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# The Numismatist

JULY 2014

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## 1876 Centennial Exposition

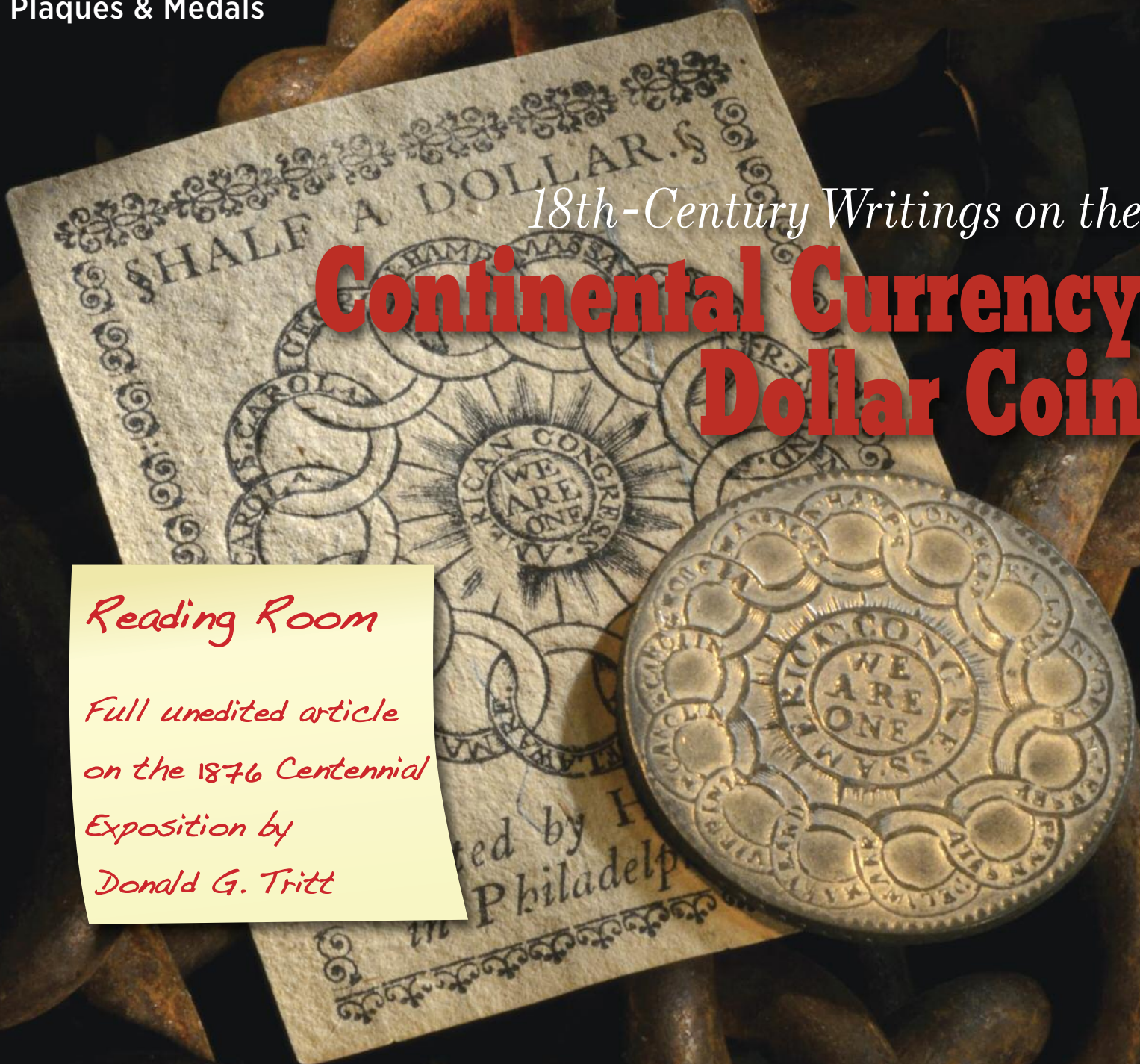
Die-Pressed Wooden  
Plaques & Medals

Enigmatic 1841  
New Orleans Half Eagle

## 18th-Century Writings on the Continental Currency Dollar Coin

### Reading Room

Full unedited article  
on the 1876 Centennial  
Exposition by  
Donald G. Tritt



## DIE-PRESSED WOODEN MEDALS & PLAQUES

*of the 1876 Centennial Exposition*

**T**he Centennial Exposition of 1876 was held in Philadelphia, May 10 to November 10, to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Though initially planned to be a display of innovations and products of the United States only, the Centennial soon became an International Exposition with the official title, International Exhibition of Arts, Manufactures, and Products of the Soil and Mine. All nations having diplomatic relations with the U.S. were invited to participate. Strong support by Philadelphians urged city council to permit use of Fairmount Park through which flowed the winding Schuylkill & Wissahickon Rivers.

The Congress of the United States, by an act approved March 3, 1871, directed that the centennial anniversary of the promulgation of the Declaration of American Independence should be held in Philadelphia. On March 3, 1872 the U.S. Centennial Commission was established with Gen'l Joseph R. Hawley (1826-1905), the 42nd Governor of Connecticut, as President. Soon afterwards the United States Congress, on June 1, 1872 created a Centennial Board of Finance with representation from each state and territory to oversee the raising of funds by offering subscriptions of capital stock not exceeding \$10 million divided into shares of \$10 each. Capitol stock certificates were issued April 21, 1875. To oversee fundraising and to provide overall administration, Alfred T. Goshorn (1833-1902) was named Director-General. Goshorn was well known as a Cincinnati businessman and successful organizer of the 1870 to 1888 Cincinnati Industrial Expositions. On July 3, 1873 President Ulysses S. Grant (1822-1885) issued the official proclamation creating the Centennial Exposition.

Beginning July 4, 1874 (with completion by April 1, 1876), more than 200 buildings ranging in size from the giant Main Exhibition Building (21 ½ acres) to tiny booths were constructed on the 236 acres set aside for the Exposition. Twenty-six states (out of 38) and thirty-five nations were represented. The Opening Address was given by President Grant on May 10. By the time the Exposition closed on November 10 more than 10 million had visited the Exposition, nearly 25 percent of the population of the United States.

### **Dates in the numismatic history of the 1876 Centennial and the appearance of wooden medals & plaques**

Anticipating a market for mementoes of the Centennial Exhibition, independent designers Thomas Hartell and John Letchworth of Philadelphia, between April 1874 and April 1875, filed for and were granted four Patents for the Design of Medals showing the exteriors of the Machinery Hall, the Main building, the Memorial Building and the Horticultural Hall.

The United States Congressional Act of June 16, 1874 authorized that official "...medals with appropriate devices, emblems, and inscriptions commemorative of the Centennial Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence be prepared at the Mint at Philadelphia for the Centennial Board of Finance, subject to the provisions of the fifty-second section of the Coinage Act of 1873, upon the payment of a sum not less than the cost thereof, and all the provisions, whether penal or otherwise, of said Coinage Act against the counterfeiting or imitation of coins of the United States, shall apply to the Medals struck and issued under the provisions of this Act." Striking of official medals began in October of 1874. Even though striking of Centennial medals began in 1874 and continued throughout 1875 and 1876, this catalog will label issues related to the Centennial under the year 1876.



The January 1875 issue of the *American Journal of Numismatics* reported that the United States Mint had made its first delivery of

“medals struck by authority of Congress for the Centennial Commission, and protected by the Coinage Laws. They are beautiful in design and execution, and are intended as memorials of the great commemoration of the one hundredth anniversary of the nation’s birth, and will be sold at \$1, \$2, \$3, and \$5 each, according to their respective styles, by the Centennial Board of Finance, and the proceeds will be applied toward defraying the expenses of the national celebration. The Mint will now turn out these Medals rapidly, and the board will be able to supply the great demand for them that is pressing from all quarters.”

Concerned that private companies were advertising their medals as “official,” the United States Centennial Board of Finance on March 24, 1875, found it necessary to issue the following notice.

“Official Centennial Medals, ‘having been prepared and issued, are now being sold by the Centennial Board of Finance and its agents, and the profits arising therefrom strictly applied in aid of the preparation for the celebration of the anniversary which the Medals commemorate. They are the only Medals relating to the great events of 1876 officially issued, and may be readily distinguished from any of the tokens styled Centennial Medals, and issued by private parties for their individual profit, from the fact that in addition to the design and other wording, the larger Medals have stamped upon them, ‘Act of Congress, June 1874,’ and the others, ‘By the authority of the Congress of the United States’.” (In violation of this, the wooden medal 1876 [1] was produced.) These official Medals are of four kinds – small gilt at \$1; large bronze at \$2; coin silver at \$3; large gilt at \$5; or all enclosed in one case at \$11. Cautionary notice is hereby given that the Centennial Board of Finance intends to avail itself of the protection and privilege granted by the Acts of Congress above mentioned, and that the highly penal provisions for publishing, counterfeiting or imitating the authorized official Medals will be strictly enforced against all infringement and violation.”

In April and May 1875 independent designer John H. Schreiner of Philadelphia filed for and was granted two Patents for the Design of Medals depicting Joseph R. Hawley, Alfred T. Goshorn, the Main Building and the Memorial/Art Gallery.

The first portrayal of an authorized Centennial medal appeared in the April 1875 issue of the *American Journal of Numismatics*. Depicted there was the now iconic “Independence Centennial Commission Medal” in silver, gilt and bronze. Listed were two sizes. The size 36 (55mm) medal showing on its reverse “Act of Congress June 1874” and the size 24 medal (38mm) showing on its reverse “By Authority of the Congress of the United States 1876.”

