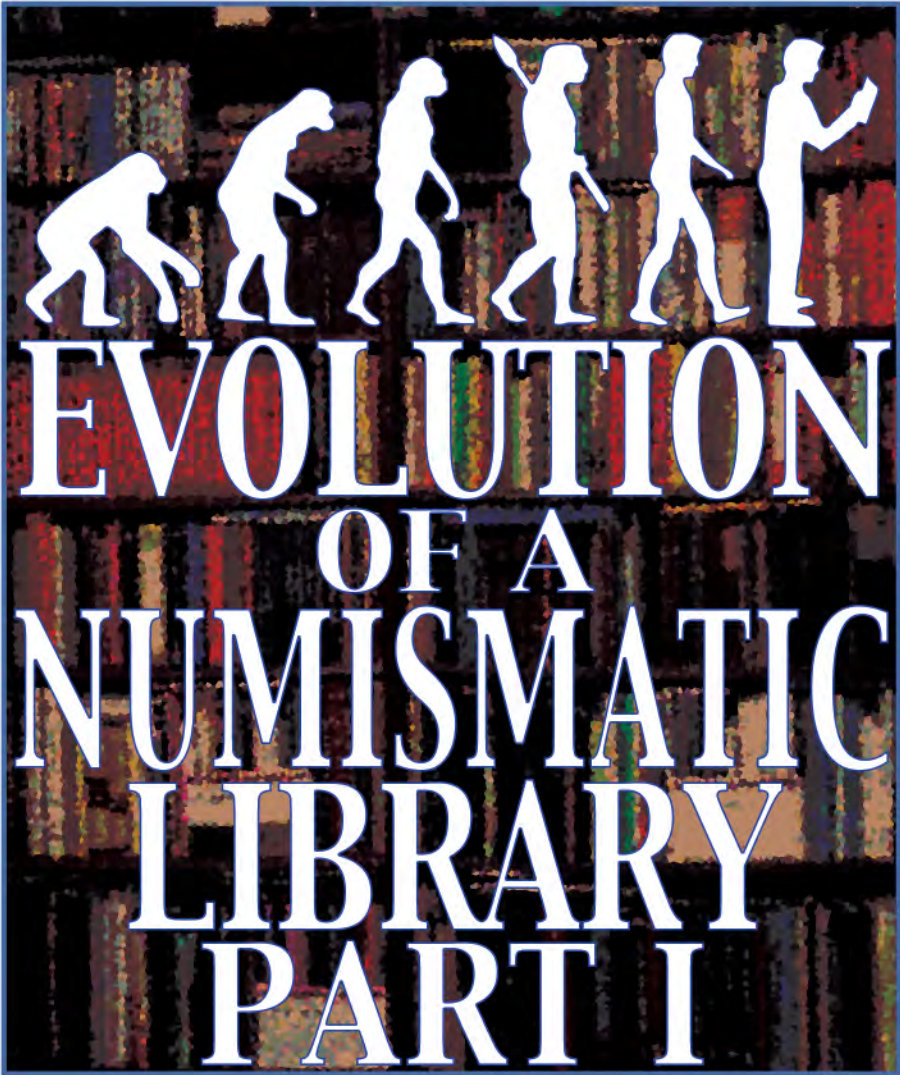
THE Asylum

VOL. 38 NO. 2



SUMMER 2020

Quarterly Journal of the Numismatic Bibliomania Society • COINBOOKS.ORG





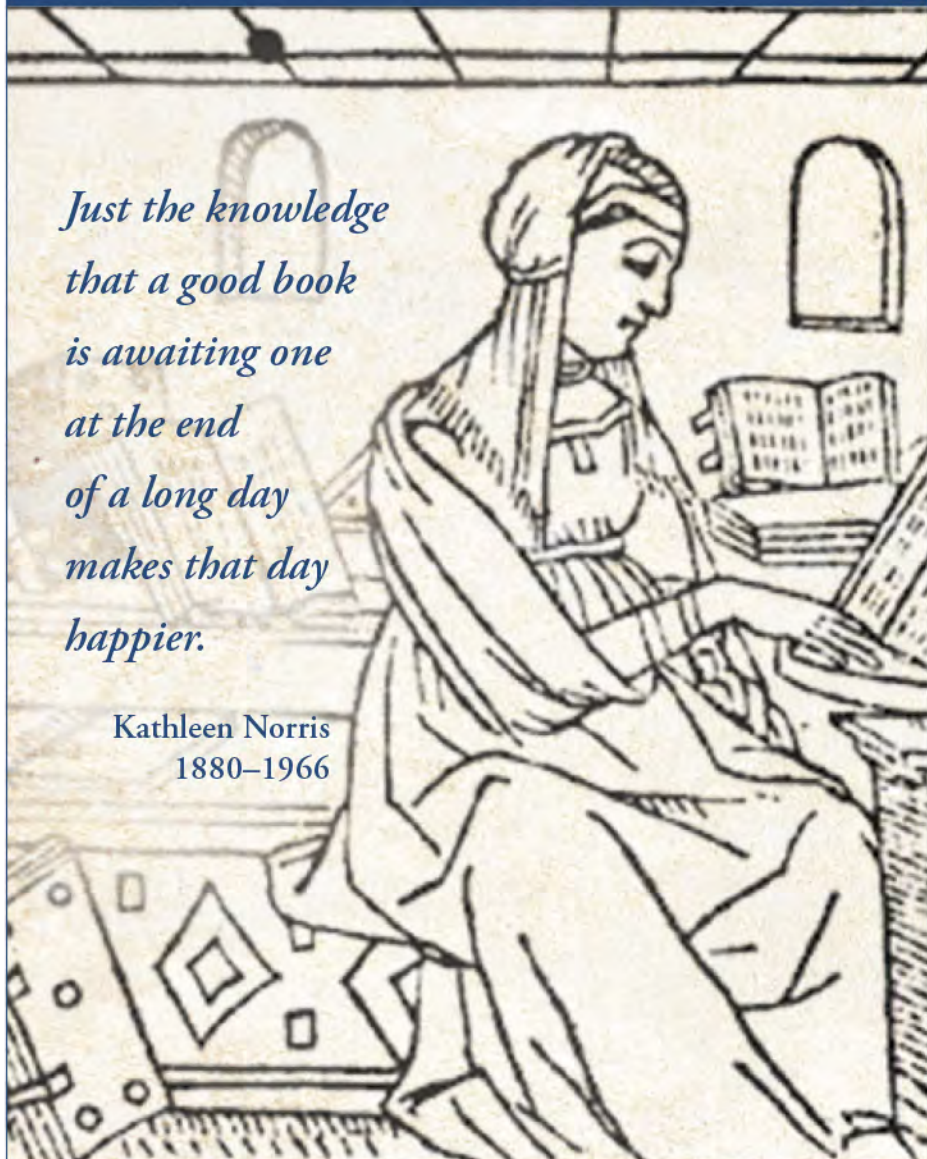
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*Just the knowledge
that a good book
is awaiting one
at the end
of a long day
makes that day
happier.*

Kathleen Norris
1880–1966



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Evolution of a Numismatic Library: Part 1

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Tom Harrison
NBS President

Message from the President

I hope everyone is staying safe and well during these challenging times. This extended stay-at-home period provides a great opportunity to spend some extra time in our libraries re-discovering neglected volumes, organizing our shelves or writing that article for *The Asylum* that we have been contemplating.

As I am writing this message, the status of the ANA World's Fair of Money in Pittsburg is still uncertain. While remaining hopeful the convention will happen, we are considering alternative plans should cancellation be necessary. Regardless, it will be imperative for the financial health of the NBS that we conduct our annual benefit auction. As always, we truly appreciate novel items and donations with a value of over \$100 that will spark spirited bidding (while donations of less expensive material are also appreciated, we have some on hand that we could not fit into last year's sale). Again this year, David Fanning has graciously offered to accept and catalog items for this event. Your much appreciated donations can be sent to: Kolbe & Fanning, 141 W. Johnstown Road, Gahanna, Ohio 43230. Donations should be received by June 30. As plans develop, please watch for updates in *The E-Sylum*.

During these uncertain times, may your numismatic library provide investigation, discovery, and most of all, enjoyment.



Maria Fanning,
The Asylum Editor

Message from the Editor

Welcome to our theme issue for the year: "Evolution of a Numismatic Library." It seems as though everyone is taking advantage of our current strange circumstances by staying at home and enjoying their numismatic libraries to their fullest. We received so many submissions for this special issue that we were forced to divide it into two parts. The second part will be published in the fall issue with our reports from the ANA's World's Fair of Money, currently scheduled to take place in Pittsburgh. I do hope to be able to travel there myself this year to thank as many of you in person, assuming it will be possible to do so.

Included with the current issue is the ballot for *The Asylum* 2019 Awards: the Jack Collins Award for best first-time author and the Joel J. Orosz Award for best article of the year. You may vote by filling out and mailing the ballot to me at the address on the ballot or by voting online at www.surveymonkey.com/r/9P5TRTJ.

Until we can meet again, please continue to share your numismatic bibliomania with the rest of us through *The Asylum*!



Donate to the NBS Benefit Auction at ANA



Sample lots from 2018 NBS Auction

Each year at the ANA World's Fair of Money, the Numismatic Bibliomania Society conducts a benefit auction to raise funds for the organization. All items sold are donated to the NBS by members and 100% of the proceeds go to the NBS treasury.

Suggested lot value is \$100 and up, but all donations will be accepted. A catalog will be compiled and distributed prior to the auction and absentee bid may be placed for those who cannot attend.

Literature donations may be sent to:

NBS Auction
David Fanning
141 W. Johnstown Road
Gahanna OH 43230

The Canadian Numismatic Bibliography: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

By Darryl A. Atchison, F.C.N.R.S.

In the beginning...

I first became involved in coin collecting in the early 1970s at about age eight or nine when I was given a number of strange, foreign coins from various family members. Since then my interest in numismatics has never diminished.

I joined my first coin club around the time of the Montreal Olympics in 1976 and bought most of my coins from a gentleman called Mr. Reid who ran a menswear shop in Chatham, Ontario. He sold his coins from a back room in the store (all-in-all it was a pretty low-key affair). At that time I was primarily interested in Canadian copper cents—especially the large cents which were issued from 1858–1920—a series which I still believe is the most-attractive of all of Canada’s circulating coins. Over the next few years I acquired many coins from Mr. Reid, until he retired and closed the store. The Kent Coin Club had monthly meetings in Chatham’s library (and I suppose they still do) and had an annual coin show at the Wheels’ Inn, although I didn’t find out about these until I was around 14 years old.

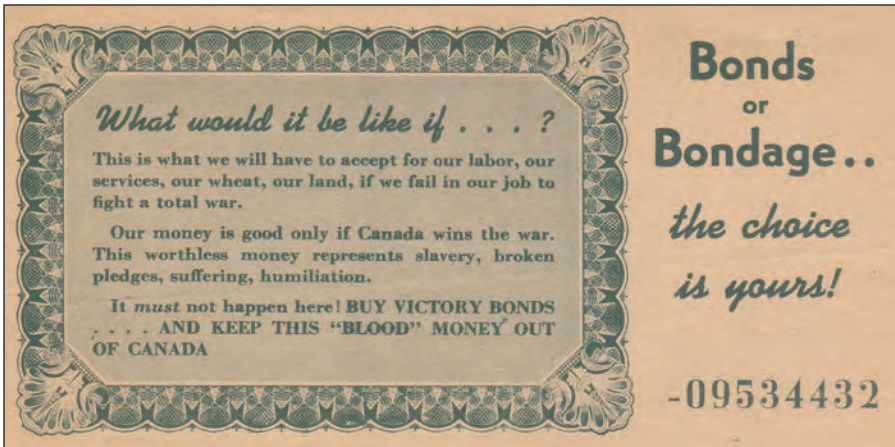
I remember travelling to a coin show in Windsor in the late 1970s where I witnessed the sale of three 1921 five-cent coins for the princely sum of \$9,000. To put this into perspective, you should know that my entire annual budget for buying coins at that time was well below \$100; coming as I did from a family of blue-collar workers with little spare cash for such pastimes. I remember I had about \$30 to spend one year at the coin show. I had saved up for a couple of months and my parents gave me a bit more money on the day. I can still remember the numerous ‘treasures’ I left the show with on that day, including a few late-Victorian twenty-five cent pieces and a couple of Edwardian fifty cent pieces which were all well-worn, a particularly attractive 1919 five cent piece in AU condition, uncirculated examples of both types of the 1967 \$1 notes, and a few obscure tokens. I was thrilled with my loot and I still have all of these pieces today.

I still knew nothing about organized numismatics nor had I been introduced to numismatic literature. I didn’t see a copy of *Canadian Coin News* for the first time until sometime around 1981, a couple of years before I graduated from high school. My local newsagent did stock a couple of U.S. magazines including *Coinage* which I bought each month. I think the cover price was around a couple of bucks or so. As I certainly couldn’t have afforded most of the pieces discussed, I learned to appreciate the history of the pieces and the stories which they often told—if you took the time to listen.

Sometime around 1975 or so, my parents took us on a trip to Ottawa where we visited the Parliament Buildings. For some strange, unknown reason, I was touched, not by the architecture, but by the symbolism of the buildings themselves. Perhaps the



"If Day" Note, obverse



"If Day" Note, reverse

fact that the Vietnam War had only recently concluded had subconsciously played on my mind. I'll never really know why, I guess. Perhaps, it was also because I had been a member of the Royal Canadian Army Cadets which I joined around that time too. There is definitely a patriotic streak in my genes. Visiting the Peace Tower and seeing the Book of Remembrance was an experience which I have not forgotten to this day! Little could I have known the long-lasting effects that boyhood trip would have on my life. I went on to a career in the now-dissolved Administrative branch of the Canadian Armed Forces which I eventually resigned at the rank of Sergeant. I also started to collect anything and everything numismatic which had a depiction of the national parliament buildings, eventually putting together a six-case non-competitive exhibit for the 1988 Ontario Numismatic Association convention in Toronto and speaking at several local coin clubs about my particular choice for a topical collection.

