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## Your Newsletter July 2006

*Your Newsletter* is an electronic publication of the American Numismatic Association dedicated to serving Young Numismatists by publishing their articles and related items of numismatic interest. To subscribe to the free *Your Newsletter*, email [YourNewsletter@money.org](mailto:YourNewsletter@money.org) and ask to be placed on the list. Permission to copy, distribute, and publish any information in *Your Newsletter* is granted to all.

**Editor:** Max B. Spiegel

And finally, thank you to our contributors and readers! If you have an interesting numismatic article, website, or other item of interest that you would like published in *Your Newsletter*, email [YourNewsletter@money.org](mailto:YourNewsletter@money.org).

### Editor's Notes

It's time for the ANA Summer Seminar! As you read this, approximately 250 students are descending on beautiful Colorado Springs for the first session of what's billed as the numismatic highlight of the year. With approximately 15 courses offered each session, there is something for everyone. There are also interesting optional mini-seminars and bull sessions to supplement the regular coursework. While I don't mean to sound like a broken record, I will put in one final plug: the Summer Seminar is a great experience and anyone who is serious about numismatics should attend at least once. For those attending this year, please feel free to share stories and highlights from your seminar experience, which I can then publish in the August issue of *Your Newsletter*. I'll see you in the Springs!

### Announcements

#### **Outstanding Adult Advisor Award Nominations**

The ANA is seeking nominations for the Outstanding Adult Advisor Award. If there has been an adult advisor who has been particularly meaningful in your numismatic

career, email [outreach@money.org](mailto:outreach@money.org) with a name and your reasons for nominating this candidate for special recognition. Nominations must be received before July 15<sup>th</sup>.

## YN Auction Catalogs

The YN Convention Auction and YN Mail bid Catalogs will not be published in *Numismatist*, but will be available online August 1, 2006 at [www.money.org](http://www.money.org) (select "Young Numismatists" from the "Explore the World of Money" pull-down menu). Please call 719-482-9869 or email [outreach@money.org](mailto:outreach@money.org) with questions.

## Young Numismatists of America

The Young Numismatists of America is seeking members! The YNA is an organization founded in 2001 with the goal of promoting numismatics among Young Numismatists. It publishes a quarterly newsletter, *The Young Numismatist*, which features articles, news, contests and more. Although the club is run only by Young Numismatists, both YNs (\$3 dues) and adults (\$5) are welcome to join. To find out more information, and to get a membership form or sample newsletter, visit [www.ynaclub.org](http://www.ynaclub.org).

### Collector Coins at Face Value

By Andy McCray

Imagine finding a 1909-S VDB cent in your pocket change! Wow! That would be very nice. What about a 1914-D cent. All these coins are in circulation right now. Scott Travers spent them at face value in New York City for a pretzel and a bottle of water. Imagine how hungry and thirsty he must have been! However, these coins are not the only coins you can find in pocket change or at face value. There are many more! In this article, I will tell you some successful strategies for finding valuable coins at face value. After all, would you rather pay face value for that 1909-S VDB, or spend around



A 1914-D Lincoln Cent  
(Photo: HeritageCoin.com)



A 2004-D Wisconsin State  
Quarter with an Extra Leaf  
(Photo: Central States Numismatic Society)

\$1,500 in the numismatic market?

I have acquired many different coins at face value. One way, is to look for error coins. Not all of these error coins are obvious, so they will not be pulled out of circulation by non-collectors. For example, there is the Wisconsin state quarter with the extra-leaf (which has had lots of publicity) or "wide AM" pennies made between

1998-2000. The "wide AM" pennies look like any other penny you would find in change, so they are not easily noticed. There are also double die cents like the 1995. With a good eye these can be spotted. The list goes on and on. There is such a huge variety you can find by looking for modern error coins.

My favorite way to find valuable coins at face value is through the bank. Don't spread this secret though!!! When you go to banks, ask for rolls of half dollars. I have found that many banks do not even carry half dollars. I highly recommend calling ahead. It also helps if you can try to make friends with the teller. When looking through rolls of half dollars, you are mainly looking for silver. Half dollars made in 1964 and before are 90% and from 65-70 are 40%. Many people do not know that they made 40% halves. Looking through halves is a breeze when compared to looking through pennies. \$10 in halves is equal to 20 coins and in pennies that amount is equal to 1,000!!! You can even find Franklin half dollars! My best find was an uncirculated 1955 Franklin half. I have found lots of silver and even a '62 proof Franklin. This is by far the best way to look through coins at face value. I have even found a couple of proof Kennedy's.