In June 1875 the independent designer Israel Y. Knight of Philadelphia filed for and was granted a Patent for the design of a medal, later to be known as the *Magna est Veritas* medal or the *Washington Cherry Tree* medal listed here as 1876[2].

Starting with the September 1875 issue no. 7 of *The Coin Circular* (edited by G. A. Gillingham, Titusville, Pennsylvania) and continuing for four subsequent issues, John W. Haseltine of 1225 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, first announced sale of six “Centennial Medals, Carved in Solid Walnut. Small Medals 2 ½ inches, Large Medals 3 inches – in diameter. Price, \$1.50 per box.” The term “carved” was used here even though Haseltine knew these medals were pressed. One month later his advertisement in the *AJN* would describe these medals as “struck.” Three years later, J. W. Scott & Co. advertised this

same set in *The Coin Collectors' Journal* for \$1. John W. Haseltine (1838-1925) was born in Philadelphia where most of his life was involved in the commercial aspects of coin collecting, except for a short ten year stint late in life as a stock broker. To my knowledge Haseltine was the only dealer to specifically advertise sale of wooden Centennial medals.

At the October 1, 1875 meeting of the Boston Numismatic Society, Henry H. Holland exhibited two wooden medals showing the head of Washington<sup>1</sup>. I believe this was the first public appearance of the rare small head Washington medal in wood 1876 [5] being shown alongside the large head Washington medal in wood 1876 [3].

In the January 1876 issue of the *American Journal of Numismatics* Henry H. Holland began his series "Centennial Medals" – a series when completed in October 1878 listed 206 different medals, in all materials, relating to the Centennial. Also appearing in the January 1876 issue was Haseltine's repeated notice that "The Centennial Medals in the list published [later] in this issue of the Journal [by Holland] can be obtained of J. W. Haseltine, 1225 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia." Accompanying this notice by Haseltine was a brief description of the method of producing wooden medals<sup>2</sup>.

The "black walnut medals," so called are, it is said, made from wood cut with the grain, steamed until it assumes a semi-pulpy condition, then coated with shell-lac, and the impression made by a squeeze and not a blow.

It was in this same issue that James Hammond Trumbull (1821-1897), a Philologist, challenged calling these wooden pieces "medals."

"Medal" is metal, even if it's spelled with a d. Architects and painters talk of "medallions," which are not of metal, but they use the word as they do "roses" and "stars" figuratively. Wood is non-metallic, and consequently non-medallic<sup>3</sup>.

In February 1876 Edward Frossard began his series "Centennial Medals" in the *Coin Collectors Journal*, a series when completed in January 1877 presented 320 different Centennial medals of all materials. He noted "The collection of Centennial Medals is assuming some importance, and in time they will find their appropriate place in collections."

During the years between 1870 and 1898 Haseltine is reported as having issued 87 auction catalogs. Between March and November 1876 Haseltine issued seven "*Centennial Catalogs*." Adams remarked that "Haseltine built a close relationship with various officials at the U. S. Mint, serving as a

—NONE BUT NUMISMATIC ADVERTISEMENTS—  
INSERTED IN THIS PAPER.

1876. 1876.

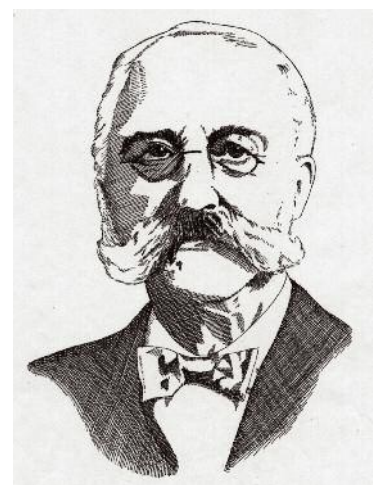
**CENTENNIAL MEDALS,**  
Carved in Solid Walnut.  
Small Medals 2 ½ inches,  
Large Medals, 3 inches  
—IN DIAMETER.—

Reverse of the four small medals consists  
of the words:  
"The 100th Anniversary of American Independence,  
Great International Exhibition, Fairmount Park,  
Philadelphia,  
4th OF JULY, 1876."

Reverse of two large medals consists of the words:  
"The 100th Anniversary of American Independence,  
4th of July, 1876. Exhibition open from May 10th  
to Nov. 10th, 1876, Fairmount Park, Phil-  
adelphia, United States of America."

Price, . . . . . \$1.50 per box.  
Circulars of Centennial Medals sent to any address  
on application to

**JOHN W. HASELTINE,**  
—Dealer in—  
-Coins, Paper Money, Minerals,-  
-Shells, Postage Stamps, Auto-  
graphs and all kinds of  
**CURIOSITIES.**  
1225 Chestnut St., Philadelphia.



PHOTOS: DONALD G. TRITT

▲ **JOHN HASELTINE** advertised "Centennial Medals Carved in Solid Walnut" in the September 1875 issue of *The Coin Circular*, although he knew the medals were, in fact, pressed.

<sup>1</sup> Boston Numismatic Society. Transactions of Societies. *American Journal of Numismatics*, January, 1876, p. 67 (entry for October 1, 1875).  
<sup>2</sup> *American Journal of Numismatics*. Editorial. January, 1876, p. 72.  
<sup>3</sup> Notwithstanding Trumbull's critique, in this catalog I will refer to wooden pieces issued to commemorate persons, actions and events by the more generic terms, medals or medallions.

conduit to the hobby for many rare (and some not so rare) pattern coins” adding that “... the man could have told us a great deal about mint operations that remain unknown ...”<sup>4</sup>

## **The Legal Suit**

Perhaps it was the issuing of a wooden medal by John Schreiner depicting the Main Building six months after Thomas Hartell and John Letchworth had received their patent for design of this same building that prompted a legal fight. On 25 April, 1876, Hartell & Letchworth appeared in the United States Eastern District Court of Pennsylvania to defend their suit against John H. Schreiner, Frederick C. Viney & others (later founders of the Philadelphia Ornamental Wood Co. and patentees for other 1876 medals) arguing they were the original inventors of designs for medals for which Letters Patent No. 7,827 (Memorial Hall) and No. 7,828 (Main Building) were granted them in November, 1874. Schreiner answered saying their designs were for an elevation view of Centennial buildings whereas the designs of Hartell & Letchworth were for perspective views of Centennial buildings. Of even greater historical significance in this suit was contention over use of the word “Centennial” by Schreiner. In their suit Hartell & Letchworth stated they had registered in the Patent Office in May 1873, as a Trade-Mark, the word “Centennial.” Schreiner denied use of this Trade-Mark on their medals excepting use of “Centennial” on lids of paper boxes containing wooden medals. The Court ruled the word “Centennial” to be common property and the complainant’s suit by Hartell & Letchworth was dismissed on April 25, 1876.<sup>5</sup> Interestingly, the word “Centennial” never appeared on any of the small or large round wooden medals although this phrasing did appear on seven of the ten rectangle medals.

## **The Philadelphia Ornamental Wood Company**

On April 29, 1876, four days after dismissal of the suit over use of “Centennial,” the State of Pennsylvania granted a Charter to John H. Schreiner et al. for Incorporation of the Philadelphia Ornamental Wood Company. The purpose of this company as stated in its application papers of April 29, 1874, was

The manufacture of articles of wood, such as “souvenirs of the Centennial,” scroll and ornamental work, and designs in wood, as secured in letters patent of the United States No. 8324, and No. 8365, issued to John H. Schreiner, and now held by him the said John H. Schreiner, Frederick C. Viney, Josiah P. Ford, James A. Robinson and John H. Horner and of selling the same, and of the taking, holding and selling patent rights therefor.

Initial capital stock was \$50,000 divided into 1,000 shares valued at \$50 each. Shares were issued to the six Directors in the following amounts: John H. Schreiner (288), Frederick C. Viney (226), Josiah P. Ford (226), James A. Robinson (125), John H. Horner (125) and Egbert K. Nichols (10).

Except where noted all issues in this catalog were pressed by the Philadelphia Ornamental Wood Company.

Of curious note, eighty years prior to the founding of the Philadelphia Ornamental Wood Company a John Schreiner was listed as the Chief Pressman and highest paid workman on the staff of the Chief Coiners Department at the Philadelphia Mint. His salary was \$1.80 per day. No connection has

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<sup>4</sup> Adams, John W. *United States Numismatic Literature*, Mission Viejo, CA. 1982.

<sup>5</sup> Cadwalader, John and Theodore McFadden. *Cadwalader’s Cases: Being Decisions of the Hon. John Cadwalader, Judge of the District Court of the United States for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, between years of 1858-1879*. Philadelphia: R. Walsh. 1907. Vol. 2, p. 513.

<sup>6</sup> George G. Evans (Ed.) *Illustrated History of the United States Mint (revised)*. Philadelphia: George G. Evans, 1889. p. 2

been established between these two John Schreiners.<sup>6</sup>

## Numismatic-related Exhibitors at the Centennial

*The 1876 Catalog of Pennsylvania Exhibitors* shows two displays in the Class No. 402 “Medals, pressed & engraved; electrotypes of medals,” one by William & Charles Barber, the other by A. C. Paquet. Unfortunately, no detail is given in the 1876 Official Catalog indicating what items were displayed. Interestingly, Breuker & Kessler, lithographers of pictures found in lids of the boxed set of six wooden medals, were exhibitors as was the W. A. Drown & Co. of Philadelphia, makers of umbrellas and parasols, which issued a pressed wood advertising plaque. Hartell & Letchworth, designers of several Centennial wooden medals, exhibited in Class No. 216 “Decorative Glass Ware.”