As a sideline, I also collected numismatica militaria, which includes things like



Original Reichsmark Note, obverse



Original Reichsmark Note, reverse

regimental coins and tokens used by particular regimental messes. I also collected Second World War military payment certificate from theatres of war where Canadians may have used these notes. In my travels, I met a retiring Regimental Sergeant Major who was serving at CFB Borden and we arranged to meet and compare collections. He had a note in his collection which I had never seen before nor had I heard about it. I had a few Canadian decorations including a Naval General Service medal which was possibly a fake. Much research would have been needed to properly attribute the piece and prove it was a genuine medal. I had neither the interest nor the motivation to carry out such a huge project at the time, and coveted this strange note immensely. After a few hours of swapping war stories we eventually concluded a trade which incorporated my medals for his note and couple of other far-less-interesting items.

I acquired the "If Day" note around 1987 and began asking everyone I knew if

they knew anything about the piece. Sometime in either 1992 or 1993, I was sitting at a CNA convention table with Graham Esler (then Curator of the Bank of Canada Currency Collection) and I took the opportunity to show him the note... which I still knew nothing about, despite having owned the piece for several years. In early 1994, a letter arrived in the post with a photocopy of an article by Herbert Friedman on propaganda notes. My "If Day" note was briefly mentioned in the text of the article and I, at last, had a solid lead on the background to this bizarre piece of Canadian history. I learned from the article that the note was issued in Winnipeg in 1942 but there was no more information beyond this. I wrote to the Winnipeg Free Press offices and they sent me copies of articles which appeared in the February 1942 papers covering the event for which the notes were originally issued. Later, I assembled an exhibit for the 1995 CNA convention in Calgary where I could display the fruits of my research and I also published an article in the *Canadian Numismatic Journal* to share the information with other collectors.

Why is this relevant?

This background information is provided because the events as they are outlined above eventually led to the *Canadian Numismatic Bibliography's* birth.

In the early 1990s I became interested in Canadian numismatic literature, primarily as a means of learning more about the pieces in my collection, but also to learn more about pieces which were not yet in my collection, including those which I didn't even know existed.

At that time, the only person selling literature in a serious way in Canada was Bill McDonald who ran a mail-order service called Marlcourt Books. I had been purchasing books from Bill for around three or four years when the Friedman article arrived in my mailbox. I casually remarked to Bill that "it would be nice if there was a listing somewhere of books and articles on Canadian numismatics" where people could go to locate references on obscure pieces. And the seed was planted. I began to catalogue my own library (which I thought was fairly extensive... boy, was I naïve).

Over the course of the next few months Bill and I spoke many other times and somehow he was convinced that I could put together this magical, mystical text which would be the cure-all for the ills of Canadian numismatic researchers. I learned in late-June of 1995 that Bill intended to propose the project to the membership of the Canadian Numismatic Research Society, having already spoken to a few other people, including Ron Greene about the idea. As I wasn't in the room at that meeting (only members of the Society can attend), I will have to take Bill's word for it when he tells me that the C.N.R.S. members eagerly embraced the idea.

Nonetheless, the CNB project officially existed. Ron was appointed as the Project Chairman and I was appointed as the Editor. We then began to put out feelers for other people we thought might be interested in assisting us. Some we wrote to and others we met in person. The response was typically one of amused interest but few really believed that such a project really had a chance of succeeding. Nonetheless, with Ron and Bill at the helm, enough interest was eventually generated to hold planning meetings.

Those of you who own copies of the CNB will already know that these planning

meetings weren't as productive as was hoped. To quote Ron from his 'Comments' in the *CNB*: "I will not dwell on the difficulties of coming to an agreement on exactly what was to be included in this work, as no agreement was ever reached." Nonetheless, I had massive optimism and persisted with the work that I was doing!

In October 1995 I somehow learned about the Armand Champa sales being conducted by Bowers & Merena. I had missed the first three sales but was able to get copies of those catalogues as well as the one for Part IV after writing to David Bowers. I knew that these catalogues would be an invaluable reference based on all of the hype (I mean advertising) which surrounded the sales. I remember the catalogue arrived in the post about four days before the sale. I can't remember whether I bid by phone (or how I bid) but somehow I managed to acquire a particularly rare book published by Warren Baker which was practically buried at the back of the sale catalogue. Thus, not only had I obtained the sales catalogues themselves as a source of research material for the *CNB* project, but I also added a piece of literature to my library as a result of getting the catalogue. This pattern would repeat itself over and over again during the course of the 12 years it took to complete the project. Fortunately, back then it was still possible to have books shipped in a large mail bag relatively cheaply. Otherwise, I could never have afforded to purchase countless books in Fred Lake's mail bid sales. The postage would have been a killer! On a separate aside, Fred became a very close friend of mine and he was very helpful when it came time to place my bids which I usually did a few days before a particular sale ended. I would tell him my bid for a particular lot and he would tell me if I was under the current bid and would then offer advice on what he thought a winning bid might be. Based on his extensive knowledge, I either increased my bid or I told him that I would have to patiently wait for the book to appear in a future sale. This allowed me to use my limited funds judiciously and I added probably a couple of hundred books to my library this way. I still miss Fred a lot and think of him often as I pick up particular books which came from his sales. Other literature dealers were also very helpful to me including: George Kolbe (who sold me a set of John Adams two-volume set on U.S. numismatic literature at a reduced price because the set had been bound upside-down); Myron Xenos who sent me countless catalogues over the years; and Remy Bourne who also held several auction sales from which I was able to add a few titles to my library over the years as well.

True Life Is Stranger Than Fiction... Or You Never Know What Lies Around The Corner

So there I was in July of 1995, having just been appointed as the editor of a project which we had then (foolishly) thought would take us five years. Over the next few months, I set myself to work on the organizational stages of the project and completed the catalogue of my own library. I had asked Ron, Bill and a few other people if they too would compile listings of their libraries and over the course of the next year or so the lists appeared from various sources.

Coincidentally, at that time, I had been dating a lovely young woman from Ireland who had lived in Vancouver for about three years. Fiona attended the 1995 Canadian Numismatic Association convention with me so that she could meet some of my 'coin

friends.' She had a good time in Calgary but I can't honestly say that she was enamoured with numismatics. Sorry to break it to you all, but she has a secret name for all of us eccentrics—'numis-spastics'—and I have to admit that it makes me laugh every time I think about it. Despite this, over the new few months things were moving along extremely nicely on both the project and the relationship, until one late-November evening when I received the news that Fiona had decided it was time to go home because she missed her family. Her departure date was set for a little over three weeks away which meant she would be back on the Emerald Isle in time for Christmas. Curiously, there was no mention of breaking up or anything like that. So, I decided that decisive action was needed. Through a number of secret phone conversations, I managed to make all of the necessary arrangements for a long-distance Christmas morning proposal—literally thanks to the help of 'Ma Bell' and Father Fitzgibbon. Needless to say, Fiona accepted my proposal and plans for the wedding were set in motion. I then set about calling all of the other parties who would be interested in the upcoming celebration and informed my employer that I would be leaving for Ireland sometime in mid-1996—probably the longest, open-ended notice-period ever given.

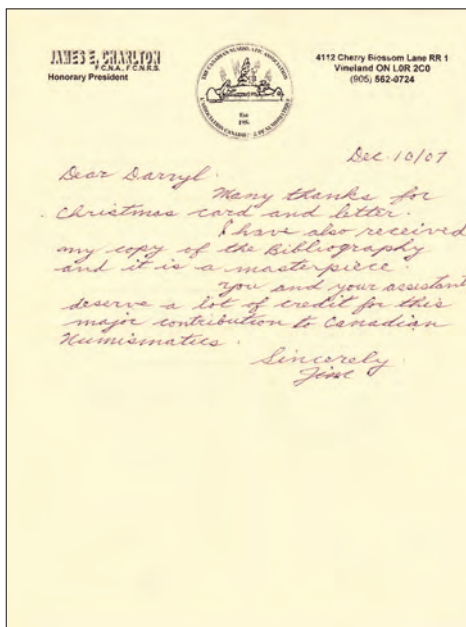
In June of 1996, I gave my boss my definitive departure date and made plans to sell-off or dispose of anything that wasn't going with me to Ireland. I packed up 25 boxes of numismatic literature as well as a cabinet-type victrola which contained photographs and genealogical records. These were shipped by slow boat to Ireland. Other than that I took only my clothes, golf clubs, snooker cue and a few other belongings with me. I arranged to make a two-day stopover in Toronto to visit my family there and I even called in on Bill and Gwen McDonald who served me my 'last meal' and drove me to the airport. In our haste to leave, I later found out that I had left my golf hat at Bill's house. I miss Bill and the hat!

I was both excited and nervous about moving abroad. I had never even visited Ireland before this. Fiona's father collected me at the airport in Shannon and had me back in Cork a few hours later where we were happily reunited and married a few weeks later.

Things then settled down for a bit and I got back to work on the *CNB* project. So in less than a year I simultaneously started both a new life and a new project and I could not have imagined how difficult (or expensive) working on the project was going to be from the 'other side of the world.'

Sometime in late 1996, I received a letter from Whyte's Auctioneers concerning a coin show they were going to be hosting at the Gresham Hotel in Dublin in February 1997. Someone had written to Ian telling him that I had recently moved to Ireland and he asked me if I would put on an exhibit at that show. Why do I mention this? Because, once again, fate intervened and as I was setting up my exhibit, I got talking to the fellow next to me about his exhibit of Yugoslavian notes. We talked for hours and eventually became very close friends. In fact, Neil McCormick went on to become an invaluable member of the *CNB* team. His proof-reading skills and talent with languages were almost legendary. More than this though, Neil, and his close friend John Rainey, helped me to adjust to my new life in my adopted country. And as we approach the one-year anniversary of Neil's death, I am, once again, reminded of all of the friends that I made as a direct result of this project.

Coincidentally, sometime around this time, I was also introduced to Ken Lowe from The Money Tree who encouraged me to join the NBS which I did in either late 1996 or early 1997. Sadly, Ken passed away soon afterwards but to this day I still enjoy re-reading their house organ *Out On A Limb* several times yearly because—even though the tone of each issue was deliberately self-deprecating and irreverent—Ken managed to share his joy for the hobby in equal measure with lots of great advice for literature collectors. Nearly 25 years later, I still anticipate the arrival of the *E-Sylum* in my inbox every Monday morning as well as the printed *Asylum* every few months and I'm still glad that Ken introduced me to the society.



Letter from Jim Charlton

Those of you who have been members of the NBS for a long time are all-too-aware of the notices that we published in the *E-Sylum* concerning the *CNB*'s publication and I know that the countless delays caused a great deal of consternation amongst some collectors who probably believed there was no such project! Yet, I can assure you that we persevered and continued to work diligently (but certainly not tirelessly) and I was thrilled when I had the chance to meet up with Wayne Homren at Heathrow Airport in July 2007 to show him the 'physical evidence' that the *CNB* was actually real! When the publication was mailed to subscribers in October 2007, I was finally able to put down my tools and rest, knowing that we had produced an important (albeit not imperfect) text to aid current and future researchers.

Perhaps it was fitting to wait 12 years (the length of the *CNB* project itself) before sharing this with the greater numismatic fraternity. And, although I know that pride is one of the seven deadly sins, whenever I'm asked what the most valuable item in my collection is, I always point unreservedly to the letter I received from James Charlton, the 'Dean of Canadian Numismatics', in December 2007.

After all, who could have imagined that a kid from a backwater town in southern Ontario with a population of 10,000 would one day receive such praise from such a numismatic giant? Certainly not me!

One final note to close this off: since the *CNB*'s publication back in 2007 through the J.D. Ferguson Historical Foundation, I was pleased that CD copies of the text were eventually made available (minus the illustrations to avoid possible copyright disputes). Thanks to the ongoing efforts of Paul Petch, who masterfully designed the layout of the *CNB*, and without whose technical expertise the book would never have been published. Nonetheless, I am also aware of the hundreds, if not thousands, of

books and articles that have been published since then and the notion of an update (or second edition) weighs heavily on my mind regularly. Whether this will actually happen or not, I can't honestly say!

Perhaps some other foolhardy team of optimists 50 years from now will leap in head-first and tackle this challenge. If so, I genuinely wish them luck!



My Two-Part Library

By Leonard Augsburger

My numismatic library was launched in March, 1999 with the appearance of my first article in *The Numismatist*. For some reason I thought it would be a good idea to collect all the source material used for that article, which meant that I would “need” a complete set of *The Numismatist* and the *Numismatic Scrapbook*. Somehow I got connected with Dr. George Troxel, who was looking to get rid of a 40-year run of *The Numismatist*. Whether they came free or for postage I have no recollection, but a good start was had at little cost. Similarly, eBay was ramping up, and many volumes of the *Scrapbook* were acquired through that venue at minimal expense. The library was then purely for research purposes, especially for the current coin marketplace, so modern auction catalogs were added *en masse* and soon I had a full set of Bowers and many others from the major auction houses. The Krause *Auction Prices Realized* series was a necessary index, so I acquired a full set. At some point John Adams decided his basement needed purging, and a number of boxes full of random things exposed me to literature I hadn't used before. A 19th century reprint of *Bibliotheca Numaria?* What was I supposed to do with that? It contained no pictures, no prices, and no discussion of U.S. coins! My horizons have somewhat broadened in the last 20 years.

My first substantial purchase was a complete hardbound set of the Bowers & Merena auction catalog series, which I acquired out of a Remy Bourne sale. As I al-



Bowers & Merena auction catalog set



Basement library

ready had the card cover versions, this represented a strong move (perhaps “descent” might be a better word) in the bibliophilic direction. How pleasing they appeared all uniformly lined up on a shelf! Recently I visited the library of a collector who will bind even *photocopies* to achieve the right “look” in the bookshelves. The profligacy of such an endeavor is no mystery to a fellow book collector. As for the Bowers set, never mind that one uses only 10% of the catalogs for 95% of one’s inquiries, the more compelling point is that the set is *complete* and possesses pleasing *eye appeal*.

The library is divided into two parts. Reference books generally reside in the upstairs office, while auction catalogs and periodicals are stored in the basement. The first floor is off-limits to numismatic books, a pity as the dining room is rarely used for its intended purpose and would be far more suited to housing books. Many interesting titles could be added to the library, such as *My Wife Yes, My Gun Maybe, My Books Never*. There are occasional exceptions made when arranging literature. The sale catalog of Washingtonia from the Historical Society of Pennsylvania goes upstairs next to Neal Musante’s two-volume masterpiece on the subject. The John Adams fixed price list of 1794 large cents is next to Jim Neiswinter’s delightful works on early large cents. The Heritage January 2015 sale catalog of the Partrick 1792 pattern coinage is adjacent to the author’s works on that subject. And so on. The upstairs reference library is focused on works related to U.S. colonial and federal coinage, tokens and medals, paper money, and numismatic literature.

