

NEWS & NOTES *continued*

## REAL OR FAKE?

# Certification Trailblazer

Collecting went through a revolution in the 1970s, when third-party coin grading became a hobby standard.

➤ WHEN I BEGAN collecting coins in the 1950s, an accurate evaluation of the item's condition was not an important con-

sideration. Of first importance was the date and mintmark so I could fill the appropriate hole in the coin folder. I took coins out of circulation at face value, and if a nicer example was found, I replaced the first piece with the better one. Even in the late 1960s, when I stretched my budget horribly to buy a magnificent Saint-Gaudens double eagle (gold \$20) for \$70, I gave no thought at all to the coin's objective grade.

Unknown to me at that time, talks were underway within the halls of the American Numismatic Association to tackle the growing challenge of coin authentication and objective grading. This led to the formation of the ANA Certification Service (ANACS). The new entity certified its

first submission in June 1972. As the value of this service was further embraced by coin dealers and collectors, the grading staff at ANACS grew, and the agency moved to Colorado Springs in 1976.

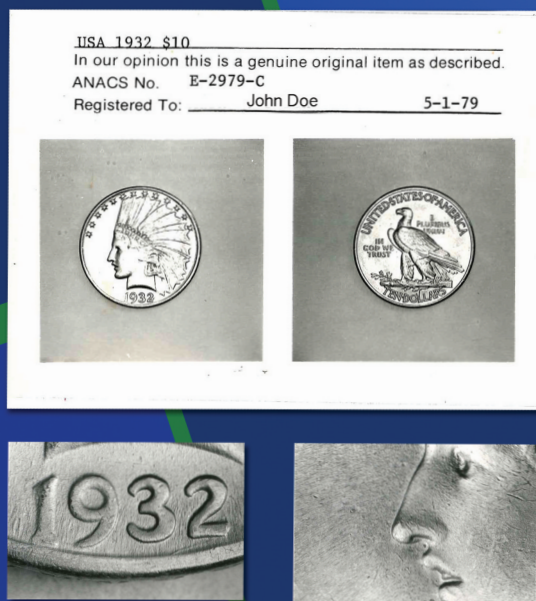
In 1979 ANACS began grading coins based on the *Official American Numismatic Association Grading Standards for United States Coins* (ANA Library Catalog No. GA50.A5). Encapsulation had not yet begun, but the coin was photographed (obverse and reverse), with an independent grade assigned to each side. The ANA copyrighted the process in 1983.

ANACS began encapsulating coins in 1989. The background of the front label states "ANA Official," while the hologram at the top of the reverse shows "ANA" and the Association's trademark lamp emblem. In 1990 the ANA sold ANACS to Amos Press, and "ANA" was dropped from the label.

Today, Numismatic Guaranty Corporation is the ANA's official grading service. ANACS is still going strong as one of the top three independent grading companies, serving the needs of thousands of collectors and dealers.

Out of the ANA came the initiative, standards and organization to implement a system of grading and certification for the benefit of all. More innovations are sure to come.

—Larry House



PHOTOS: ANA ARCHIVES

▲ **THE AMERICAN NUMISMATIC ASSOCIATION** Certification Service (ANACS) took close-up images of each coin, recognized the specimens as either "genuine" or "counterfeit," and issued certificates to the owners. ANACS was sold in 1990 and is still in operation today.