The years surrounding the Centennial Exposition were clearly the peak period for the production of wooden medals and plaques in the United States. It was during this time that the largest quantity of such pieces and the largest number of varieties was produced.

## Die Pressing of Wood 19th Century Inventors

Henry May of Bridgeport, Connecticut is often credited with being the modern-day inventor for the embossing of wood. His Patent #50,608 dated October 24, 1865, was titled “Embossing of Wood.” In his specification papers, May described his invention as a “new and useful Improvement in Stamping or Molding of Wood” and provided the following description –

“The pieces of wood to be pressed or molded are cut from the end of the log or timber in sheets or cross-sections, having the face or faces upon which the impression is to be made transverse to the grain. The pieces of wood, having been thoroughly seasoned or otherwise freed from moisture of water or sap, are placed under, between, or within dies or molds of any desirable form, in such a manner that a heavy pressure may be made upon the end of the grain of the wood, and the pieces of wood, when thus placed, are subjected to a single and short pressure by such dies or molds, the pressure being applied against the end of the grain and in a direction as nearly as possible paralleled with the grain. Such pressure, having been applied is then removed and the wood released from such dies or molds without unnecessary delay.”



◀ **THE EXPOSED END GRAIN** of a pressed-wood Centennial Exposition plaque.

Two years later in 1867 the Ornamental Wood Manufacturing Company of Bridgeport, Connecticut was formed with Clapp Spooner as President and Treasurer. An advertising flyer dated June 1, 1869 lists their pressed wood products as “Medallions, Curtain Pins [Tie Backs], Rosettes, Monograms, etc. Embracing many designs of Elegance and Utility, Admirably adapted to embellishment, where Beauty and Taste are required.” Such was the appeal during the Victorian period. A penciled note indicates these items could be purchased at The Great Coliseum of the 1869 National Peace Jubilee in Boston.

Over the next five years six patents were granted to May and others connected with the Ornamental Wood Manufacturing Company of Bridgeport for improvements in the embossing of wood. This company produced at least eight different varieties of wooden medals for the 1869 Peace Jubilee. By 1877 the catalog of this company depicted 305 designs for the following pressed “natural wood ornaments” – rosettes, medallions, mouldings, escutcheons, heads, brackets, door knobs, shutter knobs, curtain pins or tie backs, bell pulls, leaves, drawer pulls, panel and tablet ornaments.



The Ornamental Wood Manufacturing Company continued in existence until 1889. However central was the 1865 invention of Henry May and its use in products of the Ornamental Wood Manufacturing Company, it appears the technology for the embossing of wood should properly be credited to Philander Shaw of Boston who five years earlier in 1860 was granted Patent #28,309 titled Method of Preparing and Molding Wood into Different Forms. Shaw stated

“my invention consists in submitting wood to the action of heat while confined in a compressed state within a mold and also in so treating the wood ...filling it either wholly or partially, with resinous or oily or other moisture repelling matter, or with metallic or mineral salts, or any preservative chemical, or dye. ... I submit the ... blanks of wood to the action of high pressure steam within a strong closed vessel ... and by the condensation of the steam within the vessel I can obtain a vacuum in the pores of the wood. After a vacuum has been produced I admit into the vessel in a fluid state, oily, or resinous or other water-proof material, or any metallic or mineral salts or other preservative chemical. ... Where I desire to have the injected matter thoroughly forced into the wood, I apply any required amount of pressure to the contents of the vessel. ... When the blanks are removed from the vessel they are submitted to the action of heat to evaporate from the wood any moisture which may be therein and any solvent of the injected matter, which may be condensed and preserved. ... The blanks of wood are now compressed into molds by a screw or any other suitable press. I prefer to have the blanks and molds in a warm or heated state. ...The molds with their contents are next removed from the press, and submitted to the action of heat, which I prefer to apply in ovens. I have used from 200° to 300° F. for this purpose.”

This procedure described by Shaw in 1860 closely resembles the basic method used in all subsequent wood embossing and the pressing of medals and plaques. Drawing upon a search of related U. S. Patents from 1860 to 1875 a more technical description of this process can be found in Tritt, Donald G. “An Introduction to Die-Pressed Wooden Exonumia,” *The Numismatist*, February, 2012, p. 41.

## Estimated Rarity Scale

Since my research has discovered no production records for the Philadelphia Ornamental Wood Company, my best estimate of rarity is derived from the large number of pieces I have either seen, recorded or purchased over a forty year period. The scale offered here is a relative scale i.e. the most frequently seen pieces are given a 1 whereas those seen somewhere in between these and the unique and near-unique pieces known to me are given ratings reflective of their appearance in my referent sample.

### Rarity

### Valuation

		<b><i>Prime Condition*</i></b>	<b><i>Average Condition</i></b>
R-1	Most Common	\$75	\$50
R-2	Common	\$100	\$75
R-3	Less Common	\$125	\$100
R-4	Uncommon	\$150	\$125
R-5	Scarce	\$600	\$400
R-6	Rare	\$750	\$500
R-7	Two known	\$1,500	-----
R-8	One known/Unique	\$2,500	-----

\* No cracks or splits. Text on reverse is fully readable.

## Black Walnut

Most all 1876 wooden Centennial medals and plaques were issued in Black Walnut. Early in the Victorian era use of Black Walnut was the preferred wood and used throughout the home on wood-work, furniture, glued-on medallions, doors, cabinets, the large bedroom armoire, curtain tie-backs, door knobs, frames – and much more. By 1876 Black Walnut (*Juglans Nigra*, a native American wood) was considered the “only wood appropriate for middle class gentility.”<sup>7</sup> Examples exist of settees decorated with a pressed wooden medallion depicting Miss C. L. Kellogg which was an exact replica of a wooden medal issued for the 1869 National Peace Jubilee in Boston. Known as Black Walnut to distinguish it from White Walnut or Butternut (*Juglans Cinerea*) it was preferred for several reasons. Its color offered a fine contrast to the bright fashions coming into existence, it could be worked to produce fine decorations by carving and by pressing with a die, and it would hold up well showing minimal effects of aging.

Unless otherwise noted the wooden Centennial medals and plaques in this catalog were issued in Black Walnut by the Ornamental Wood Company of Philadelphia

### 1876 [1] Independence Centennial Commission Medal      *Rarity 8    Unique    \$2,500*

Independence Centennial Commission Medal, 1876. 55 mm (3 mm). Black Walnut. Unlisted by Holland and by Frossard. Spangenberg, 1876 [1]



Actual Size  
55 mm



PHOTO: ROBERT B. KELLEY

▲ **OBVERSE** Within a beaded circle, a female figure resting on her L knee, holds in her R hand a sword to the ground and raises her L hand in tribute to the original colonies shown as a ring of 13 stars from which issue rays. Around the border, THESE UNITED COLONIES ARE AND OF RIGHT OUGHT TO BE FREE AND INDEPENDENT STATES. *In exergue*, 1776.

▲ **REVERSE** Three female figures within a beaded circle. A standing female wearing a liberty cap and a girt with sword supports a shield of the United States at her lower L. With each hand she places a laurel-wreath on the head of a kneeling female, one typifying Mechanical Arts and the other Ornamental Arts. The female at the L holds a hammer in her R hand which rests on a heavy cog-wheel with an anvil nearby. The female at the R has her R hand on a bust and holds with her L hand a modeling-stick with palette and brushes below. Around the border, IN COMMEMORATION OF THE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE. *In exergue*, 1876. Below, ACT OF CONGRESS JUNE 1874.

<sup>7</sup> Lichten, Francis. *Decorative Art of Victoria's Era*. New York, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1950. p. 93.



The wording on the obverse is a quotation from the first resolution of the Continental Congress of June 10, 1776.

The lead article of the April 1875 issue of the *American Journal of Numismatics* features the medal shown above (in metal) citing it as “The Centennial Commission Medal.” William S. Appleton, Secretary stated this medal was issued in bronze and silver and in two sizes, size 36 (55 mm) and size 24 (38 mm).<sup>8</sup> Six months later in the same journal John W. Haseltine advertised for sale “Centennial Medals struck in Solid Walnut: Two Medals, three inches in diameter, four Medals, two and a half in diameter, \$1.50 per box of six.” No mention was made of the medal shown here being produced in wood.

Spangenberg reported that “There is no mention of wooden specimens being struck either in the Mint report of the period [1874-1876] or in private listings of Centennial medals.”<sup>9</sup> This medal was unknown to both Frossard and Holland, catalogers writing at the time of the Centennial. Continuing Spangenberg’s early research and finding no mention of this piece elsewhere, I am convinced the unofficial U. S. Mint medal shown here, stamped with “Act of Congress, June 1874” is the only known copy of a medal pressed in wood from original dies created by William Barber, Chief Engraver of the Philadelphia Mint. To date, no information has been found telling where or by whom this wooden medal was pressed. However, it is highly probable that production of this piece was aided by Haseltine. John Adams (1982) notes “Haseltine built a close relationship with various officials at the U.S. Mint, serving as a conduit to the hobby for many rare (and some not-so-rare) pattern coins.”<sup>10</sup>

The official Mint issue of this medal (in metal) was cataloged by R. W. Julian<sup>11</sup> as CM-10 (obverse) and CM-11 (reverse), by Hibbler & Kappen<sup>12</sup> as HK-20 and voted #52 on the list of “100 Greatest American Medals and Tokens.”<sup>13</sup>

**Provenance.** Hank Spangenberg reported<sup>14</sup> this wooden medal as being from the Estate Sale of Henry Chapman (1860-1935), an exhibitor at the Exposition. Items from this sale, other than coins, went to Ed Rice of Cranberry, NJ from whom Hank bought this piece prior to his 1969 articles “Wooden Medals Unique Mementoes.”<sup>15</sup> In the May, 1974 issue of *The Numismatist* Hank advertised offering to pay a record price for this medal in wood. There were no takers. In April 1981 this medal was sold as lot #1739 from the Kessler-Spangenberg Auction Catalog by NASCA. The catalogers remarked, this is “The first specimen we have seen or heard of in this material.” This wooden medal later appeared in the stock of Lawrence E. Elman and was purchased by Donald G. Tritt in July, 1988.