The basement is generally dedicated to periodicals and auction catalogs, with the aforementioned *Numismatist* and *Scrapbook* consuming the lion’s share of available



Upstairs library

space. The growth of Newman Portal and other online resources has greatly relieved the space situation, as several bins of modern auction catalogs have been mercifully dispatched to the great library in the sky via the recycle bin. A number of reference books also reside in the cellar depths, these go better unnamed as their authors might be offended. It is indeed a deliberate placement, as the upstairs office measures but a hundred square feet, and that on a warm day when the walls are expanding. The bar to “qualify” for a second floor shelf is significant.

Today I have less interest in purchasing bulk materials, especially those that have been digitized. Recent additions include a small group of 19th century letters related to the dismissal of a New Orleans Mint official, the deluxe 1992 reprint of the Browning book, a specially-bound copy of Eric P. Newman’s *Secret of the Good Samaritan Shilling*, and a uniformly bound set of vols. 1–30 of the *American Journal of Numismatics*. I had to justify the last purchase by selling my existing (mongrel) set. Clearly the bibliophile has taken over, as that purchase represented *zero additional content* to the library. But, how nice it looks on the shelf!



My Library

By Scott A. Blickenderfer

Books are silent sages that are always available for instruction, and don't judge when you fall asleep in lecture. I've been a coin collector since childhood, with interests that have been far-ranging. Currently I am working on a US type set, half-heartedly, and am actively working on a "centuries gold set." Most important to me, by the time I shuffle off this mortal coil, I hope to have the definitive set of Indiana Civil War Tokens. I'm a member of the ANA, ANS, CSNS, CWTS (past president), and of course the NBS.

I have always been a bibliophile. Since hoarding science fiction titles in high school and college and medical texts in med school, my library is as eclectic as my coin collecting tastes. In addition to my numismatic library, I currently have a large collection of reference and photo books on medieval calligraphy and illumination as well the best biographies I can find of all the U.S. presidents (which I'm reading *in order*).

Based on my stack of *Asylum* back issues, I have been collecting numismatic related books seriously since 2011. The usual rules applied. Prior to this mania I had a couple of standard out-of-date small books on grading, a few Red Book volumes, etc. But while coin collecting to fill spaces can be a satisfying pursuit, I became more intrigued by the nuances of the sport. To paraphrase Susser (1968), to collect coins without reading books is to sail an uncharted sea; reading books without collecting coins is to not set sail at all. I developed an aptitude for variety attribution of Bust Halves and Morgan Dollars, so standard references by Overton and Van Allen



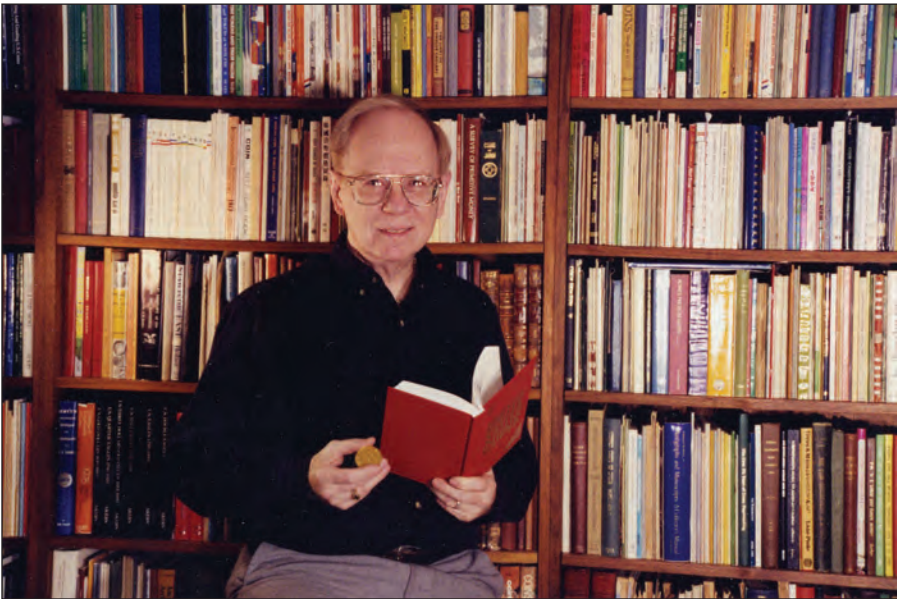
& Mallis were purchased. Then came standard references for the various coin types produced by the Mint. In rapid succession Lange, Briggs, Breen and Sheldon among others hit the shelves, and I was off to the races. Most have come from used book stores (I travel a bit) and book auctions. I go to the booksellers corner FIRST at the ANA conventions. I have books dating back to the late 16th century, and supplemental research texts that will be used for my anticipated convention exhibits. My favorites include *The 100 Greatest Ancient Coins*, signed by Berk at his offices in Chicago (now THAT'S a library!) and my complete run of Civil War Token Society *Journals*. The NBS and its educational opportunities are a welcome addition to the background of this library!



My Numismatic Library

By Ken Bressett

My home library is probably somewhat different than many others because it was started somewhere around 1942 when I was still a budding collector. My first pieces of numismatic literature were ads and brochures or promotional items. One very memorable item was the Little Orphan Annie brochure from 1936 describing a set of eight world coins as a premium for drinking Ovaltine; that I did until I earned all of them. Other early acquisitions were a 1934 B. Max Mehl mailing that first kindled my





interest in coins; a book, *From Barter to Banking* by Joseph Leeming 1940; and a copy of the old *Hub Coin Book* c. 1942.

Later I tried to accumulate or read whatever books I could find locally or in nearby libraries. Regrettably there were very few, but I was able to acquire some through the help of George Fuld, Eric Newman, and a few other bibliophiles of that time. Frank Katzen and Aaron Feldman were good sources, and I believed in “Buy the Book *Instead* of the Coin,” rather than Aaron’s usual advice. By the time I made numismatics my lifelong avocation, I had acquired a wide-ranging library of basic information about the hobby.

Throughout the years I have been fortunate to have worked with Whitman Publishing where I organized and built a comprehensive research library for them that could be used daily for study and writing. More recently I have lived near the massive ANA Library, and occasionally use that resource. Yet I continue to maintain my personal library at home so that I always have books immediately at hand when needed.

As my library grew, and interests expanded, I was eventually able to acquire references on a great many subjects. Many are treasured autographed copies from fellow authors, others are ‘working’ copies that are stuffed with clippings, notations, corrections and additional information. All are now old friends and can be easily located by their place on the shelf, their size, or binding. Some are actually organized by country, subject or theme. Nearly 1,000 devoted to U.S. material are closest at hand in my office, and cover everything from the 1652 coins of Massachusetts to articles about the use of Ramen noodles as currency in today’s prisons. The rest of the world, from 700 B.C. to the present, is covered in the main library room that holds somewhere over

3,000 volumes.

Included in that mix are copies of nearly every ANS publication ever issued, and all of the standard references for ancient coins from Barclay V. Head's classic *Historia Numorum*, to the complete works of the British museum on Greek and Roman coins and the full *Dumbarton Oaks* series on Byzantine coins.

Today much of this information is instantly available through Google or the Internet. Yet nothing can surpass the pleasure of holding an actual book in my hand and doing research the good old-fashioned way.



My Love of Numismatic Books

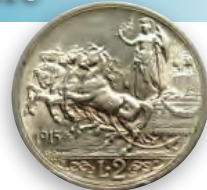
By Bill Buxton

My love of numismatic books began in 1994, with purchase of a collection from Apollo Coins. For \$40 I got started with five hardback volumes of the Garrett Collection and three more of the Louis E. Elisabeth volumes with many other hard back books. I have collected as much I can of ANS literature. The collection goes back to the antiquarian beginning. I also have collected many European series from Roman to middle ages books. It spans several rooms and now is an extensive collection.



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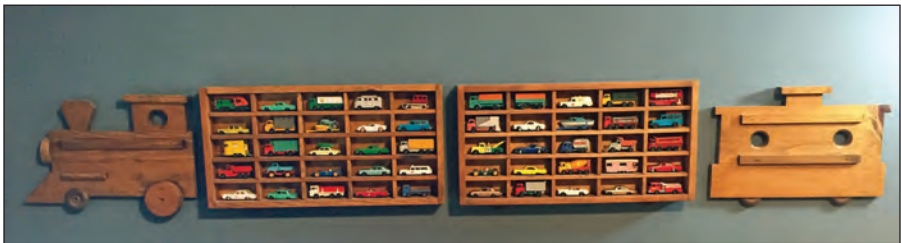
One Man's Clutter is Another Man's Art Museum

By Bill Daehn

The Autumn 2017 issue of *The Asylum* focused on stories documenting the growth of our numismatic libraries, and the story of my library's growth was included, along with photos of the bookshelves. One of the objectives for the stories in this issue of *The Asylum* is to share how our libraries are "decorated with unusual numismatic art and ephemeral items."

Luckily, I have a room in my home that I've been able to claim as my home office and numismatic library—a room which I have been able to decorate without the usual spousal-approval requirements that apply to other rooms of our home! Thus released from the confines of good taste, I've been able to display items which reflect my collecting interest—the coins of the ancient Greeks.

Adding such items creates an atmosphere conducive to immersing oneself in the ancient world. But perhaps it would be best to start at the beginning—the beginning of my activities as a collector. Although I was collecting coins before age 10, my serious collecting started earlier, with Matchbox cars, and I display a selection of that



Matchbox models of 1968

original collection in my library (all from the 1968 model year).

Now onto something more relevant to numismatics. The centerpiece of the room is a large print (albeit, too large for the room, but because I'm controlling the decorating here, that's doesn't matter!) of a scene from ancient Rome. This is a modern reproduction of Giuseppe Vasi's *Campo Vaccino*, a portion of his 1765 copper-plate etching of the ancient Roman Forum.

Flanking the print are four hand-finished castings by artist Carroll Gibson featuring her renderings of ancient Greek coin masterpieces. Each is ten inches in diameter and each is an artwork in itself, derived from the image on an actual ancient Greek coin.

Reproductions of a Greek painted vase and other sculptures provide some desk



Giuseppe Vasi's Campo Vaccino (1765) flanked by four of Carrol Gibson's coin sculptures



Zeus



Arethusa



Alexander the Great



Apollo

ornaments. And to accent the bookshelves, amid the various knick-knacks are some smaller plaster renderings of ancient Greek coins.

Another wall features a framed plate from the set of six plates produced by coin dealer Thomas Elder, circa 1911, illustrating coins from the famed Demanhur Hoard of Alexander the Great tetradrachms.

Completing the effect is a wood carving, measuring 18 inches in height, of the bust of a Greek warrior wearing a helmet decorated very much like those found on the tetradrachms of ancient Athens, complete with a full crest. This one-of-a-kind



Framed plate "Elder's Collection of Coins of Alexander the Great"

item—a delightful creation by an unknown artist—is one of my favorite library accents.

There are many more items I could illustrate but you get the idea. This all goes to show that one man's clutter is another man's art museum.



Plaster rendering of an ancient Sicilian coin provides a bookshelf accent



A wooden warrior graces one wall

“Dear John” Numismatic Movie Library

By C. Benny Dietz

I haven't included any pictures of my personal numismatic library, but you may view my set up of a library / study area in the movie “Dear John,” filmed here in Charleston, South Carolina in 2008. In addition to being the Picture Car Coordinator (cars used in filming), I volunteered to do the unofficial job of Numismatic Advisor. The Props Coordinator (Properties, or small items used in filming) was happy when I told them that they can use portions of my coin collection, but asked if I could also help out the Set Decorator (large items, like furniture, etc.) with some books to stock the character's study area. I brought them six large tubs of books and catalogs, and helped set up his research area. (Mind you, the display cases were not my idea, but they insisted on that part.) I set it up much like my own research area / library at home.

There is a copy of the DVD in the ANA library.



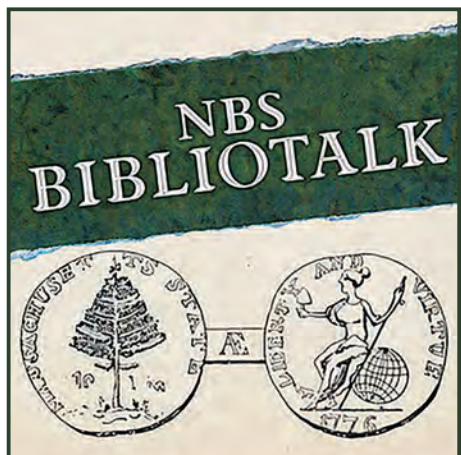
A still from the movie “Dear John” about a father connecting with his son over coin collecting

NBS Bibliotalk podcast with Lianna Spurrier

Episode 1:
“Louisville vs. Lawrenceville”
with Joel Orosz

Episode 2:
“300 linear feet of Books”
with George Kolbe

Available on Apple Podcasts,
Google Podcasts, and Spotify.



A Bibliophile's Challenge: Space, Space and More Space

By Thomas D. Harrison

In the mid 1970s when I began acquiring numismatic literature, I had no intention of becoming a numismatic bibliophile. In those early days, I was rationally collecting reference works, contemporary auction catalogs and Bowers and Ruddy's Rare Coin Review to support my coin collecting interest. Did it not make perfect sense to know the history, artistry and stories surrounding the coins I was collecting?

A year after my wife, Pam and I were married, we purchased our first home. We brought this fixer-upper back to life and began planning our next move. We decided to build. We would act as the general contractor, and my brother and I would do the majority of the construction during evenings and weekends while working our 40-hour W2 jobs. A couple of metal shelving units in the finished basement of this home served as my library and became the seed for what it would eventually become years later.

Being a transitory family, we sold our newly constructed home and purchased an older house to remodel while planning our next building project. This was when I received Pam's ultimatum. I could build one more house and that was where we would stay to raise our children. For the record, we moved five times in the first twelve years of marriage and have been in this house 38 years.