Looking for coins at face value is a fun way to enjoy numismatics. You never know what you are going to find! It would be neat to start a small collection of coins that you have gotten only for face value. You probably won't get rich, but finding coins at face value sure is fun. Best of all, if you don't find anything, you are not out any money. Just cash them in! Good luck finding coins!!! Who knows, you might end up finding that 1909-S VDB! E-mail finds to [MccrayAndy@aol.com](mailto:MccrayAndy@aol.com)!

### Copper- From Regular Collection to Full-Time Obsession

By Jeffrey Swindling, LM-5781

There is no series in American coinage which is richer in history, varieties and personality than early copper. Excitement, passion and amusement eagerly follow a true copper collector. Most collectors probably have an old large cent or two in their collections because they are intrinsically interesting. But once you learn the basics of attribution, grading and preservation, the real fun begins!



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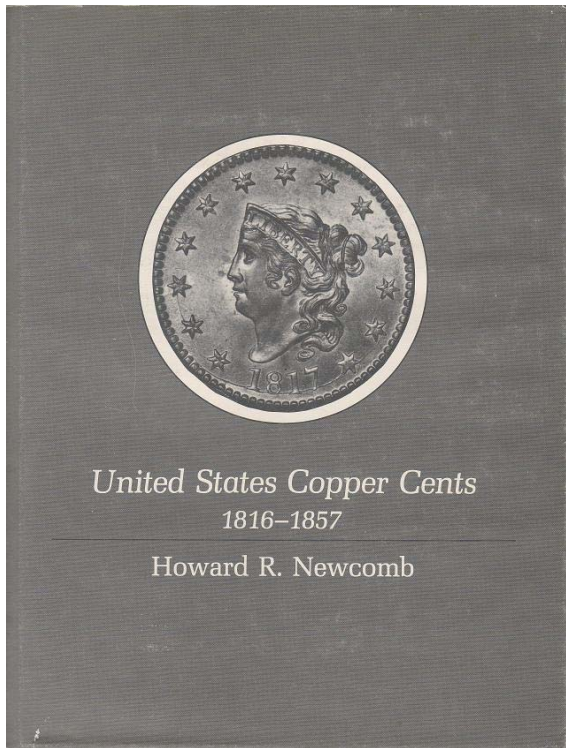
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Large Cents were arguably the first official coins for circulation produced by the fledgling US Mint in Philadelphia after it was chartered by Congress in April of 1792. At this time (and for the next several years), dies for coin production still had all of the devices punched in by hand. This means that leaves, stars, digits in the date, berries, stems, or any number of design elements could be placed in various locations or at assorted angles. The Mint relied on the skill of the die sinkers to generate cleanly prepared dies with which to strike coins. Luckily (or unluckily as the case may be!) for large cent collectors, no two dies are really exactly identical. Hence the plethora of varieties to collect-- and the true fun of collecting early coppers!

Varieties are discovered, cataloged and referenced through a process called "attribution". To properly attribute early American copper coins, one needs a few simple items. First you need a loupe. Most numismatists probably already own a good 7-10x magnification triplet lens loupe (and if they don't, they should get one soon). This will likely be sufficient for the purposes of most attributions. Sometimes varieties are so blatant, a loupe isn't even necessary! Secondly, you need a coin to attribute. Nearly all large cents from 1793-1839 have numerous collectable varieties which are fairly easy to spot with a little practice. Later date large cents become much tougher to properly attribute, and can be a fun challenge even for expert copper collectors. For teaching purposes in this article, we'll focus mainly on how to attribute middle date large cents 1816-1839. Lastly, you'll need a good reference work on copper varieties. My personal preference is the 1991 two volume work of numismatic literary genius authored by William C. Noyes entitled "United States Large Cents." The first volume, easily identifiable by its green cover, covers early date cents, from 1793-1814. The second volume covers 1816-1839 and has a dark red cover. There are numerous other books on attributing large cents, so feel free to shop around for your own personal favorite.