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<sup>8</sup> *American Journal of Numismatics*. The Centennial Commission Medal. April 1875. pp. 73-74

<sup>9</sup> Spangenberg, Henry. Wooden Medals Unique Mementoes. *Numismatic Scrapbook Magazine*, March 1969, pp. 414-421 and April 1969, pp. 625-637.

<sup>10</sup> Adams, John W. *United States Numismatic Literature: Vol. I, Nineteenth Century Catalogs*. Mission Viejo, California, 1982. p. 47.

<sup>11</sup> Julian, R. W. & N. Neil Harris. *Medals of the United States Mint: the First Century 1792-1892*. El Cajon, California: Tokens & Medals Society, 1977.

<sup>12</sup> Hibbler, Harold E. & Charles V. Kappen. *So-Called Dollars*. New York: The Coin & Currency Institute, Inc. 1963.

<sup>13</sup> Jaeger, Katherine & Q. David Bowers. *100 Greatest American Medals and Tokens: Complete with Market Values*. Atlanta, GA: Whitman Publishing, 2007.

<sup>14</sup> *Personal correspondence*.

<sup>15</sup> Spangenberg, Henry. Wooden Medals Unique Mementoes. *Numismatic Scrapbook Magazine*, March 1969, pp. 414-421 and April 1969, pp. 625-637.

Magna Est Veritas (Washington Cherry Tree) Medal, 1876. 62mm, (6mm). Cherry. R. Laubenheimer. Unlisted in Frossard; Holland, 73; Marvin, 267; Spangenberg, 1876-2; Rulau & Fuld 292e after Baker 292.



Actual Size  
62 mm



▲ **OBVERSE** Beneath undraped Washington bust after Houdon facing L, *in exergue*, R. LAUBENHEIMER. Above, five pointed radiant star. At outer edge, two heavy circular laurel wreaths tied at bottom. Circular legend inside wreath, FIRST IN WAR, FIRST IN PEACE, AND FIRST IN THE HEARTS OF HIS COUNTYMEN. Below bust, lower inner semicircle BORN FEB. 22, 1732 – DIED DEC. 14, 1799. Tiny square & compass Masonic symbol below. At bottom, *in exergue*, PATENTED JUNE 8, 1875.

▲ **REVERSE** L figure of Washington's father with a cane and on R a youthful George with hatchet in hand near a felled cherry tree. Trees & fence in background. At top, wreath enclosing a G W monogram and an eye. Legend in upper semicircle, MAGNA EST VERITAS ET PRÆVALEBIT. Below *in exergue* in two curved lines, I CANNOT TELL A LIE / 1876.

The patent for this medal Design No. 8,377 was issued June 8, 1875 to Israel Y. Knight of Philadelphia for a term of three and a half years. His stated intent was to have dies engraved “from which the medal is to be struck, either in alto-relievo or bas-relief.” Using the design of Knight, dies were cut by Rudolph P. Laubenheimer (1833-1905), a German immigrant who came to America about 1855 after studying and acquiring skills in Hamburg. Establishing his shop 1858 in New York City, his business card described his work as an engraver and diesinker of medals, badges, jewelry dies, embossing plates, dies for silverware, button dies and seals for wax. The year 1876 appears prominently on the reverse. However, past catalogers have used 1875 to identify this piece, being the year the patent was granted. Although unlisted in Wood by Frossard, he states the Magna est Veritas medal (his No. 80) in silver, copper and white metal was struck in 1876.<sup>16</sup> Following the convention of assigning a date to a medal in the year it was struck, I have listed this medal as an 1876 piece. The Latin phrase “Magna est Veritas et Prævalebit” (motto of the Masonic Order of the Red Cross of Constantine) translated means “Truth is Great and will Prevail.”

Pressed from cherry wood (*Prunus Serotina*) planchets, the color of these medals ranges from the ordinary dark reddish-brown to a light color, the latter pieces being from the sapwood of cherry. This wooden medal was likely pressed by a company other than the Philadelphia Ornamental Wood Company.

Henry W. Holland, writing in 1877 had no trouble listing the Magna est Veritas medal in cherry wood as a medal (his catalog No. 73).<sup>17</sup> Not so with William T. R. Marvin writing in 1880. Cataloging the

<sup>16</sup>Frossard, Eduard. Centennial Medals, *Coin Collector's Journal*, August 1876. p. 134.

<sup>17</sup>Holland, H. W. Centennial Medals, *American Journal of Numismatics*, October 1877. pp. 43-44.

size 32 (50mm) Magna est Veritas medal in metal as No. 267, he went on to say “There are dies almost exactly like the [No. 267], from which impressions have been struck in cherry wood, size 40 [62mm]; but as I do not consider that impressions in *wood* are properly classed as Medals, I do not include them here.”<sup>18, 19</sup> Thus continued Trumbull’s 1876 rejection of pieces produced in wood being worthy of classification as medals.<sup>20</sup> By 1885 William S. Baker described the size 32 (50mm) Magna est Veritas medal in metal (his catalog No. 292) saying “The head is well modeled and shows quality in execution. Dies similar to these but larger were also prepared by [Laubenheimer] for the purpose of striking impressions in wood.”<sup>21</sup> With Baker this wooden medal received recognition as, at least, an “impression.” The design of the larger wooden piece by Laubenheimer, referred to by Baker, is distinguished by three changes namely, the size was increased from 50mm to 62mm, the initials “R. L.” were removed from the right edge of the bust and the signature of “R. Laubenheimer” now appears below the bust.

**1876 [3] George Washington (Large Head)**      *Rarity 1*      *Prime \$75*      *Average \$50*

George Washington Centennial Medal (large head), 1876. 62mm. (10mm). Black Walnut. Holland, 14; Frossard, 17; Haseltine, 329; Spangenberg, 1876-3.



▲ **OBVERSE** Large Washington bust (27mm wide) in center facing R. Upper border, GEORGE WASHINGTON. Lower border, BORN FEB. 22, 1732 / DIED DEC. 14, 1799.



▲ **REVERSE** Around border, THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE, Center, GREAT / INTERNATIONAL (wavy) EXHIBITION / FAIRMOUNT PARK / PHILADELPHIA / 4TH OF JULY / 1876.

The design for the obverse of this medal was either by Anthony C. Paquet (Second Series Obverse) or by Charles E. Barber after the design of Pierre Simon DuVivier of Paris. Holland suggests the die for this medal was engraved by William H. Key (1820-ca. 1902).<sup>22</sup> William Key, born in Brooklyn, was a diesinker and engraver in Philadelphia from about 1844 to 1860 and an Assistant Engraver to William E. Barber at the Philadelphia Mint from 1864 to 1885. Rulau & Fuld note the obverse of this portrayal of Washington greatly resembles “the earlier U. S. Mint series of medalets which were intended for public sale purposes during the Centennial.”<sup>23</sup>

<sup>18</sup>Marvin, William T. R. Masonic Medals, *American Journal of Numismatics*, April 1878. pp. 95-96.

<sup>19</sup>Marvin, William T. R. The Medals of the Masonic Fraternity. Boston: Privately printed, 1880. pp. 110-111.

<sup>20</sup>*American Journal of Numismatics*. Editorial. January, 1876, p. 72.

<sup>21</sup>Baker, William S. Medallion Portraits of Washington. Philadelphia: Robert M. Lindsay, 1885. pp. 123 & 126.

<sup>22</sup>Holland, H. W. Centennial Medals, *American Journal of Numismatics*, January 1876. pp. 64-65.

<sup>23</sup>Rulau, Russell and George Fuld. *Medallion Portraits of Washington* (2nd edition). Iola, Wisconsin: Krause Publications. 1999.



William E. and Charles C. Barber exhibited in the Art Gallery at the Centennial in Class No. 402, "Medals, pressed and engraved; electrotypes of medals."<sup>24</sup> Regrettably, the Official Catalogue of the Centennial does not identify what medals they displayed.

Holland, who included in his catalog only issues he had seen, identified this piece as "one of seven wooden medals [the others Hawley, Goshorn, Washington (small head), Main Building (76mm, no ground), Memorial Hall or Art Gallery (76mm, no ground) and Independence Hall] which were produced by the Philadelphia Ornamental Wood Company and only in black walnut."<sup>25</sup> He further notes that the "execution of the obverse [of this medal is] a little better than the others [wooden pieces]." The reverse of this medal contains the exact wording and positioning as the other size 62mm medals identified by Holland. Lot #716 in the Bangs sale of January 30 & 31, 1885, cataloged by John W. Haseltine, lists this medal being sold in a box.

In my tally of the small (62mm) round wooden Centennial medals 30 percent were of this Washington issue making it the most often seen.