This final building project would provide several novel features, including a library for my books which had been in storage during the past couple of moves. By this time, I had joined the NBS and was receiving price lists and auction catalogs from every U.S. numismatic book dealer. Although the biblio seed had begun to sprout, I was still primarily collecting literature to support my coin hobby. I reasoned 175 feet of shelving would more than suffice. The library consisted of two walls of floor to ceiling walnut shelving, a small built-in desk and light fixtures from a local shuttered movie theater. We also incorporated two stain glass windows salvaged from an old mansion in our hometown. This worked fine for the next 20 years as my numismatic interest took a hiatus while I started a new business.

Fast forward to 2008 when my numismatic interest rekindled. Many of the coins I collected in the past had dramatically spiked in price, and I saw numismatic literature as an ideal collecting alternative. It provided a variety of collecting options that typically fit my budget constraints and fed my interest in numismatic history with its fascinating stories. The only problem I foresaw with this novel collecting strategy was the one every bibliophile dating back centuries has confronted: space, space and more space. My current library was woefully lacking.

As luck would have it, we were contemplating an addition to our home. Since this is where we wanted to spend our retirement years, we needed a first floor bedroom and a larger dining room for our growing family. And, I thought, *why not take the*





plunge and incorporate that dream repository for my “volumes” of numismatic volumes? Plans were drawn and construction was soon under way. I contracted a good friend in his mid 80s who had a large carpenter shop in his lumberyard to build 22 custom bookcases. We added track lighting and a large antique oak library table for a desk. With construction completed and nearly 500 feet of shelving, I was set to begin my book quest in earnest. Again, time would prove I was naive when it came to estimating shelving requirements.

Once family and friends saw my library begin to fill, they knew there was little chance of derailing my enthusiasm. Soon after my library was completed, Pam and our son Andrew collaborated on a special decorative addition. My father did leather work as a child and passed the interest on to our son. He became quite proficient in making an array of hand tooled objects. Pam found *The Asylum* logo on the NBS website, and Andrew selected the corner designs. He used photoshop to turn the logo image into an outline that he enlarged and printed. Andrew then reproduced the image on tracing film in order to trace it on the leather. Using a swivel knife, he cut the pattern into the leather and used various shading, shaping and background tools for a three dimensional feel. This treasure is proudly displayed above the door to my library, a foretelling of the realm visitors are about to enter. When first-time visitors realize all the shelves are lined with numismatic books, they invariably develop a bewildered expression and struggle to express their thoughts. When I remind them of *The Asylum* leatherwork above the entry to my library, they seem to accept my curious obsession for the disorder it is.

The addition of ephemeral items related to the titles and authors I collect is an essential element of my library. I enjoy collecting these typically scarce and often rare items that help add to the story of our hobby's literature and its authors. One example is a prized possession I acquired at the 2015 ANA Convention in Rosemont, Illinois. For years I had been assembling a file of B. Max Mehl catalogs and his endless assortment of ephemeral items. Numismatic literature dealer Charles Davis had a large framed collage of two B. Max Mehl portraits and one of the Star Building. Housed in a 32x38 ornate frame, the 1982 work was produced by literature dealer John Bergman's father, John Sr., for Armand Champa. I contemplated the purchase for a couple of days, knowing I had no wall space for it in my library, and under no circumstances, would Pam agree to hang it above the living room couch. But I just could not help myself; I had to have it. I still remember the curious looks I received toting B. Max across the bourse floor, through the hotel lobby and to the parking deck. Today this prize is displayed on an easel in a corner of my library. Supporting artifacts like this, enrich my collecting experience, add a bit of vitality to my biblio retreat and are downright fun.

The organization of my library is an ever-evolving process. Attempting to create some semblance of order out of the chaos I, like many collectors, typically shelve the antiquarian classic titles together, the special deluxe editions shoulder to shoulder, the contemporary references by subject and the auction catalogs by their cataloger. However for some unexplainable reason, there are various exceptions where certain authors' works are arranged together regardless of the subject matter. Sometimes items are shelved side by side when I find a certain link between volumes that connect them in some related but often obscure manner. These quirks are of little consequence since I created this maze and am able to easily navigate these inconsistencies. As new titles join the ranks and must be shoehorned with their mates, others must be relocated to a new residence. Maybe it is just part of the collecting exercise that I periodically rearrange titles and authors, but this has proven to be an effective way to stumble on and revisit neglected or forgotten friends.

In the mid 1970s when I began acquiring numismatic literature I had no intention of becoming a numismatic bibliophile. Nevertheless, all these years later, the library has reached capacity, books have sprouted in a guest bedroom and are beginning to fill a storeroom in the basement. Occasionally, when I look around and wonder what this is all about, I am reminded of *The Asylum* leatherwork above the entry to my library and seem to accept my curious obsession for the disorder it is.



Numismatic Booksellers I Have Known

By Dave Hirt

I started to collect coins as a teenager, when I sometimes received Barber coins on my paper route. For the next fifteen years the only numismatic book I bought was the Red Book each year. Then, in 1965 I received an auction catalogue from Abner Kreisberg who had some literature lots in it, and I was successful bidding on a bound, priced copy of the Parmelee sale. That was my start. However, I returned to coins and didn't buy any more literature until I was at a Pennsylvania coin show in 1967 and purchased three bound volumes of the *American Journal of Numismatics*. I enjoyed reading through these issues, so my next purchase were more *AJN* issues from a *Coin Hunter* price list. In 1968 I got more involved in literature, buying twenty-two lots in Katen's Newell sale. I still kept buying coins until 1974 when I changed jobs and moved to Maryland. My coins were left in a bank in Pennsylvania, my former home. In 1975 I decided to sell most of my coins. They were auctioned by Pine Tree in 1975 and 1976. From then on, I only collected numismatic literature.

In 1970 Harmer-Rooke auctioned a hoard of catalogues from the Henry Chapman estate. I bought a number of catalogs from that sale. Living in Maryland put me close to Frank and Laurese Katen, who always held public sales. I attended most of these sales until they retired.

I started bidding in George Kolbe's sales in 1976, and continue to this day with Kolbe & Fanning. I obtained many great items from George.

I bid in Stanford Durst sales in the late 1970s. His sales of the Wadsworth Athenaeum had great material. I got my share of items from these sales, but I was outbid on many choice items by a wealthy Kentucky collector who seemed to like the same items that I did.

Cal Wilson started having sales in 1981. I bid in most of them, and got some items, but the same Kentucky collector continued to outbid me. I guess that most readers can guess that I refer to Armand Champa. I know that it was him because after his death I purchased his set of Cal Wilson catalogues. Champa had an interesting way of marking lots that he wanted. He an X beside the lot anywhere from one to eight Xs. If he put 8 Xs, he REALLY wanted the lot.

Roger Zago held a group of bid or buy sales in the mid-eighties. I got some interesting things from him and I was sad when he discontinued his sales.

Orville Grady had sales over a fifteen-year period. One great item I got from him was a bound book of Frossard's numisma issues.

Money Tree started in 1987. Ken Lowe and Myron Xenos were friends of mine. Their sales were well catalogued. Ken just LOVED numismatic literature! He would take a simple pamphlet and elaborate over it for ten minutes. His early death was a tragedy.

Charles Davis began auctions in 1989 and continues selling books today. I will never forget attending his sale of the library of the Numismatic and Antiquarian Society of Philadelphia. The sale was in Cleveland in 1997. What a sale that was! It was

attended by a who's who of numismatic literature collectors. Sadly, some of them are no longer with us. Among other things I won at that sale was a Maris elephant folio book on the coins of New Jersey. By far the most expensive purchase in my library was made from Charlie, a complete bound set of W E Woodward sales.

John Bergman was a fine gentleman. Once he offered me a plated Earle catalogue. I told him that I loved it, but could not afford it. He said, "Just take it with you, and pay me installments." That was so kind of him. I was standing with some others at Bergman's stand at an ANA convention. Eric Newman came by, and stopped to talk. He said that there was a mix-up at his hotel, and at first they said that there was no room for him. Berg-



My 19th century bookcase that was suggested in *The Asylum*. I thought that was such a neat idea.



man, ever the wit exclaimed “Well, you could have roomed with John Ford.” Everyone had a laugh.

Fred Lake began his sales in 1989. His sales were full of numismatic information, many times at an inexpensive price. I was always happy when a Lake catalogue arrived. I bought many hundreds of items in Lake sales. I really miss Fred!

Remy Bourne had sixteen sales and I bid in most of them with so-so success. I did get some nice things. I remember his Dick Punchard sale. I got some auction catalogues that I had wanted for a long time.

I think of David Sklow’s sales, especially after he left Money Tree. My library was quite advanced by that time, however I was still able to find things I wanted in his sales. I was happy for him to get a job at the ANA, but do miss his sale catalogues.

One friend I want to mention is Wayne Homren. I think that I first met him and John Burns at a coin show in Lancaster, Pennsylvania around 1980. I believe that Frank Katen was also there. Wayne has been a true friend ever since. I remember attending his wedding in Pittsburgh. I remember that I sat with the boys from Money Tree, Ken and Myron. Wayne has remained a friend all these years. He does an incredible job putting the *E-Sylum* together every week. I don’t think ANYONE ELSE could do that. Thanks Wayne!!!



John, the Deaf Guy

By Lawrence J. Lee

He usually shuffles in late, after the coin club meeting has already started. Because he can't hear, he greets people at a hearty volume that carries over the club president droning on about the upcoming club coin show. Because of his cerebral palsy, his torturous trek across the room to find a seat makes a small commotion. He laboriously carries an armful of thick books. The meeting briefly bogs down until the late comer loudly plops into a seat.

Oh, look: it's John, the deaf guy.

John Stepp was a mess at his birth in 1956. No one knew why he was a mess just yet. That took a few years and many medical tests to become apparent. But what was clear was the blue-eyed little tyke just didn't seem too bright. Except for his eyes, which had a special sparkle that drew his father close to his son, setting up a bond that would grow and then thrive for decades.

It soon became painfully obvious that Little Johnny couldn't hear, walk or speak. The learned doctors and even the boy's parents were somewhat suspicious he may also be mentally retarded. Any one of those curses would challenge a parent; to have them all present in one little kid was overwhelming. And yet, John's father, Robert Stepp, accepted the challenge.

He quit his job as a music teacher and went back to school and got a PhD. in Special Education. He took his boy from doctor to doctor asking—what is wrong? Who can help? He learned all there was to learn medically about his son's condition. He studied new treatments, he began teaching others about his discoveries. Robert E. Stepp, Jr. eventually founded the Barkley Memorial Center for Special Education at the University of Nebraska, in Lincoln, NE.

Dr. Stepp learned that his son's deafness had been misdiagnosed: John had a functional inner, middle and outer ear; the damaged part was in brain, specifically in that part of the brain that processes sound. And more significantly, they discovered that part of the brain was right next to the area affected by cerebral palsy. John's deafness and his cerebral palsy were linked.

With this discovery, they now knew how to attack John's medical condition. He



John Stepp with his numismatic library



had operations on his legs and feet that allowed him to walk without a brace. Although John never talked until he was nine years old, they send him to school to learn how to lip-read, a talent he became magically adept at.

While John's first love was model trains and electronic "junk"; once he got an allowance, he began collecting coins. After the sudden death of his father John inherited his coin collection, including his prize possession; an 1858-S Seated Liberty dime in VF condition.

Like many kids who are shut off in one area of their senses, John fine-tuned his brain in other areas. He began by fixating on the minutia of world coinage. He received his first Krause-Mishler catalog of world coins in 1973 and memorized virtually the

entire book. He learned the key dates, differences in types, learned to grade on his own and then did what any young boy would do with too much knowledge and very little money: we went and cherry-picked the coin dealer's junk boxes. Knowledge is power and John reclaimed what little bit of power he could by knowing more about their coins that did the dealers. He was to become a very powerful man, at least in that sense.

John found he had a talent for pattern recognition and three-dimensional problems so he learned to play chess. And not only play, he came to dominate the Nebraska junior circuit, eventually earning national and even international honors as a chess master. He has a closet at home filled with over 60 different chess championship trophies but he dismisses that part of his life: it's all about coins. His favorite memory of playing in the World Deaf Chess Championship⁷ in Rotterdam in 1996 was not the championship bout, but when he appraised the collection of a fellow player. As a true numismatist, he spent his time in Europe going to coin dealers in Paris, touring the French mint, and stopping by to visit the French Numismatic Society. The Eiffel Tower never quite made the wish list.

To gain a degree of independence and to generate money to buy coins, John spent five years as a CAD/CAM designer. He learned as much as possible about metallurgy, metal stamping and machine technology, all geared towards his numismatic interests. He then became a professional college student and tried five different majors before graduating with a B.A. in Anthropology. Along the way he also picked up a Master's degree in Museum Studies, specializing in numismatic.

After spending a summer at the ANA as an intern under Robert Hoge and armed with his background in metallurgy, his two degrees and his studious approach to nu-

mismatics, John tried to find a coin company that would benefit from his numismatic knowledge. He interviewed with two of the major grading companies to be a grader but both passed. He underwent a humiliating interview with a major coin dealer who approached his deafness by talking really loudly. He applied at several museums, did John the deaf guy. But he never got past the first interview. He eventually obtained a job at a local bank where they found it was not necessary for him to be able to hear to handle data entry.

While waiting for the golden ring to come his way, John has quietly built a numismatic collection of over 22,000 books and periodicals, all perfectly cataloged and stored in what he modestly considers to be a fully functional library and museum: the Stepp Institute. He has researched and is in the process of writing up a catalog of over 500 die varieties of Russian denka coins. He has over 5,000 pieces of German notgeld he is researching for varieties. He is collecting 1/24 talers because he noticed something interesting in the striking process that the grading companies have not yet tumbled to. There is so much to do, and so little time left.

John has a strong Christian faith and he is sure there is a role for him to play on the larger stage. Those dealers and coin grading companies who didn't hire him in the past are to be forgiven. He just got some new books in the mail he wants to show the coin club members. He might be just a little bit late, signs John the deaf guy, but he wouldn't miss the next coin club meeting for anything.



<p>STEPHEN ALBUM RARE COINS</p>  <p>stevealbum.com</p>	<p><i>Connect with your fellow bibliomaniacs!</i></p>  <p>INSTAGRAM numismaticbibliomania</p>  <p>FACEBOOK Numismatic-Bibliomania-Society</p>
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The Amazing Shrinking Library

By Michael E. Marotta

I have been getting rid of my numismatic books. I was able to sell some by setting up as a dealer at local coin shows. Others I donated to my city library for their used book sales. About a dozen were donated to prisons. Another dozen were wrapped carefully along with a few coins, and sent to long sleeps in landfills. The books which I have kept so far include the ones that I actually refer to more than a few times a year when writing articles for coin club magazines and newsletters.