Each unique die variety is given a number to identify it. Early copper is classified by Sheldon (S) numbers, while middle and late dates are assigned Newcomb (N) numbers. Unlike S numbers which go from 1-295, N numbers are assigned for each date. For example, there is an N-1 variety for each date 1816-1839. Each additional variety for that specific date is assigned N-2, then N-3 and so on. The year 1831 features 12 distinct varieties! Additionally, the Noyes reference works have very clear black and white photos of each variety, with helpful arrows and descriptions pointing to diagnostic markers.

You could probably properly attribute high grade large cents fairly easily simply by comparing them to the pictures in your reference books. But if you are out on the coin show floor, this is not always possible (or prudent). This is where "quick finders" come in handy. Quick finders are short lists of key diagnostic markers used to attribute large cents. A quick finder for each date appears in the text of the Noyes book I use. However, the abbreviations which are found here can be extremely confusing for a novice copper collector. Excellent articles on these abbreviations, written by noted copper expert Steve Carr, can be found in old issues of the Early American Coppers (EAC) bimonthly club publication "Penny-Wise." In our example of middle date large



*United States Copper Cents, 1816-1857*  
By Howard R. Newcomb  
(Photo: Editor)

cents, common abbreviations refer to leaves and letters in the inscription on the reverse. "PLC" means the "point of the leaf under the 'C' in 'AMERICA.'" Other letters and leaves, such as the D in UNITED, are common diagnostic markers for these cents.

Here's a simple trick to make some of your attributions a lot more efficient. Look for obvious errors first-- recut dates and letters, overdates and double punched devices are usually really easy to see. Die markers, such as breaks, gouges and cuds can also be diagnostic for certain dates. Sometimes these quick and easy-to-find diagnostics lead you right to a certain variety, and you only have to use the technical aspects of attribution as a double-checking method. I highly recommend double or triple checking all of your attributions, because sometimes mistakes, even obvious ones, can be missed.

One of the best things you can do as a copper collector is go to the ANA's annual summer seminar and take the course entitled "Early American Copper Coins." The instructors, Doug Bird and Steve Carr, are both highly respected in the copper community as well as being established experts in the field. Class members get tons of hands-on experience with high grade, beautiful coins. In a typical session, you can expect to handle tens of thousands of dollars in truly amazing coins. In addition, attend as many coin shows as you can and try to get some practice attributing the coins you see there. Build a rapport with dealers, and they may allow you extra time to sit and learn about their coins. You may even find yourself wanting to make purchases from them, whether it's now or in the near future. You can get a good idea of the types of coins and varieties which are out there by looking out for them at larger shows. Join the EAC, and read their magazine. There are resources which can be tapped all over the numismatic world.

Of course there are many more books you could use, and many more methods which can be employed to attribute your early American coppers than I have discussed here. Part of the fun is finding out what you like best, and which is easiest for you to use! You'll quickly find that you have become hooked on early American copper coins. Start a new passion today!

### Young Numismatists Programs

The ANA has many programs to encourage Young Numismatists to be active in the hobby. This year's ANA Summer Seminar will be held in two sessions during the first two weeks of July. Summer Seminar is an opportunity for numismatic scholarship and

camaraderie, offering students a wide and varied selection of week-long courses suited for anyone, from the curious beginner to the most advanced numismatist. Young Numismatists (YNs), ages 13 to 22, stay in a Colorado College dormitory with experienced chaperones and mentors. Although the deadline for scholarships has now passed, you can still register to attend by filling out this [form](#). For more information about the Seminar, the numismatic highlight of the year, go to the ANA website ([www.money.org](http://www.money.org)).

Two great ways for Young Numismatists to learn and earn spectacular coins and other prizes are the [David R. Cervin Ancient Coin Project](#) and the [Early American Copper Coin Project](#). By completing hobby-related activities YNs can also earn auction dollars to spend at the ANA World's Fair of Money convention each year. You see how to earn these auction dollars, and for a form to fill out, click [here](#). Speaking of the convention, the World's Fair of Money is being held in Denver this year from August 16 to 19. The convention is a great place to meet new people, buy and sell numismatic pieces, and go to many free educational functions. I encourage all who are attending to [exhibit](#) something from their collection. It is a great way to educate others and win awards. The YN Best of Show even wins a scholarship to next year's Summer Seminar! This year, because the convention is being held so near to ANA Headquarters in Colorado Springs, there is a member appreciation day planned for August 20.

If any other clubs have programs or events for Young Numismatists, please send the information to [YourNewsletter@money.org](mailto:YourNewsletter@money.org).

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