**1876 [4] George Washington (Large Head, Blank Reverse)**    *Rarity 5    Prime \$600    Average \$400*

George Washington Centennial Medal (large head, blank reverse), 1876. 62mm. (10mm). Black Walnut. Unlisted by Holland, Frossard, Haseltine, Spangenberg.



Actual Size  
62 mm



▲ **OBVERSE** Large Washington bust (27 mm wide) in center facing R. Upper border, GEORGE WASHINGTON. Lower border, BORN FEB. 22, 1732 / DIED DEC. 14, 1799.

▲ **REVERSE** Blank.

The design for the obverse of this medal was either by Anthony C. Paquet (Second Series Obverse) or by Charles E. Barber after the design of Pierre Simon DuVivier of Paris. Holland suggests the die for this medal was by William H. Key (1820-ca. 1902).<sup>26</sup> William Key, born in Brooklyn, was a diesinker and engraver in Philadelphia from about 1844 to 1860 and an Assistant Engraver to William E. Barber at the Philadelphia Mint from 1864 to 1885. Rulau & Fuld note the obverse of this portrayal of Washington greatly resembles "the earlier U. S. Mint series of medalets which were intended for public sale purposes during the Centennial."<sup>27</sup> William E. and Charles C. Barber exhibited in the Art Gallery at the Centennial in Class No. 402, "Medals, pressed and engraved; electrotypes of medals." Regrettably,

<sup>24</sup>United States Centennial Commission. *Official Catalogue of the U. S. Centennial Exhibition 1876*. Philadelphia: John R. Nagle & Co. 1876.

<sup>25</sup>Holland, H. W. Centennial Medals. *American Journal of Numismatics*, January 1876. pp. 64-65.

<sup>26</sup>Holland, H. W. Centennial Medals. *American Journal of Numismatics*, January 1876. pp. 64-65.

<sup>27</sup>Rulau, Russell and George Fuld. *Medalic Portraits of Washington* (2nd edition). Iola, Wisconsin: Krause Publications. 1999.

the Official Catalogue of the Centennial does not identify what medals they displayed.<sup>28</sup> Holland, who included in his catalog only issues he had seen, identified the obverse of this piece as “one of seven wooden medals [Hawley, Goshorn, Washington (large & small head), Main Building (76mm, no ground), Memorial Hall or Art Gallery (76mm, no ground) and Independence Hall] which were produced by the Philadelphia Ornamental Wood Company and only in black walnut.”<sup>29</sup> He further notes that the “execution of the obverse [of this medal is] a little better than the others [wooden pieces].”

### Blank Reverses on Round Medals

The George Washington medal shown here is the only known blank reverse medal in the series of five 62 mm wooden Centennial medals. Only a few copies of this blank reverse medal are known. However, the few 62mm wooden medals which have a blank reverse are identical to each other in every regard – and similar to the blank reverse found on only one of the larger 76mm Centennial medals, the Memorial Hall medal 1876[12]. They all carry the same rim characteristics as those issues with embossed reverses namely, they all have a small recessed double lip, they have the same depth of lip and there is an absence of abrasion. This suggests these issues with blank reverses were the original state of the planchet before pressing rather having been filed off at some later time. The fact this blank reverse issue was unlisted by Holland and by Frossard (both writing at the time of the Centennial) suggests these pieces may have been produced sometime after the Centennial or at a location distant from the exhibition buildings.

**1876 [5] George Washington (Small Head)**      *Rarity 6*      *Prime \$750*      *Average \$500*

George Washington Centennial Medal (small head), 1876. 62mm. (10mm). Black Walnut. Holland, 13; Frossard, 18; Unlisted by Haseltine & by Spangenberg.



Actual Size  
62 mm



▲ **OBVERSE** Small Washington bust (22mm wide) in center facing R. Upper border, GEORGE WASHINGTON. Lower border, BORN FEB. 22, 1732 / DIED DEC. 14, 1799.

▲ **REVERSE** Around border, THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE, In center, GREAT / INTERNATIONAL (wavy) EXHIBITION / FAIRMOUNT PARK / PHILADELPHIA / 4TH OF JULY / 1876.

The portrait of Washington shown on this medal differs in several ways from that shown on the only other wooden Washington medals 1876 [3] and 1876 [4]. The bust of Washington is considerably

<sup>28</sup>United States Centennial Commission. *Official Catalogue of the U. S. Centennial Exhibition 1876*. Philadelphia: John R. Nagle & Co. 1876.

<sup>29</sup>Holland, H. W. Centennial Medals. *American Journal of Numismatics*, January 1876. pp. 64-65.

smaller and occupies less of the field, truncation of the bust is longer and the hair style and lay of the bow differs. Wording and size of letters on the obverse and reverse of this medal is identical to that shown on the large head Washington wooden medal.

Minutes of the October 1, 1875, meeting of the Boston Numismatic Society, appearing in the *American Journal of Numismatics*, reported that “Mr. Holland exhibited two centennial imitations of medals in wood with the head of Washington.”<sup>30</sup> This was likely the first public appearance of what could only be the large head and the small head Washington medals. Furthermore this report documents these medals were issued in 1875, nearly eight months before the opening of the Exhibition corroborating the likelihood that Haseltine had on hand the wooden Centennial medals he advertized for sale.

Holland suggests the die for this medal was by William H. Key (1820-ca. 1902).<sup>31</sup> William Key, born in Brooklyn, was a diesinker and engraver in Philadelphia from about 1844 to 1860 and an Assistant Engraver to William E. Barber at the Philadelphia Mint from 1864 to 1885. Rulau & Fuld note the obverse of this portrayal of Washington greatly resembles “the earlier U. S. Mint series of medalets which were intended for public sale purposes during the Centennial.”<sup>32</sup>

William E. and Charles C. Barber exhibited in the Art Gallery at the Centennial in Class No. 402, “Medals, pressed and engraved; electrotypes of medals.”<sup>33</sup> Regrettably, the Official Catalogue of the Centennial does not identify what medals they displayed. Holland, who included in his catalog only issues he had seen, identified this piece as “one of seven wooden medals [the others Hawley, Goshorn, Washington (large head), Main Building (76mm, no ground), Memorial Hall or Art Gallery (76mm, no ground) and Independence Hall] which were produced by the Philadelphia Ornamental Wood Company and only in black walnut.”<sup>34</sup> He further notes that the “execution of the obverse [of this medal is] a little better than the others [wooden pieces].” The obverse and reverse of this medal contains the exact wording and positioning as the other size 62mm medals identified by Holland.

**1876 [6] Joseph R. Hawley**      *Rarity 3*      *Prime \$125*      *Average \$100*

Gen’l Joseph R. Hawley Centennial Medal, 1876. 62mm. (9mm). Black Walnut. Holland, 11, Frossard, 19; Haseltine, 329; Spangenberg 1876-5.



Actual Size  
62 mm



▲ **OBVERSE** In center, bust of Hawley facing R. Upper border, GEN’L JOSEPH R. HAWLEY. Lower border, PRESIDENT U. S. INTERNATIONAL EXPOSITION. *In exergue*, PAT. JUNE 1. 1875.

▲ **REVERSE** Around upper border, THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE. In center, GREAT / INTERNATIONAL (wavy) EXHIBITION / FAIRMOUNT PARK / PHILADELPHIA / 4TH OF JULY / 1876.

<sup>30</sup>Boston Numismatic Society. Transaction of Societies. *American Journal of Numismatics*, January, 1876, p. 67 (entry for October 1, 1875).

<sup>31</sup>Holland, H. W. Centennial Medals. *American Journal of Numismatics*, January 1876. pp. 64-65.

<sup>32</sup>Rulau, Russell and George Fuld. *Medalic Portraits of Washington* (2nd edition). Iola, Wisconsin: Krause Publications. 1999.

<sup>33</sup>United States Centennial Commission. *Official Catalogue of the U. S. Centennial Exhibition 1876*. Philadelphia: John R. Nagle & Co. 1876.

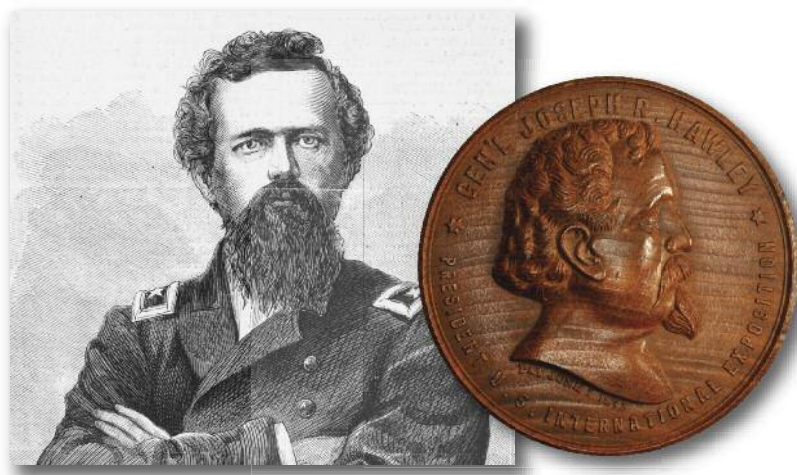
<sup>34</sup>Holland, H. W. Centennial Medals. *American Journal of Numismatics*, January 1876. pp. 64-65.