It felt good to be able to sell the *Breen Encyclopedia* and *The Garrett Collection* to a new collector, a young guy apparently in his 30s, who was fascinated by coins and wanted to know all about them. His friend assured him that priced at a third of retail, the books were bargains.

My decision to deaccession my library was based on many considerations.

First, I am not getting any younger. In the event of my early exit from this side of reality, my wife and daughter would be left with the burden of figuring out what is important to others, valuable to others, collectible, rare, or common. And then they would be left with selling, packing, shipping, refunding, and all of the other hassles.

Second, I have already paid thousands of dollars more than it would cost to replace a large subset of them to haul these books across the continent at least four times. I am not going to do it again.

Third, I can always borrow them and many others from the ANA's Dwight N. Manley Library or other institutions and have done so many times over the years in order to write articles for publication.

Fourth, although I got warm feelings just looking at them shelved in my library, that is about all most of them were good for. The ones I sold, I was happy to get any money for. Aaron Feldman's mandate to buy the book before you buy the coin did not help him when he let go of his library; and his story is paradigmatic. Coin collectors collect coins, not books about coins.

Fifth, in too many instances, I found problems with their assertions.

Finally, thanks to former ANA President Clifford Mishler, I discovered a truth about myself: I am not a collector.

While he was retiring from his duties as president of Krause Publications and assuming more responsibility on the board of the ANA, Clifford Mishler came to the Michigan State Numismatic Society conventions over Thanksgiving weekends and spoke to our educational seminars. His message was unity. All collectors share essential traits. He called collecting "a gene you do not inherit." Rather than disparaging

others—“How can you collect that junk?”—we should recognize each other for our cultural virtues. A collector pursues completeness, rarity, condition, and value. In the course of 50 minutes, Mishler elaborated each point. The unifying element is that collecting is a lifestyle. Over the years and decades, the most valuable moments are those precious events when the long-sought rarity, perhaps unperceived and unappreciated even by other collectors, comes into your hands to complete the set.

I realized that I am not a collector. As happy as I am to own things, I lack the passions for completeness, rarity, condition, and value. I like artifacts because they are evidence of history and sociology. But to own one is to own them all. Though I do have three different oil lamps and three different slide rules, owning more will not tell me more. Rather than pursuing objects, I seek necessary factual truths.

Geographers advocate for finding “ground truth.” When you see something as “green” is it because it is emitting some discrete signal between 520 to 560 nanometers; or is it receiving a broader spectrum and reflecting back in that range while absorbing all the others; or is it generating across a broader spectrum but having the signal blocked or filtered so that only green passes through? Is it the green of RGB or a blend of cyan and yellow from CMYK? Completing my master’s degree in social science in 2010, I took a class in remote sensing. Our school colors were green and white. In GEOG 582, we learned to apply software to aerial images of our stadium with its green artificial turf playing field surrounded by green concrete -and-wood stands, surrounded by grass and trees. But our professor warned us that powerful though technology is you never know a place for sure until you go there and experience it for yourself. So, I do own examples of many forms of money because they provide ground truths in sociology and economics.

At the ANA convention in Dallas in 2018, I discovered the coins of Saint Pierre and Miquelon. I recognized the Liberty head with wings as being a French motif. I knew nothing of Saint Pierre and Miquelon. I guessed that they must be in Africa. In truth, they were the last French colonies in North America, and are now a self-governing collectivity that sends one senator and one representative to the National Assembly in Paris. I paid less than \$10 for the pair, struck in the only year of issue, 1948. I now have evidence of an interesting fact. If they had cost more, I would have lived without the objects and been content with the knowledge about them.

It is knowledge about books, not the running footage of my shelves, that makes me a bibliomaniac. My current reading includes *History of Desktop Publishing* by Frank Romano (Oak Knoll Press, 2019), which I bought after learning about it from *The E-Sylum* (Vol. 22 No. 41, October 13, 2019, Article 28, “Loose Change”). I do not need to own one each of all the word processing machines, their printers and memory extensions, though I do own a manual typewriter and a Selectric. And I do own books, including books about books.



From a Medical Library to Numismatic Literature

By Roger Moore

Thirty years ago my library was mostly medical journals and books. As I became interested in the different series of colonial coins, I tried to add auction catalogs and literature associated with that specific series of interest. Most of my early literature collecting was directed at acquiring every piece of written information about New Jersey coppers. Of course an original 1873 Crosby, 1865 Dickeson, and 1881 Maris elephant folio were essential. Other additions included the Maris Family History, hand written letters and postcards from Maris, photographs of where Maris had lived and was buried, and associated material, such as full sets of plates of New Jersey coppers made by various numismatists. The life of Maris and many of the New Jersey plates served as the basis for a number of research articles undertaken with good friends—Ray Williams and Dennis Wierzba. An off-shoot of these studies was finding that the Saint Patrick halfpence (actually the smaller farthing sized coins) were the first officially declared coinage of New Jersey in 1681. This led to further literature accumulation and an article revisiting Vlack's categorization of the large-sized Saint Patrick halfpence.



At the same time my interest was piqued by the most prevalent small change used in colonial America, the counterfeit British and Irish coppers, which offered a whole new field of collecting both in coins and literature. The work of many dedicated researchers trying to bring order to the chaos of these 10,000 copper varieties led to the first comprehensive book on this subject in 2018, *Contemporary Counterfeit Halfpence and Farthing Families*. There is still much work on this subject to be done and many new additions will be needed for my library to flesh out this topic. My latest research endeavor, which dates back two decades, is into Virginia halfpence as well as the coins found in the first British settlement of America—Jamestown. Research into these areas has expanded my library expo-



entially in a number of new directions. Last year the culmination of my study of the Virginia Halfpence, aided by the ready references in my library, was a new book for which I am very proud: *The Coins of Colonial Virginia*. It was definitely a labor of love but one that depended greatly on the previously laid foundation of giants in the field, most notably Eric Newman. Much of the new direction my library will be taking is in researching the coins excavated from the early settlement of Jamestown, Virginia.

Concurrent with my many new numismatic literature purchases, my medical library has shrunk to a single shelf and will mostly disappear to make room for additional numismatic literature purchases.



How I Became A Bibliomaniac

By Franklin L. Noel

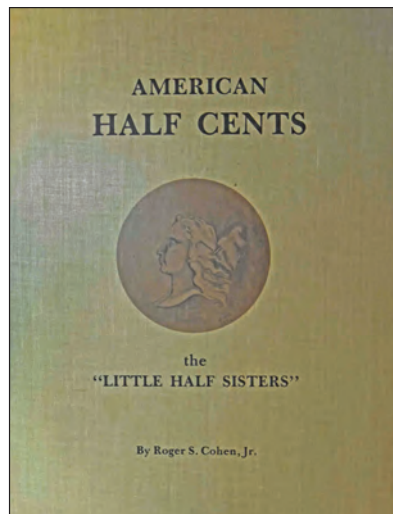
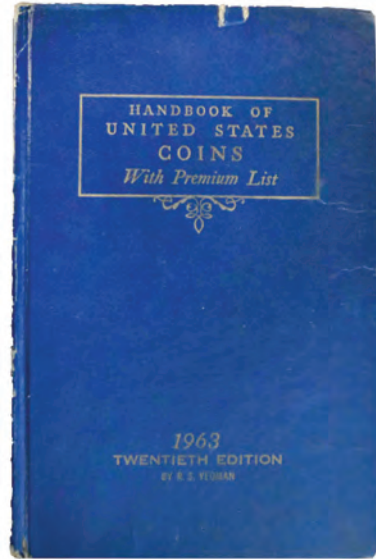
My first coin book was NOT the “Red Book.” It was the “Blue Book,” *Handbook of United States Coins With Premium List* (20th Edition, Whitman Publishing, 1962).

My parents purchased it at the Coin Department of Gimbel Bros. department store in 1962, and gave it me for my eleventh birthday, together with a three ring binder for storing coins culled from circulation called *The Treasury of Coins*. For years, this “Blue Book” was the only volume in my numismatic library.

Years later, as an adult I became re-acquainted with my coin collection: cents, nickels, dimes, and a handful of Morgan dollars, given to me by a step-grandmother who worked in a bank and was able to get the silver dollars at face value. I purchased a book by Norman M. Davis, called *The Complete Book of United States Coin Collecting* (4th Printing, Macmillan Publishing Co., 1974). Now my library had two volumes. More years would pass before I became serious about collecting again.

In 1980 I joined both the American Numismatic Association (ANA), and Early American Coppers (EAC). Though it would be many years before I had the time and resources to attend any of their conventions, both the ANA and EAC, through their journals, *The Numismatist*, and *Penny Wise* respectively, redefined for me what it meant to collect coins. I began to collect half cents by die variety.

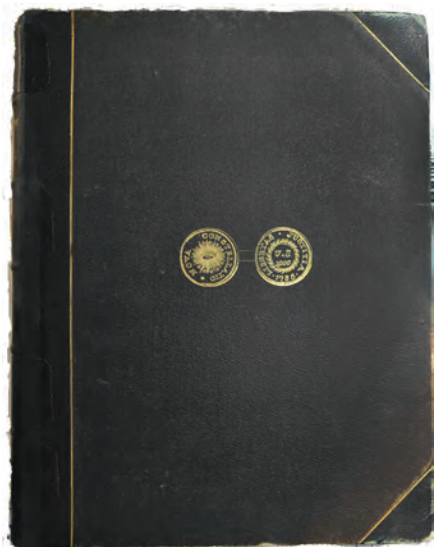
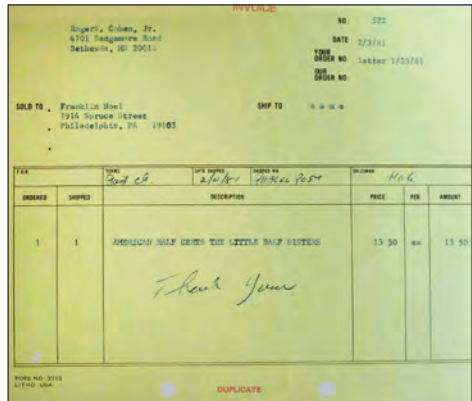
On January 28, 1981, I ordered the first Edition of *American Half Cents; the “Little Half Sisters.”* I ordered it directly from the author, Roger S. Cohen, Jr. by sending him a check for \$13.50. Roger shipped it out “parcel post” on February 4, 1981. I know

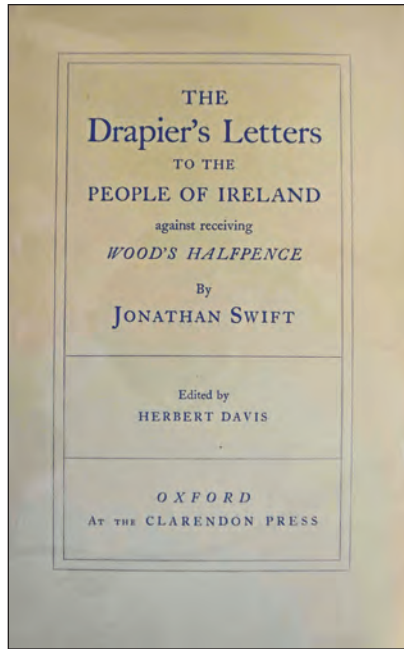
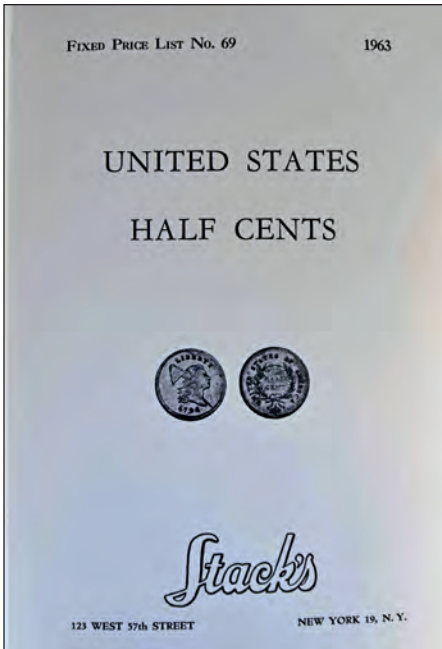


all this detail not because I have such a great memory, but because I met Bob Kebler at the 2012 EAC convention. Later, while he was cataloguing Roger Cohen's papers for the Newman Numismatic Portal, he came across my original invoice and was kind enough to send me a color photocopy, which I now keep inside the front cover.

Soon I also developed an interest in "Colonials." When it came out in 1983, I bought a copy of the Durst reprint of *The Early Coins of America*, by Sylvester Crosby (Sanford J. Durst reprint, New York, 1983). At the time, I was unaware of the many other reprints that had come out in the century since Crosby self-published his *magnum opus*: 1945 (Green), 1965 (TAMS), 1970 (Burt Franklin), 1974 (Quarterman), and 1983 (Quarterman). Today I own a specimen of each as well as three 19th century originals. In 1996, I attended the ANA Summer Seminar for the first time and took the class in colonials. It was taught by Eric Newman (then a spry octogenarian), Ken Bressett, (then the editor of the "Red Book,") and a young colonial dealer, Tom Rinaldo. By then I had also become a member of C-4, (Colonial Coin Collectors Club), received the *C-4 Newsletter* regularly, and subscribed to *The Colonial Newsletter* as well.

Also in the late 1990s, attendance at a few numismatic literature auctions conducted by fellow Minnesotan Remy Bourne, began to add to my growing collection of numismatic literature. As the 20th century ended, I had perhaps a dozen numismatic books and several years' worth of numismatic periodicals. Soon after, Pete Smith, who I knew from our local Northwest Coin Club, here in Minnesota, introduced me to





the Numismatic Bibliomania Society (NBS), of which he had been President, and its digital arm, *The E-Sylum*.

The flood gates opened. I have been regularly buying coin books ever since. Charles Davis, George Kolbe, David Fanning, Kolbe and Fanning, Fred Lake, and David Sklow all significantly exacerbated my coin book affliction.

Today, numismatic periodicals, auction catalogues, and books dedicated to a wide variety of numismatic topics, occupy between 50 and 100 linear feet of shelf space in my home. The bulk of my books are related in one way or another to early American copper, but by no means is my numismatic library limited to that niche. I have books on ancient coins, on the 1933 St. Gaudens Double Eagle, on Franklin Half Dollars, on Liberty Nickels, on early quarter dollars, and early half dollars, just to name a few other areas of interest. Since January of this year alone, I have added, a 1935 reprint of Jonathan Swift's, *The Drapier's Letters to the People of Ireland Against Receiving Wood's Halfpence*, and a 1969 reprint of Stack's 1963 *Fixed Price list No. 69* (Joseph Brobston's *United States Half Cents*).

I am unaware of any treatment or cure for Bibliomania, (I believe Ms Fanning was being generous when she addressed us in her e-mail by the less pejorative term, "bibliophiles"). The only remedy: build more bookshelves.



The Idiosyncractic Peregrinations of a Numismatic Bibliophile

By Joel Orosz

Personal libraries do not so much grow as metastasize, expanding wildly toward every point of the compass. Sometimes the librarian nudges the efflorescence in certain directions; more frequently, it surges erratically along; but always it overflows shelves into nearby piles; and not infrequently, it swamps the dedicated room, and leaks into other areas of the house never meant for warehousing books. Sooner or later, more dedicated home geography has to be acquired, each time accompanied by the hollow promise that “this is the last time I’ll need more space.”

Like literally hundreds of thousands of Baby Boomers, I became a coin collector young, in my case at the age of eight, by helping my father search through rolls of circulated Lincoln Cents. I’ve already recounted the joys of treasure-seeking from the local bank in my Foreword to Dave Bowers’ *Coins and Collectors Golden Anniversary Edition*, so I’ll not wax nostalgic here. My numismatic “library” began with a dog-eared copy of the 1965 Red Book, used strictly and unsentimentally for pricing information. It is a story for another time how, during the next sixteen years, my interest in collecting numismatic books deepened, slowly at first, then suddenly and profoundly over the Christmas holidays of 1981, with a fortuitous purchase of an extensive collection of catalogs and periodicals.

For the purposes of this memoir, we begin in the summer of 1982, when young marrieds Joel and Florence Orosz returned to Kalamazoo from graduate (Joel), and law (Florence), school in Cleveland.



One of the ranges in the new “Man Cave.” The empty shelving in the distance suggests that my late father-in-law’s prediction that I would never fill my shelves may yet be proved right.



Frank Joseph Reilly's 1947 oil painting is dominated by two David Rittenhouses: the man, and his clock. Rittenhouse holds a very large half disme.

Our small apartment in Cleveland, and even our somewhat larger one in Kalamazoo, could not absorb the literature from my fortuitous purchase of a few months before, so it was all stashed away in the basement of Florence's parents' home. Soon, we were engaged in building—with the assistance of Florence's father—a house in Parkview Hills, a planned community he had developed in partnership with pioneering ecologist Dr. Lewis Batts. Our modest new two-story, traditional Georgian home shared a woodlot with deer, foxes, and flocks of gabbling wild turkeys. It would have been a four-bedroom home, except that one 12' x 12' upstairs chamber was lined, floor to ceiling, with built-in bookcases. Pondering the plans, my father-in-law warned me, "You'll never fill all of those shelves, no matter how long you live." This turned out to be a spectacularly inaccurate prognostication.

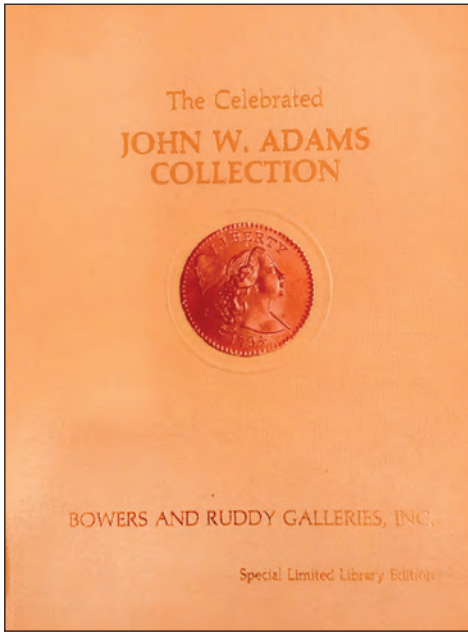
Much forethought had informed our building plans, most of which proved no more valid than my father-in-law's prediction. From 1985 to 1993, our anticipated



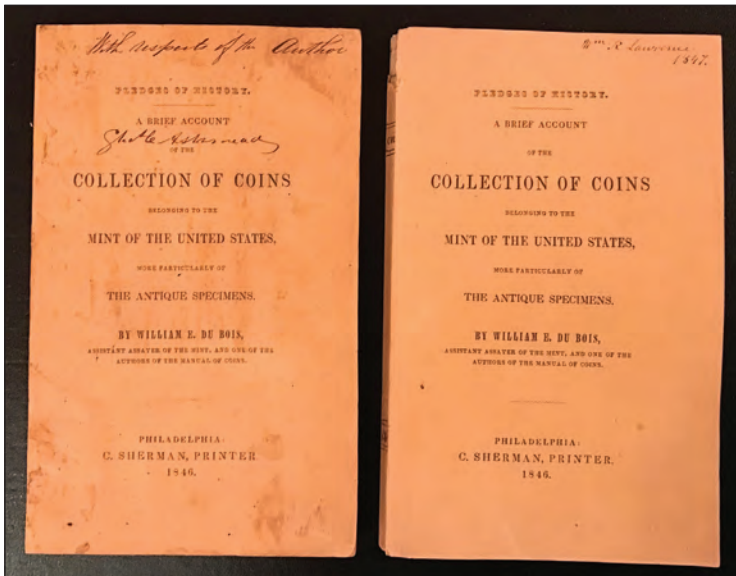
Carlton Eddy's 2017 oil painting depicts Thomas Jefferson recording the first expenditure of half dimes in his *Memorandum Book* on the evening of July 13, 1792.

two children doubled to four, and the house, which had seemed adequate when we were constructing it, appeared to contract with every new arrival. A saner couple would have moved to larger accommodations, but we loved Parkview Hills, so we embraced territorial aggrandizement: we added on to our home in 1987, 1991, 1996, and 2008. In these expansions, the original house sprouted wings to both north and south, with a new garage added to the north wing at a rather jaunty northeastern-facing angle. During the 1991 addition, a larger room on the south wing's second floor became my new library. Larger, yes, but after only a few years, it, too, was overrun by the constant influx of new titles.

Our final alteration, thankfully completed just before the 2008 Financial Crisis reared its hideous head, was a ground floor master bedroom suite. This addition veered off the south wing at a southwestern-facing angle, giving our finally completed domicile a footprint in the form of a figure "S." We have taken that "S" to signify

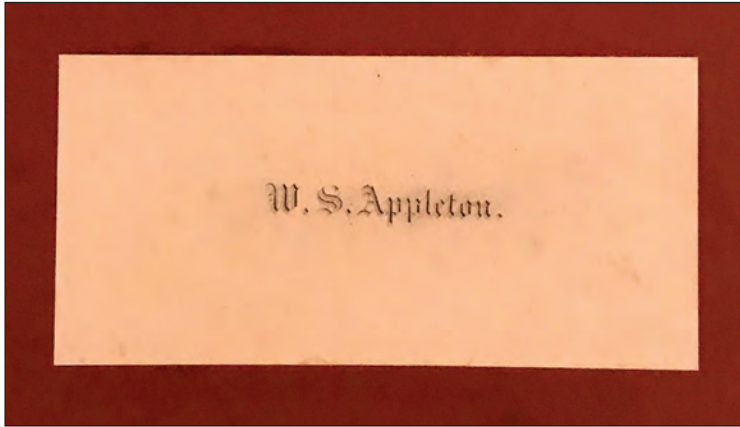


John W. Adams taught me to “collect the collectors” with his superb collection of provenanced large cents.

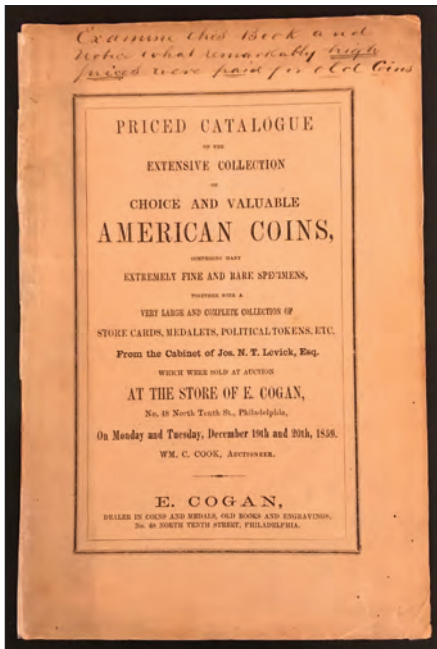


You should only “take the pledge” once--unless the second copy is inscribed.

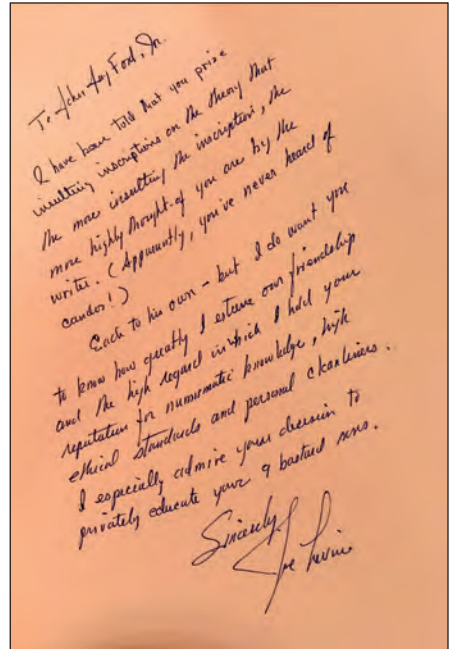
“Stop,” and shall never add another brick to our abode. But, back to that final addition, in 2008: Florence and I struck a deal; she would have free rein to furnish and decorate above grade, and I would become the lord of the underworld, capturing the entire new “garden level” for my office and library. As part of the deal, Florence inherited my 1991 library for her new office. So she has feathered her second-floor aerie,



William Sumner Appleton's bookplate is elegant in its simplicity



J.N.T. Leveck was a happy camper after Ed Cogan sold his collection in December of 1859.



Joe Levine obliges John J. Ford's reputed proclivity for insulting inscriptions.



(above) David Rittenhouse (alas, the Natalie Hause copy, not the Charles Willson Peale original), looks benignly past the verre églomisé lamp.

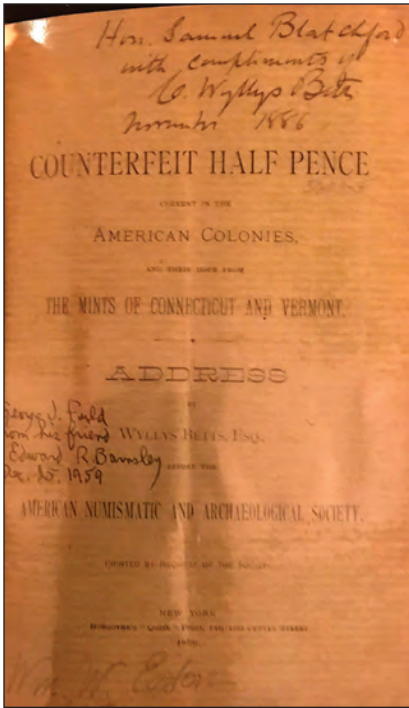
(left) A detailed view of 6 of the 20 French coins and medals adorning the lamp

whilst I have burrowed below grade in my windowless space, which our children have, inevitably, dubbed “Dad’s Man Cave.” This cavern is so much larger, and I am so much older, that my father-in-law’s premonition that I would never fill my shelves may yet be proven prescient!

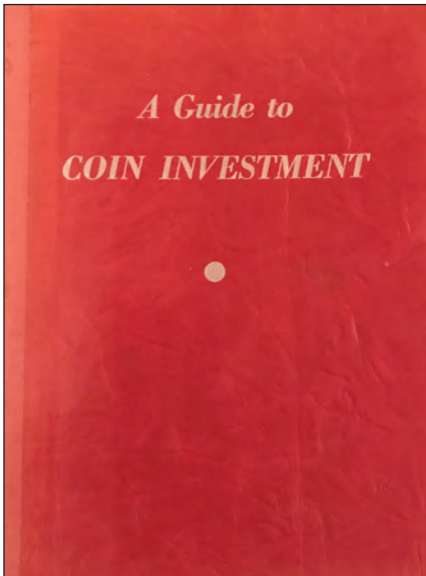
In its above-grade manifestations, my libraries were small enough to require all significant wall space to be dedicated to shelving. Capturing vast subterranean real estate allowed me, for the first time, to spare enough vertical space to hang some art. A chance purchase (for all of fifty cents!) of the Gerald W. Johnson book, *Pattern for Liberty: The Story of Old Philadelphia*, at Titcomb’s bookstore on Cape Cod led me to the acquisition (for considerably more than fifty cents) of Frank Joseph Reilly’s oil painting “A Specimen of the Work of America’s First Mint is Examined by its Director in 1792.” If it looks like a knockoff of John Ward Dunsmore’s “Washington Examining the First Coinage of the United States,” that is because Dunsmore’s work inspired it. Reilly, a superb painting teacher, but not a first-rank illustrator, borrowed Dunsmore’s depiction of Washington visiting the first Mint for the prosaic purpose of illustrating a 1947 ad campaign for Continental Distilling Corporation’s “Philadelphia Blended Whisky.” A more dignified pedigree attaches itself to another oil hanging in my office, which I commissioned from numismatic artist Carlton Eddy. It depicts Thomas Jefferson reflecting on the significance of his spending the first coins struck under the authority of the U.S. Constitution, as he records the expenditure of half dismes in his Memorandum Book on the evening of July 13, 1792. Resting beneath the two paintings are the unique jigsaws depicting them crafted by Wentworth Wooden Puzzles in the United Kingdom. At least I believe these jigsaws to be unique, for who else would bother to create such esoteric items?