Joseph R. Hawley, born 1826 in North Carolina, moved to Connecticut in 1837 and graduated in 1847 from Hamilton College, New York. In 1850 he began practicing law in Hartford, Connecticut and in 1857 became Editor of the *Hartford Evening Press*. An ardent opponent of slavery, he joined the Union Army in 1861. Serving until 1865 he achieved the rank of Major General. In 1867 he became Editor-in-Chief of the *Hartford Courant*, the oldest newspaper at the time in the United States. Elected Governor of Connecticut in 1866, he served a two-year term. At the organization of the United States Centennial Commission in March 1872, Hawley was elected President and re-elected each succeeding year. In September of 1872 he was elected to the United States House of Representatives serving until 1875. From June 1875 Hawley took up temporary residence in Philadelphia to administer the Exposition and served until January 1877. General Hawley died in 1905.

The patent for this medal, Design No. 8,365 was issued June 1, 1875 to John H. Schreiner of Philadelphia for a term of 3 ½ years. This patent was one of two patents listed in his 29 April 1874 application papers for corporation of the Philadelphia Ornamental Wood Co. As stated on this patent application, Schreiner's intent was to show "a likeness of General Joseph R. Hawley, Pres. of the United States International Exposition, 1876 on one side, and on the reverse side a likeness of Alfred T. Goshorn, Director-General of the United States International Exposition to be held in Fairmount Park, Philadelphia, in 1876." Instead, two medals were issued by Schreiner showing each of these individuals but on separate medals. It is interesting to note that 80 years prior to John H. Schreiner's 1875 patent for this medal, another John Schreiner was associated with the Philadelphia Mint. The *"Illustrated History of the United States Mint"* of 1889 shows a John Schreiner among its list of officers, clerks and workmen employed at the Mint as of 10 October 1795.<sup>35</sup> This earlier John Schreiner, the Chief Pressman, was listed as the highest paid person in the Chief Coiner's Department at a salary of \$1.80 per day. No connection has been established between these two John Schreiners.

Holland suggests the die for this medal was by William H. Key (1820-ca. 1902).<sup>36</sup> William Key, born in Brooklyn was a diesinker and engraver in Philadelphia from about 1844 to 1860 and an Assistant Engraver to William E. Barber at the Philadelphia Mint from 1864 to 1885. Holland, who included in his catalog only issues he had seen, identified this piece as "one of seven wooden medals [ the others, Goshorn, Washington large & small head, Main (76 mm, no ground), Memorial or Art Gallery (76 mm, no ground) and Independence Hall] which were produced by the Philadelphia Ornamental Wood Co. and only in black walnut."<sup>37</sup> The reverse of this medal contains the exact wording and positioning as the other five size 62 mm medals.



◀ **GENERAL JOSEPH ROSWELL HAWLEY** was the 42nd Governor of Connecticut, a Civil War general, and a journalist and newspaper editor. He served in the United States House of Representatives and was also a U.S. Senator.

<sup>35</sup>Evans, George G. (ed.) *Illustrated History of the United States Mint* (revised). Philadelphia: George G. Evans. 1889, p. 12.

<sup>36</sup>Holland, H. W. Centennial Medals. *American Journal of Numismatics*, January 1876. pp. 64-65.

<sup>37</sup>Holland, H. W. Centennial Medals. *American Journal of Numismatics*, January 1876. pp. 64-65.

Alfred T. Goshorn Centennial Medal, 1876. 62mm. (9mm). Black Walnut. Holland, 12; Frossard, 20; Haseltine, 329; Spangenberg 1876-4.



Actual Size  
62 mm



▲ **OBVERSE** In center bust of Goshorn facing L. Upper border, ALFRED T. GOSHORN. Lower border, DIRECTOR GENERAL U. S. INTERNATIONAL EXPOSITION. *In exergue*, PAT. JUNE 1. 1875.

▲ **REVERSE** Around upper border, THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE. In center, GREAT / INTERNATIONAL (wavy) EXHIBITION / FAIRMOUNT PARK / PHILADELPHIA / 4TH OF JULY / 1876.

Alfred Trabor Goshorn, born 1833 in Cincinnati, graduated from Marietta College, Ohio in 1854. Admitted to the Bar in 1856, instead he became proprietor of a paint manufacturing company in Cincinnati. He distinguished himself becoming the organizer and later President of the Industrial Expositions held in Cincinnati from 1870 to 1888. In 1873 Goshorn was appointed a delegate to represent the State of Ohio on the United States Centennial Commission. That same year fellow delegates, recognizing his achievements conducting the Cincinnati expositions, elected him Director-General of the International Centennial Exposition, a post in which he continued until January, 1877. Goshorn died in 1902.

The patent for this medal, Design No. 8,365 was issued June 1, 1875 to John H. Schreiner of Philadelphia for a term of 3 ½ years. This patent was one of the two patents listed in his 29 April 1874 application papers for incorporation of the Philadelphia Ornamental Wood Co. As stated on this patent, Schreiner's intent was to show "a likeness of General Joseph R. Hawley, Pres. of the United States International Exposition, 1876 on one side, and on the reverse side a likeness of Alfred T. Goshorn, Director-General of the United States International Exposition to be held in Fairmount Park, Philadelphia, in 1876." Instead, two medals were issued by Schreiner showing each of these individuals but on separate medals. It is interesting to note that 80 years prior to John H. Schreiner's 1875 patent for this medal, another John Schreiner was associated with the Philadelphia Mint. The *Illustrated History of the United States Mint* of 1889 shows a John Schreiner among its list of officers, clerks and workmen employed at the Mint as of 10 October 1795.<sup>38</sup> This earlier John Schreiner, the Chief Pressman, is listed as the highest paid person in the Chief Coiner's Department at a salary of \$1.80 per day. No connection has been established between these two John Schreiners.

Holland suggests the die for this medal was by William H. Key (1820-ca. 1902).<sup>39</sup> William Key,

<sup>38</sup>Evans, George G. (ed.) *Illustrated History of the United States Mint* (revised). Philadelphia: George G. Evans. 1889, p. 12.

<sup>39</sup>Holland, H. W. Centennial Medals. *American Journal of Numismatics*, January 1876. pp. 64-65.

born in Brooklyn was a diesinker and engraver in Philadelphia Mint from about 1844 to 1860, an Assistant Engraver to William E. Barber at the Philadelphia Mint from 1864 to 1885. Holland, who included in his catalog only issues he had seen, identified this piece as “one of seven wooden medals [the others, Hawley, Washington large & small head, Main (76 mm, no ground), Memorial or Art Gallery (76 mm, no ground) and Independence Hall] which were produced by the Philadelphia Ornamental Wood Co. and only in black walnut.”<sup>40</sup> The reverse of this medal contains the exact wording and positioning as the other five size 62 mm medals.

**1876 [8] Independence Hall**      *Rarity 2      Prime \$100      Average \$75*

Independence Hall Centennial Medal, 1876. 62mm. (9mm). Black Walnut. Holland, 22; Frossard, 21; Haseltine, 329; Spangenberg, 1876-6.

PHOTO: ROBERT B. KELLEY



Actual Size  
62 mm



▲ **OBVERSE** In center elevation view of Independence Hall. Upper border, 1776 INDEPENDENCE HALL 1876. Above building, BIRTHPLACE OF LIBERTY. Below building, COMMENCED 1729 / FINISHED 1734.

▲ **REVERSE** Around upper border, THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE. In center, GREAT / INTERNATIONAL (wavy) EXHIBITION / FAIRMOUNT PARK / PHILADELPHIA / 4TH OF JULY / 1876.

By the spring of 1729 the citizens of Philadelphia were petitioning for permission to build a state house. Two thousand pounds were set aside for the project. Construction of the Pennsylvania State House began in 1732 in an area on the outskirts of the city. It was this building which later came to be known as Independence Hall. At the time this structure was the most ambitious public building project in the thirteen colonies. Construction was piecemeal being paid with funds as they came available. By 1734 a section was completed sufficient for meetings of the Pennsylvania colonial legislature. Later, from 1775 to 1783, this building became the principal meeting hall of the Second Continental Congress. The Declaration of Independence was signed in this building on July 4, 1776. Independence Hall was also the site where, in 1777, the American Flag was first unveiled. In 1781, the Articles of Confederation uniting all thirteen British colonies were ratified here. In 1787 the US Constitution was drafted in this building. The steeple holds a bell donated in 1876 to celebrate the centennial anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. The original bell, known as the “Liberty Bell” is today housed in the nearby Liberty Bell Center. Today Independence Hall is part of Independence National Historical Park and is listed as a World Heritage Site.

Missing only the signature “Key F” under the building, the obverse of this medal is an enlarged

<sup>40</sup>Holland, H. W. Centennial Medals. *American Journal of Numismatics*, January 1876. pp. 64-65.



version of the reverse of Baker 392.<sup>41</sup> William Poillon, reporting on the January 1876 meeting of the *American Numismatic & Archeological Society* of New York noted that I. F. Wood attributed the die for this medal to Key.<sup>42</sup> William H. Key (1820-ca.1902) born in Brooklyn, was a diesinker and engraver in Philadelphia from about 1844 to 1860 and from 1864 to 1885 was Assistant Engraver to William E. Barber at the Philadelphia Mint.<sup>43</sup> Isaac F. Wood (1841-1895), an original member of the *American Numismatic Society* was Librarian of the *American Numismatic & Archeological Society* from 1869 to 1880. In their listing of Independence Hall medals, Rulau & Fuld note these pieces were struck by William H. Key (1820-ca.1902) of Philadelphia.<sup>44</sup> Holland, who included in his catalog only issues he had seen, identified this piece as “one of seven wooden medals [the others Hawley, Goshorn, Washington (large & small head), Main (76mm, no ground), Memorial or Art Gallery (76mm, no ground)] which were produced by the Philadelphia Ornamental Wood Co. and only in black walnut.”<sup>45</sup> The reverse of this medal contains the exact wording and positioning as the other five sized 62 mm medals.