Many lights are required to chase the gloom from my cavernous space beneath the loam. My favorite source of illumination is the lamp that Florence’s aesthetic eye spied at the online furniture seller “Chairish.” This statuesque (37 inches from base to bowl) beacon combines the beautiful, the practical and the numismatic all in one. The curving barrel of the lamp, 20 inches in height, boasts a helical array of 20 French coins and medals, in diameters ranging from half an inch to a little over 2 inches. These images were created by the *verre églomisé* process, whereby a design and mercury gilding are applied to the rear face of a glass to produce a mirror finish. In the case of my lamp, the coins and medals were created by the mercury silvering technique, with an amalgam of the two elements painted directly upon the rear of the glass, simultaneously providing the appearance of image depth, while protecting the images from human contact.

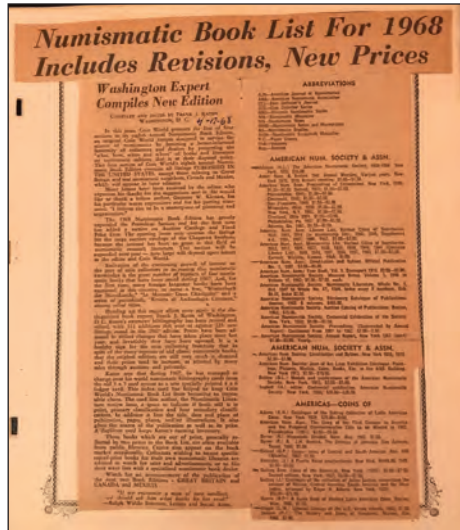
In the early and art-less years of my library-building, while still cramped in that original 12’ x 12’ space, my only organizing principle for acquisitions was “American numismatic literature.” That field was vast, however, and even if my wallet had bulged enough to continue with such an aspirational goal, the space allotted was pathetically inadequate. I became conscious of the need to develop a strategy, and focus on it. Completing a run of Stack’s catalogs from 1935 to date, for example, would both narrow my acquisitions and provide lots of thrill of the chase. So sensible! Naturally, I did nothing of the sort—in fact, I actually broadened my collecting scope instead—and for that, John W. Adams is completely responsible.



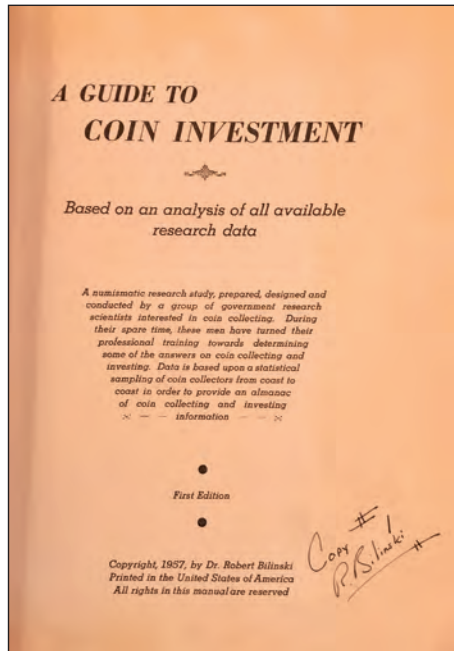
A Christmas present three times in 103 years



In 1957, there was a new "Red Book" in town.



Frank Katen and *Coin World* partnered to publish yearly numismatic bibliographies during the 1960s and 1970s.



Copy #1 of *A Guide to Coin Investment*, given to Leonel Panosh, President of the A.N.A, in 1957.

One of the first special editions I had purchased, early in 1983, was Bowers and Ruddy's deluxe catalog of the *Celebrated John W. Adams Collection of Large Cents of the Year 1794*. Adams disdained the modern style of collecting the big coppers solely by state of preservation; instead, he chose to "collect the collectors." His coins each had magnificent provenances, stretching back to the dawn treads among coin dealers and collectors, and carefully carried forward to the time of his own stewardship. Each of his coins, therefore, represented not just another pretty face, but rather a tangible link to the great dealers and collectors in American numismatic history. The proverbial light bulb flared in my head—the same could be done with literature, only more easily—for owners could leave marks of possession on books without defacing them, something that couldn't responsibly be done with coins.

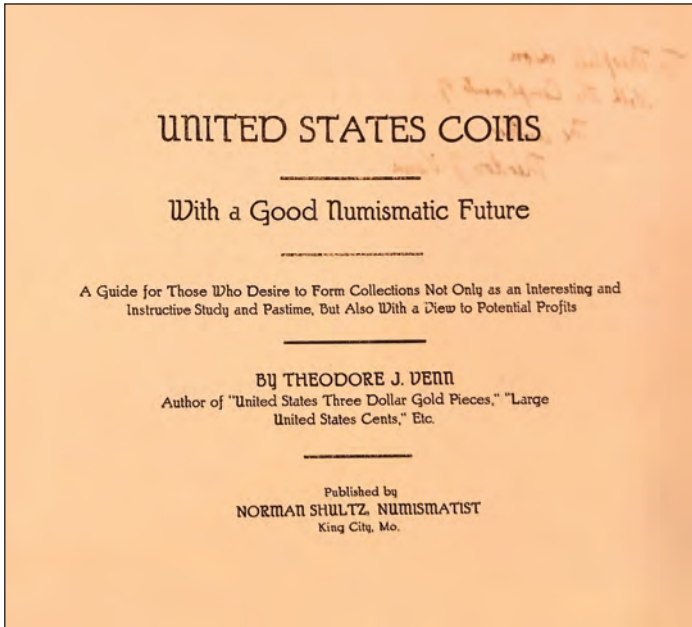
Thanks to John, therefore, I have spent the best part of four decades searching for the autographed, the inscribed, the annotated, and the bookplated. I was fortunate at the outset, for in the mid-1980s, association copies sold for small premiums over cost of a pristine book. Many collectors distinctly preferred the clean copy, regarding anything added, whether by the author or by a notable owner, as detracting graffiti. In more recent times, however, the premiums for association copies have grown steadily larger, making me thankful I caught the fever before it became endemic.

Mostly, that fever has proven beneficial, making me the latest link in the chain of ownership that often stretches to the cradle days of American numismatic interest. It has also inspired me to write an occasional column for *The Asylum*, "Associations," for which there will never be a shortage of material; I have amassed copies linked to numismatic authors and collectors from "A" (Lorenzo Abbey) to "Y" (R.S. Yeoman). "Z" has proven elusive: I'm still searching for a John Zug.

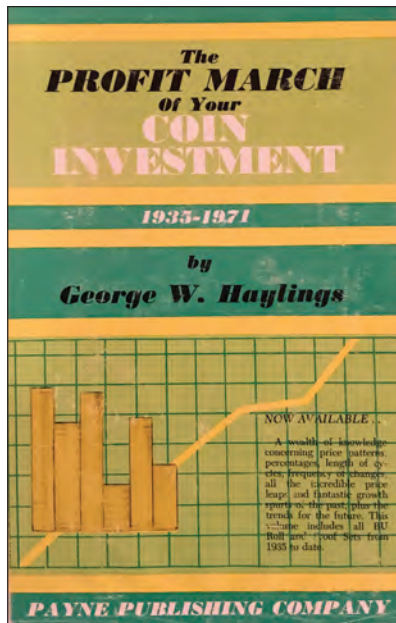
But there is the downside to the affliction, for it has made my collecting even more *omnium gatherum* than it already was. How many times has an inscription or a bookplate led me to buy a book of which I already owned a perfectly serviceable (in fact, often in superior condition) copy? Too many times (see, for example, William E. DuBois' *Pledges of History*). And that is to say nothing of the dilemmas routinely encountered when one already has an association copy, but now has the opportunity to buy the same book with a different sort of association. Which is preferable, a polished inscription from the author, or an owner's scribbled annotations that correct errors and record new discoveries? How does a collector's bookplate compare with the author's signature? If you have a book inscribed "compliments of the author" do you also need to buy a copy that is actually signed by the author? I usually settle such dilemmas by purchasing and keeping both copies. Fascinating, such a practice is. Strategic, it is not.

The fascination, fortunately, is all but endless. Knowing that a renowned author or a storied collector once held the selfsame book in his hands, gives an immediacy to the connection that is impossible to evoke by any other means. The departed bibliophiles speak to you in other ways, whether through the dignified understatement of William Sumner Appleton's bookplate, J.N.T. Levick's ebullient annotations of a sale in which his consignment brought good returns, or the joshing humor of Joe Levine "complimenting" John J. Ford's commitment to education.

Perhaps my favorite, however, is a little booklet that seems to have been owned by just about everyone, C. Wyllys Betts' *Counterfeit Half Pence Current in the American*



One of the first free-standing coin investment publications. Venn's inscription to Theophile Leon is visible on the the other side of the page.



George Haylings never met a coin he couldn't hype.

Colonies. Not only was it inscribed on the front cover by Betts to Samuel Blatchford, but the crowded cover documents that it was twice made a Christmas present, to William W. Eaton (from his father) in 1907, and to George J. Fuld (from his friend “Ned” Barnsley) in 1959. Florence made it the hat trick of Christmas gifts when she presented it to me on December 25, 2010.

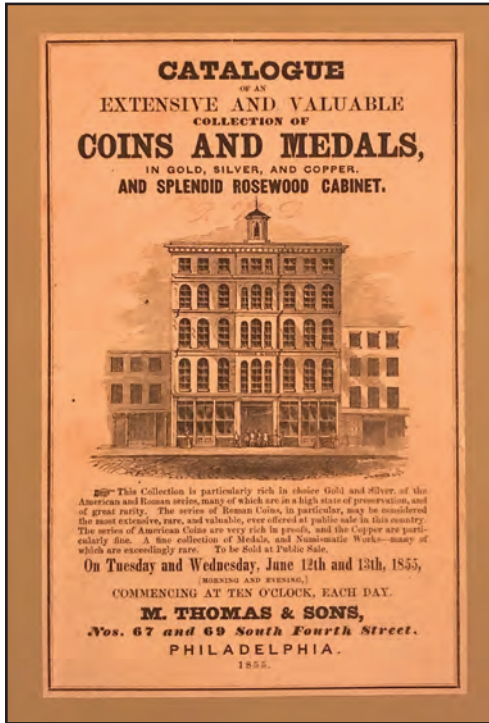
Collecting by association is evocative of that old summer camp ditty, “The Song that Never Ends.” While on this limitless journey, however, I have managed to make the occasional foray into strategy. One such excursion resulted in the most comprehensive library of a sub-topic of numismatic publications for which literally no one excepting me cares a fig. I speak of the literature of investment in United States numismatics from early 20th century through 1965. To call the writing about this topic “literature” is perhaps too grand a label; it would be more accurate to call it “hype,” because nearly all of it was poorly written and wretchedly published. Very little attention had been paid to the investment potential of numismatics before the Second World War, but interest flowered during the postwar hobby boom. Investment mania was still percolating in the 1980s when it caught my attention, but I decided to buy nothing published after 1965, since in that year the great boom in uncirculated rolls and proof sets had collapsed like a jolted soufflé. The post-1965 works that helped revive coin speculation had grown ever more hullabaloo-ish and hard-sell in their tone; whereas most investment books published prior to 1966 possessed a certain charm in their intrinsic naivete.

Moreover, back in the 1980s, when my acquisition budget was meager, buying opportunities abounded in this field. Frank Katen, beginning in 1961, had published an annual “Book Edition” in *Coin World* that listed “author/title/publication date/estimated value” for numismatic literature under 52 subject headings, all gleaned from the capacious card files he amassed during decades of numismatic bookselling. “Coins as Investment” was subject heading number nine; I sought the pre-1966 entries avidly, and got most of them. Occasionally, a purchase was edifying, such as Dr. Robert Bilinski’s *A Guide to Coin Investment*, which was based on careful research and thoughtful analysis. Theodore Venn, a pioneer in the field with his 1921 *United States Coins with a Good Numismatic Future*, inspired one of my old “Printer’s Devil” columns in Vol. 9, No. 3 of *The Asylum*, including an effusion of Eric Newman-esque poetry, with apologies to E. Clerihew Bentley:

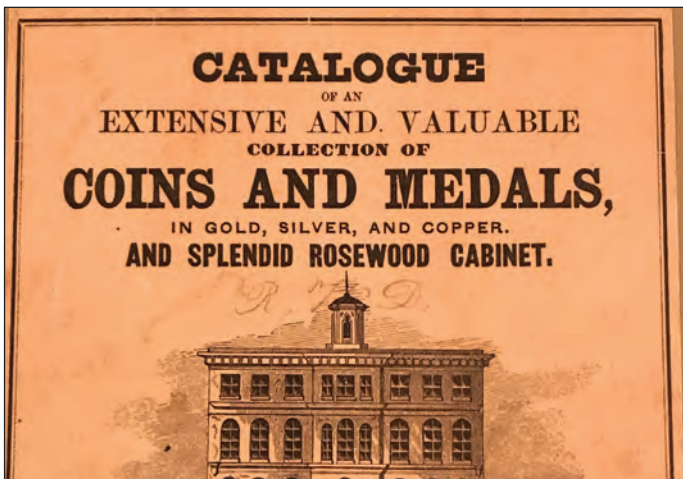
Old Theodore Venn
Said, I am going to dine with some men.
If anybody rings
Say I’m writing market maker things.

And also apologies to John Greenleaf Whittier:
Who started the torrents
From investors’ pens?
‘twas Dr. Bilinski,
But it might have been Venn!

Unsurprisingly, no groundswell of readers appeared to demand more versifying in future columns.



Title Page for John W. Kline's sale of June 12, 1855: The apotheosis of his career; unfortunately, it occurred nearer its beginning than its end.



This copy of the Kline sale belonged to Richard Wistar Davids, precocious Philadelphia numismatist and Civil War Hero.

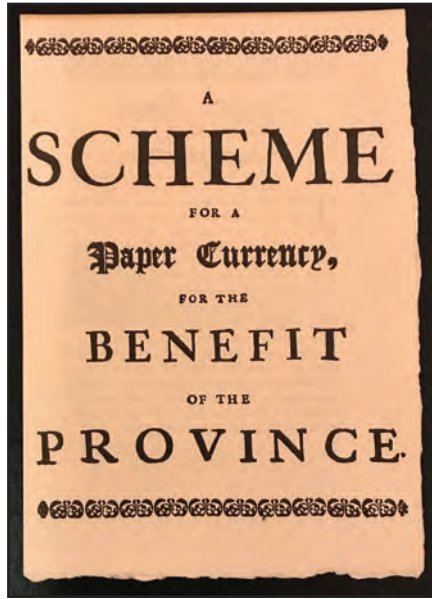
Most frequently, the early investment literature was unalloyed bunkum, such as the *Profit March* series by George Haylings. His favorite trick was to extrapolate past price gains far into the future, as if coins were a market in which prices could never, ever go down. The crash of 1965 exposed old George's game, but it didn't prevent him from continuing to make breathless predictions of ever-increasing "profit marches" for years thereafter.

My strategic purchases of early investment literature cost me peanuts. Today, one could duplicate my achievement for the cost of the shells. Like Nathan Bedford Forrest, I got there "fustest with the mostest," but alas, no one arrived afterwards, because no one except me ever cared about such publications. Providentially, I was never moved to write an article about the great investment potential of early investment literature. Despite it all, though, I still get a kick out of the gee-whiz nature of most of these works, for they were produced in a time when a rising tide of collectors was lifting all numismatic boats, and it seemed that even the most regular of Joes could get rich by collecting coins. Today, we collectors, buffeted by volatile markets and beset with a contracting base of hobbyists, are a wiser, but not necessarily happier, cohort.

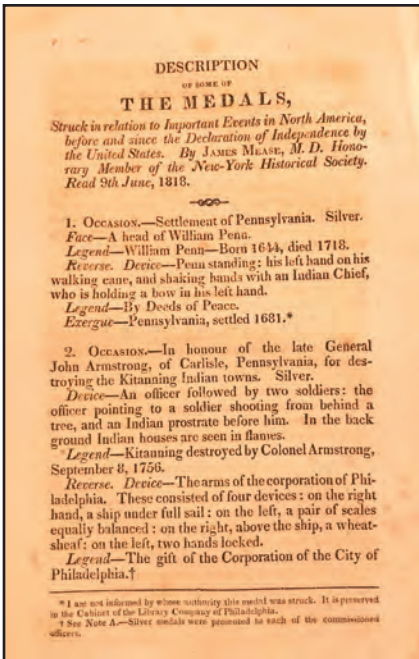
Happily, I did make one strategic choice that has panned out, if not always financially, at least in the currency of learning and satisfaction. In 1992, I was moved to buy, at George Kolbe's sale of the Dennis Mendelson Library, lot 144, the M. Thomas & Sons *Catalogue of an Extensive and Valuable Collection of Coins and Medals*, held in Philadelphia on June 12-13, 1855. It was the last line of George's description that caught my eye: "Attinelli records only twenty-eight earlier sales and nearly all are of sufficient rarity that they are virtually unobtainable." Nor was I unaware of the reasonableness of George's estimated price of \$200; the previous lot, the United States Coin Company's 1915 catalog of the H. O. Granberg collection, was estimated at \$2,500. It suddenly struck me that auctions and books produced before the Civil War—veritable incunables of U.S. numismatics—were rare, but largely unappreciated, and therefore comparatively cheap. I did get lot 144, albeit for a \$25 advance over the estimate, and soon was on a mission to collect any antebellum imprint regarding American coins, medals, tokens or paper money.

Lot 144 of the Mendelson Sale proved to be an association copy, for stamped on the title page were the initials "R.W.D." This turned out to be Richard Wistar Davids, a 19th century numismatic *wunderkind*; a buyer at the Dr. Lewis Roper sale in 1851 when he was barely old enough to shave, and the cataloger of the extensive New York State Library numismatic holdings when he was all of nineteen. Many other Davids association copies of books and catalogs have found their way into my library since lot 144, most notably Dumersan's *Numismatique du Voyage du Jeune Anacharsis*, signed by both Davids and Dr. Lewis Roper, and still the only item sold at Dr. Roper's 1851 sale that today can be confidently traced to his ownership. (See *The Asylum*, Vol. 35, No. 1). Before I shuffle off this mortal coil, I intend to write a numismatic biography of Richard Wistar Davids, ending, of course, in a blaze of glory when he fell at the Trostle Farm defending his native state during the second day of the Battle of Gettysburg.

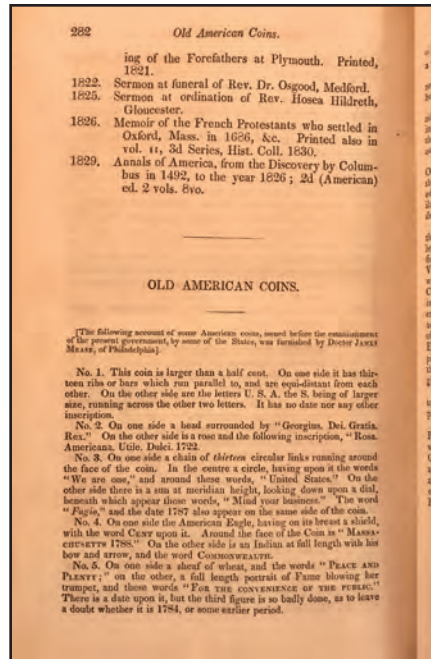
Lot 144 proved to be the gift that kept on giving. Although Thomas & Sons did not attach a consignor's name to its June 1855 sale, Attinelli's *Numisgraphics* identified it



Title Page for Fry's *A Scheme for a Paper Currency*; unfortunately, not the 1739 original, but rather the 1908 edition from the Club for Colonial Reprints



The first page of Dr. James Mease's first article on American medals, 1821



The first page of Dr. James Mease's first article on American coinage, 1838.

(p. 11) as the collection of A.C. Kline. In a later entry (p. 60), however, Attinelli noted that it was John W. Kline's "well-known cabinet," and that Mr. Kline sometimes, due to "pecuniary troubles," operated under the trade style of "A.C. Kline," the initials of his wife being "A.C." This launched me on an extended excursion of research, which culminated in the publication of *The Curious Case of the Coin Collectors Kline*, a Bowers and Merena "Little Edition." After a glorious start (his was the first numismatic collection to realize more than \$2,000 at public auction), John W. Kline's career as a dealer in coins and stamps sputtered fitfully for three decades until he finally sold his store, and finished his working life as a clerk at Philadelphia's Brobdingnagian Wanamaker's department store.

All of these fascinating biographical excursions stemmed from a single purchase of antebellum literature, but many more were to follow. So much American numismatic history flowed out of that time period, from Richard Fry's April 19, 1739 *A Scheme for a Paper Currency, for the Benefit of the Province*, to the March 21, 1861 Bangs, Merwin & Co. sale of the Francis Klein Collection, held just three weeks before South Carolina opened fire on Fort Sumter. There are numismatic titles, like *A Manual of Gold and Silver Coins of all Nations, Struck within the Past Century* by Eckfeldt and DuBois (1842), but far more often, the numismatic content is found within titles that seemingly have no connection whatsoever with coins. In the absence of dedicated numismatic periodicals, for example, the first article published in the U.S. on medals appeared in the *Proceedings of the New-York Historical Society*, (1821), and the first published on coins in the *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society* (1838). The fact that both of these pathbreaking articles were researched and written by a man almost no one remembers, Dr. James Mease, points to how little appreciated antebellum numismatic literature, is, even today. And who would think of looking for the first article published on American numismatic literature, by Frederick S. W. Mayers, in an 1859 periodical called, of all things, *Norton's Literary Letter*?

I have been "antebelluming" it for nigh unto 20 years now, but I keep finding new and interesting things to collect. In the Winter 2019 issue of *The Asylum*, I wrote about a previously undescribed version of Charles Ira Bushnell's "Early New York Tokens" that appeared in the *Manual of the Corporation for the City of New York for 1859*, and in Spring 2020, I wrote about an address delivered by Samuel Breck in 1844, and published the following year, *Discourse Before the Society of the Sons of New England of the City and County of Philadelphia*, in which he discusses Massachusetts coinage. More novel imprints are no doubt out there, patiently awaiting discovery.

The title of this article was chosen advisedly. My numismatic literature journey has been nothing if not particular to my own tastes (or quirks), and has indeed wandered, as opposed to following linear paths. But it has led to much learning and even more delight that I have been able to share (better, I would say, in prose than in poetry). Getting richer in the process is not on that list of attributes; nonetheless, it seems that becoming smarter and happier is just about as much as anyone could reasonably ask of a lifelong avocation.



The Changes to a Numismatic Library

By David Pickup

Why do we call a few bookshelves and piles of other books a library? I am sorry to be controversial but although I have a reasonable collection of books about coins it is not really a library. My favourite library is a building in a suburb of Birmingham called Sparkhill. Like many such libraries in the UK it has struggled to stay open. It is a Victorian building, built when civic pride and education was viewed differently. It was nearly sold and developed but it is still open. It is the sort of place which is a refuge and a place to learn. A place for wet Wednesday afternoons to get dry and soak up some knowledge.

Sparkhill library

When I moved to Birmingham in the 1980s, I joined the local numismatic society. I remember at one meeting the chairperson talked about the importance of having a library as a way to learn more about the items you collect, to develop your interests, enjoy collecting and generally be a good person. And yes, all these things are true.

I began with a Seaby's catalogue of British coins. I later acquired a few cheap booklets, pamphlets and then some books mainly written for young people. Later on I started to visit secondhand bookshops. These have nearly disappeared now and have been replaced by charity shops. However, in the 1980s there were lots of dusty old shops with cramped dusty rooms packed with reasonably priced books. There was always a crusty, dusty owner looking cross at everyone and making them feel guilty for daring to enter his lair. Sometimes he would frighten people off completely. There was a noisy bell on the door which he rigged up to try to electrocute people and he put up signs to make customers feel unwelcome. I do not know how they made money, though in fact they did not, and closed.

I developed an uncanny ability to find books on coins. Sometimes they were in the "antiques" section or the "pastimes and games" section. I bought some bargains and developed an interest in older books. You could get these Victorian books with line drawings written by clergymen and antiquaries. They were often in poor faded condition (I mean the books, not the authors). They had parts missing and were



Sparkhill Public Library

By Oosoom at English Q52, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=3551239>

sometimes spineless. (Ditto—the books, not the authors.) Often they had introductions which referred to others writers' books and so I built up a picture of who wrote what. There was a feeling of camaraderie amongst these people and I made some friends.

The traditional ways of building a library is to get books about the coins you have, and then research them, but why be traditional? My advice is to buy any coin book no matter how poor condition or out of date or obscure—the more obscure, the better. You never know what you might need in the future.

Better to buy the book first and then collect. Examples? I bought the two volumes of Hawkins *Medallic History* and a single volume of *Roman Imperial Coins*. The broken paperback was going to be the first in my series of RIC and it still is. Both were about £20 each. You would have to sell a body part to get them now.

What about my library? It was a shelf, then several shelves and has now been exiled from home to my office and it keeps company with my legal library (which is another story, not for now). The books no longer fit the shelves in their cupboard and they tend to try to get out when the door opens sometimes. The books used to be kept on shelves in some sort of order of subject, such ancients, European and medallions. They are now in the order of what was last bought or last fell off the shelves.

Here are some examples of recent acquisitions: Mattingley and Robinson eds., (1938), *Transactions of the International Numismatic Congress 1936* London Bernard Quaritch Ltd. Nearly five hundred pages on a variety of subjects. The books lists the delegates and their addresses. F. De Saulcy, (1880), *Histoire Monétaire de Jean le Bon* Paris Publisher unknown. A beautifully produced Nineteenth Century book on a most obscure theme. Divo J-P, (1969), *Modern Greek Coins* Zurich Bank Leu Amsterdam Jacques Schulman N V. this is a useful book on a collecting theme probably pursued by no-one at all, not even in Greece.

Most of these I am unlikely to ever use but you never know. Let me know if you hear of a cheap collection of the coins of John the Good.



Buy the Book Before the Coin

By Robert W. Rightmire

Aaron Feldman, (1895–1976), was the catalyst that lead me to the collecting of numismatic literature. An inquiry in 1968 to D. Wayne Johnson, who at the time was the research director for the Medallic Art Company, connected me with Feldman. I was trying to locate information regarding an Abraham Lincoln metallic work that was then in my possession. Johnson provided me with the contact information for Feldman who responded with some details and a note on sources. His motto “buy the book before the coin” took root.

Feldman’s typed and signed note from May 20th, 1968 has remained in my collection for the past fifty-two years. I took his advice to heart and it provided me with more than a half a century of collecting far more numismatic books, journals and printed ephemera than coins or medals. My library of numismatic literature sharpened my collecting instinct and lead to a number of finds and a sense of discovery any time I entered a coin show, coin shop or viewed a listing of items for sale. So while Feldman is now long departed, I extend my profound “thank you” to his memory.

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Adams, United States Store Cards	1920 25.00
Jewell, A Century of Campaign Buttons	1929 35.00
Miller, Cal. of U. S. Store Cards & Merchants Tokens	1962 4.00
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Schubert & Robinson, America's Foreign Coins	1944 7.50
Schubert & Heiler, The Coin Collector's Almanac	1946 10.00
Schubert & Heiler, The Coin Collector's Almanac	1947 10.00
Richard & Dallas, Manual of Gold & Silver of World	1842 20.00

The Numismatist, March 1966, p. 398

Electronic Sources Make Space

By Michael Wehner

Because of space limitations, I try to keep my library focused on my principal collecting interests, tokens and medals, particularly of San Francisco. Hence, I have a lot of my rather small bookshelf space devoted to gold rush literature and other western numismatic material. Two electronic developments allowed me to free up space to be able to expand without actually losing anything. The first was that all of the San Francisco city directories from 1850 to the 1930s are online. I downloaded all of them and sold the dozen physical directories that I had. As each was 3 or 4 inches thick, this both allowed for more books and expanded the number of years available and hence tokens I can research.

The second development was tokencatalog.com which allowed me to divest of all the individual state token catalogs that I owned. Some may miss having the actual books, which I can understand. I do consider both of these resources to be critical, but in the end they are just lists. So the space now has books that I can actually read and that works for me.

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Kolbe & Fanning Numismatic Booksellers are now managing the distribution of back issues of the Numismatic Bibliomania Society's award-winning journal *The Asylum*. The Numismatic Bibliomania Society was formed in 1979, with their publication first appearing in 1980. Now in its 36th volume, it publishes both formal and informal articles on topics of interest to numismatic bibliophiles around the world. Back issues are available in limited numbers.

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