My tally of small (62mm) round wooden Centennial medals shows that 25% depicted the Independence Hall medal making it the second most prevalent.

**1876 [9] Main Building (With Foreground)**      *Rarity 3*      *Prime \$125*      *Average \$100*

Main Building Centennial Medal (with foreground), 1876. 76 mm. (8 mm). Black Walnut. Unlisted by Frossard; Holland, 66; Haseltine, 330; Spangenberg, 1876-9.



Actual Size  
76 mm



▲ **OBVERSE** In center, perspective view from R of Main Building. Flags flying to the R. Below, raised foreground with shrubs, people, horse & carriage, omnibus. At top, arched 1776 MAIN BUILDING 1876. Below, INTERNATIONAL EXPOSITION.

▲ **REVERSE** Around upper border, \*THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE\*. In center, 4TH OF JULY 1876 / EXHIBITION OPEN / FROM / MAY 10 TO NOV. 10 1876 / FAIRMOUNT PARK / PHILADELPHIA / U.S. AMERICA.

Construction of the Main Building, the largest of the Centennial at 21.5 acres, began in the autumn of 1874 and was completed 14 February 1876.

Although no patent designation is shown on this medal, several indications suggest the original

<sup>41</sup>Baker, William S. *Medallic Portraits of Washington*. Philadelphia: Robert M. Lindsay, 1885. p. 163.

<sup>42</sup>Poillon, William. Meeting Minutes. *American Journal of Numismatics*, March 16, 1876, pp. 68-70.

<sup>43</sup>Holland, H. W. Centennial Medals. *American Journal of Numismatics*, January 1876. pp. 64-65.

<sup>44</sup>Rulau, Russell and George Fuld. *Medallic Portraits of Washington* (2nd edition). Iola, Wisconsin: Krause Publications. 1999.

<sup>45</sup>Holland, H. W. Centennial Medals. *American Journal of Numismatics*, January 1876. pp. 64-65.

design came from Patent No. 7,828 granted 3 November 1874 for a term of 3 ½ years to Thomas R. Hartell & John Letchworth, both of 15 North Fifth Street, Philadelphia. Incidentally, this and the following Hartell & Letchworth patents for wooden medals and plaques were granted before any of the patents of Schreiner were issued and before incorporation of the Philadelphia Ornamental Wood Co. on 29 April 1876. Holland noted this medal was the origin of a suit over use of the term “Centennial.”<sup>46</sup>

## The Legal Suit

On 25 April 1876 Thomas Hartell & John Letchworth appeared in the United States Eastern District Court of Pennsylvania to defend their suit against John H. Schreiner, Frederick C. Viney & others (later founders of the Philadelphia Ornamental Wood Co. and patentees for other 1876 medals) arguing they were the original inventors of designs for medals for which Letters Patent No. 7,827 (Memorial Hall) and No. 7,828 (Main Building) were granted them in November, 1874. Schreiner answered saying their designs were for an elevation view of Centennial buildings whereas the designs of Hartell & Letchworth were for perspective views of Centennial buildings. Of equal and even greater historical significance in this suit was contention over use of the word “Centennial” by Schreiner. In their suit Hartell & Letchworth stated they had registered in the Patent Office in May 1873, as a Trade-Mark, the word “Centennial.” Schreiner denied use of this Trade-Mark on their medals excepting use of “Centennial” on lids of paper boxes containing wooden medals. The Court ruled the word “Centennial” to be common property and the complainant’s suit by Hartell & Letchworth was dismissed on April 25, 1876.<sup>47</sup> Interestingly, the word “Centennial” never appeared on any of the small or large round wooden medals although this phrasing did appear on seven of the ten rectangle medals.

Holland described this medal as having an “absurd foreground,” and stated the dies were likely made by William H. Key (1820-ca. 1902).<sup>48</sup> When issued in wood the diameter was increased from size 26 (ca. 41 mm) to size 48 (76 mm). This medal and the following Memorial Hall piece by Hartell & Letchworth, both showing elaborate raised foregrounds, are the most frequently found large 76mm medals in boxed sets of six issued by the Philadelphia Ornamental Wood Co. The reverse of this medal contains the exact wording and positioning as Schreiner’s medals with no foreground for the Main Building 1876 [10] and the Memorial/Art Gallery 1876 [13]. So it appears there was considerable cooperation following the legal suit. Hartell & Letchworth exhibited in the Centennial. Whether their medals were displayed, is uncertain. However, they did win an award for their exhibit in class 216 “Gas Globes, Ornamental Sheet Glass, and Centennial Devices.”

Although Haseltine<sup>49</sup> regards the Hartell & Letchworth medals with “ground” on the obverse as less common than those with no foreground, my census shows the opposite. In my sample of large round (76mm) wooden Centennial medals, 65 percent carry an elaborated foreground. Perhaps Haseltine saw this type less often because collectors held on to copies of this version.

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<sup>46</sup>Holland, H. W. Centennial Medals. *American Journal of Numismatics*, January 1876, p. 69.

<sup>47</sup>Cadwalader, John & Theodore McFadden. *Cadwalader’s Cases: Being Decisions of the Hon. John Cadwalader, Judge of the District Court of the United States for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, between years of 1858-1879*. Philadelphia: R. Walsh. Vol. 2, 1907. p. 513.

<sup>48</sup>Holland, H. W. Centennial Medals. *American Journal of Numismatics*, October 1877, p. 43.

<sup>49</sup>Haseltine, J. W. *Haseltine Type Table Catalogue*, 1881, p. 21.

Main Building Centennial Medal (no foreground), 1876. 76mm (9mm). Black Walnut. Holland, 17; Frossard, 15, Haseltine, 329; Spangenberg, 1876-7.



Actual Size  
76 mm



▲ **OBVERSE** In center, elevation view of Main Building. Flag above flying R. Above \*1776\* IN MEMORIAM \*1876\*. Over, MAIN BUILDING / LENGTH 1880 FT. / WIDTH 464 FT. / HEIGHT 70 FT. Under building, GREAT INTERNATIONAL / EXPOSITION / PHILADELPHIA. *In exergue*, PAT. MAY. 11. 75.

▲ **REVERSE** Around upper border \*THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE\*. In center, straight lines, 4TH OF JULY 1876 / EXHIBITION OPEN / FROM MAY 10 TO NOV. 10 1876 / FAIRMOUNT PARK / PHILADELPHIA / U. S. AMERICA.

Construction of the Main Building, the largest of the Centennial at 21.5 acres, began in the autumn of 1874 and was completed 14 February 1876.

The patent for this medal, Design No. 8,324 was granted to John H. Schreiner of Philadelphia on May 11, 1875 for a term of 3 ½ years. This patent was one of two patents listed in the 29 April 1874 application papers for incorporation of the Philadelphia Ornamental Wood Company. Incorporation was granted 29 April 1876. Although Schreiner's intent under this patent was to show on the obverse a geometrical front elevation of the Art Gallery and on the reverse a geometrical front elevation of the Main Building, Schreiner instead used the reverse of this design for the obverse of the Main Building shown here.

Holland suggests the die for this medal was engraved by William H. Key (1820-ca. 1902).<sup>50</sup> William Key, born in Brooklyn, was a diesinker and engraver in Philadelphia from about 1844 to 1860 and Assistant Engraver to William E. Barber at the Philadelphia Mint from 1864 to 1885. When issued in wood the diameter was increased from 41mm to 76 mm. The reverse of this medal contains the exact wording and positioning as the other 76mm medals. Holland, who listed only issues he had personally seen, identifies this piece as "one of seven wooden medals [the others: Hawley, Goshorn, Washington (large & small head), Memorial/Art Gallery (76mm, no foreground), and Independence Hall] produced by the Philadelphia Ornamental Wood Co. and only in black walnut."<sup>51</sup>

<sup>50</sup>Holland, H. W. Centennial Medals. *American Journal of Numismatics*, January 1876. pp. 64-65.

<sup>51</sup>Holland, H. W. Centennial Medals. *American Journal of Numismatics*, January 1876. pp. 64-65.



Memorial Hall Centennial Medal (with foreground), 1876. 76 mm. (8 mm). Black Walnut. Unlisted by Frossard; Holland, 67; Haseltine, 330; Spangenberg 1876-10.

PHOTO: ROBERT B. KELLEY



Actual Size  
76 mm



▲ **OBVERSE** In center, perspective view of Memorial Hall. Below, raised foreground with shrubs, people, horse & carriage. At top, arched 1776 MEMORIAL HALL 1876. Below, INTERNATIONAL EXPOSITION.

▲ **REVERSE** Around upper border in straight lines, THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE. In center, 4TH OF JULY 1876 / EXHIBITION OPEN / FROM / MAY 10 TO NOV. 10 1876 / FAIRMOUNT PARK / PHILADELPHIA / U.S. AMERICA.

Although no patent designation is shown on this medal, several indications suggest the original design of the obverse came from Patent Design No. 7,827 granted 3 November 1874 for a term of 3 ½ years to T. Rollason Hartell & John Letchworth, both of Philadelphia. The illustration shown in the patent application depicts the Art Gallery. However, when issued this medal carried the name Memorial Hall (see below). Incidentally, all the Hartell & Letchworth patents for wooden medals and plaques were granted before any of the patents of Schreiner and before incorporation of the Philadelphia Ornamental Wood Company on 29 April 1876 (but filed for on 29 April 1874).

Construction of this building began 4 July 1874 and was completed 1 March 1876. An agreed-upon name for this structure has been uncertain from the beginning. A list of buildings in the Official Catalogue of the Centennial Exhibition made minimal mention of a Memorial Hall.<sup>52</sup> However, later in a section of this catalog describing the Art Gallery, the text labels its description as pertaining to Memorial Hall. Most publications of the era describing the Centennial use the title Art Gallery, only briefly mentioning Memorial Hall as an attachment to the rear of the Art Gallery, the two buildings totaling 1 ½ acres. Contrary to this an 1878 report from Pennsylvania identified this building as Memorial Hall adding that its annex houses the Art Gallery.<sup>53</sup> Some clarity is achieved when there appears in the official catalog a picture of a building showing its title as “Art Gallery, or Memorial Hall.” In any case it is important to use the titles Art Gallery and Memorial Hall as interchangeable.

Holland described this medal as having an “absurd foreground,” and stated the dies were likely made by William H. Key (1820-ca. 1902).<sup>54</sup> When issued in wood the diameter was increased from 41

<sup>52</sup>United States Centennial Commission. *Official Catalogue of the U.S. International Exhibition*, 1876. Philadelphia: John R. Nagle & Co. 1876. p. vii.

<sup>53</sup>Pennsylvania Board of Centennial Managers, *Pennsylvania and the Centennial Exhibition*. Philadelphia: Gillin & Nagle, 1878.

<sup>54</sup>Holland, H. W. Centennial Medals. *American Journal of Numismatics*, October 1877, p. 43.

mm to 76 mm. This medal and the Main Building medal 1876 [9] by Hartell & Letchworth, both showing elaborate raised foregrounds, are the most frequently found large medals in boxed sets of six issued by the Philadelphia Ornamental Wood Co. The reverse of this medal contains the exact wording and positioning as Schreiner's medals with no foreground for the Main Building 1876 [10] and the Memorial / Art Gallery 1876 [13]. So it appears there was considerable cooperation following the legal suit mentioned earlier. Hartell & Letchworth exhibited in the Centennial. Whether their medals were displayed, is uncertain. However, they did win an award for their exhibit in Class 216 "Decorative Glass Ware: Gas Globes, Ornamental Sheet Glass, and Centennial Devices." Although Haseltine<sup>55</sup> regards the Hartell & Letchworth medals with "ground" on the obverse as less common than those with no foreground, my census shows the opposite. In my sample of large round (76mm) wooden Centennial medals, 65 percent carry an elaborated foreground. Perhaps Haseltine saw this type less often because collectors held on to copies of this version.

In my search for die varieties I note that 38 percent of my copies of this particular medal show a dot after "America" on the reverse and 62 percent do not show this dot. I believe this indicates a weak striking rather than a die variety.

**1876 [12] Memorial Hall (With Foreground, Blank Reverse)** *Rarity 6 Prime \$750 Average \$500*

Memorial Hall Centennial Medal (with foreground, blank reverse), 1876. 76 mm. (8 mm). Black Walnut. Unlisted by Holland, Frossard, Spangenberg.



Actual Size  
76 mm



▲ **REVERSE BLANK.**

▲ **OBVERSE** In center, perspective view of Memorial Hall. Below, raised foreground with shrubs, people, horse & carriage. At top, arched 1776 MEMORIAL HALL 1876. Below, INTERNATIONAL EXPOSITION.

Although no patent designation is shown on this medal, several indications suggest the original design of the obverse came from Patent Design No. 7,827 granted 3 November 1874 for a term of 3 ½ years to T. Rollason & John Letchworth, both of Philadelphia. The illustration shown in the patent application depicts the Art Gallery. However, when issued this medal carried the name Memorial Hall. Incidentally, all the Hartell & Letchworth patents for wooden medals and plaques were granted before any of the patents of Schreiner and before incorporation of the Philadelphia Ornamental Wood Company on 29 April 1876 (but filed for on 29 April 1874).

<sup>55</sup>Haseltine, J. W. *Haseltine Type Table Catalogue*, 1881, p. 21.

Construction of this building began 4 July 1874 and was completed 1 March 1876. An agreed-upon name for this structure has been uncertain from the beginning. A list of buildings in the Official Catalogue of the Centennial Exhibition made no mention of a Memorial Hall.<sup>56</sup> However, later in a section of this catalog describing the Art Gallery, the text labels its description as pertaining to Memorial Hall. Most publications of the era describing the Centennial use the title Art Gallery, only briefly mentioning Memorial Hall as an attachment to the rear of the Art Gallery, the two buildings totaling 1 ½ acres. Contrary to this an 1878 report from Pennsylvania identified this building as Memorial Hall adding that its annex houses the Art Gallery.<sup>57</sup> Some clarity is achieved when there appears in the official catalog a picture of a building showing its title as “Art Gallery, or Memorial Hall.” In any case it is important to use the titles Art Gallery and Memorial Hall as interchangeable.

Holland described the obverse of this medal as having an “absurd foreground,” and stated the dies were likely made by William H. Key (1820-ca.1902).<sup>58</sup> When issued in wood the diameter was increased from 41 mm 76 mm. Hartell & Letchworth exhibited in the Centennial. Whether their medals were displayed, is uncertain. However, they did win an award for their exhibit in Class 216 “Decorative Glass Ware: Gas Globes, Ornamental Sheet Glass, and Centennial Devices.” Although Haseltine<sup>59</sup> regards the Hartell & Letchworth medals with “ground” on the obverse as less common than those with no foreground, my census shows the opposite. In my sample of large round (76mm) wooden Centennial medals, 65 percent carry an elaborated foreground. Perhaps Haseltine saw this type less often because collectors held on to copies of this version.

The Memorial Hall medal shown here is the only blank reverse medal of the four 76mm wooden Centennial medals. The very few blank reverses found on copies of this Memorial Hall medal are identical to each other in every regard – and similar to the few blank reverses found on the George Washington 62mm medal. They all carry the same rim characteristics as issues with embossed reverses namely, they all have a small recessed double lip, they have the same depth of lip and there is an absence of abrasion. This suggests these issues with blank reverses were the original state of the planchet before pressing rather having been filed off at some later time. The blank reverse Memorial Hall medal shown here is the only such medal in the series of 76 mm medals. The fact this blank reverse issue was unlisted by Holland and by Frossard, both writing at the time of the Centennial, suggests these pieces may have been produced sometime after the exposition.

**VIEW OF MEMORIAL HALL ►**  
as originally constructed.



<sup>56</sup>United States Centennial Commission. *Official Catalogue of the U.S. International Exhibition*, 1876. Philadelphia: John R. Nagle & Co. 1876. p. vii. 1876

<sup>57</sup>Pennsylvania Board of Centennial Managers, *Pennsylvania and the Centennial Exhibition*. Philadelphia: Gillin & Nagle, 1878.

<sup>58</sup>Holland, H. W. Centennial Medals. *American Journal of Numismatics*, October 1877, p. 43.

<sup>59</sup>Haseltine, J. W. *Haseltine Type Table Catalogue*, 1881, p. 21.



Memorial Hall or Art Gallery Centennial Medal (no foreground), 1876. 76 mm (9 mm). Black Walnut. Holland, 18; Frossard, 16; Haseltine, 329; Spangenberg, 1876-8.



Actual Size  
76 mm



PHOTO: ROBERT B. KELLEY

▲ **OBVERSE** Elevation view of the Art Gallery/Memorial Hall in center, topped by figure with outstretched arms. Arched above, \*1776 MEMORIAL HALL / 1876\* / OR / ART GALLERY. Above building on L, 365 FT. LONG. Above building on R, 210 FT. WIDE. Below building, GREAT INTERNATIONAL / EXPOSITION / PHILADELPHIA. *In exergue* PAT. MAY. 11. 1875.

▲ **REVERSE** Around upper border, THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE. In center, 4TH OF JULY 1876 / EXHIBITION OPEN / FROM / MAY 10 TO NOV. 10 1876 / FAIRMOUNT PARK / PHILADELPHIA / U.S. AMERICA

The patent for this medal, Design No. 8,324 was granted to John H. Schreiner of Philadelphia on May 11, 1875, for a term of 3 ½ years. This patent was one of two patents listed in the 29 April 1874 application papers for incorporation of the Philadelphia Ornamental Wood Company. Incorporation was granted 29 April 1876. Schreiner used the obverse design specified in this patent to issue a geometrical elevation view of the Art Gallery, adding “Memorial Hall.”

Construction of this building began 4 July 1874 and was completed 1 March 1876. An agreed-upon name for this structure has been uncertain from the beginning. A list of buildings in the Official Catalogue of the Centennial Exhibition made minimal mention of a Memorial Hall.<sup>60</sup> However, later in a section of this catalog describing the Art Gallery, the text labels its description as pertaining to Memorial Hall. Most publications of the era describing the Centennial use the title Art Gallery, only briefly mentioning Memorial Hall as an attachment to the rear of the Art Gallery, the two buildings totaling 1 ½ acres. Contrary to this an 1878 report from Pennsylvania identified this building as Memorial Hall adding that its annex houses the Art Gallery.<sup>61</sup> Some clarity is achieved when there appears in the official catalog a picture of a building showing its title as “Art Gallery, or Memorial Hall.” In any case it is important to consider using the titles Art Gallery and Memorial Hall as interchangeable.

Holland suggests the die for this medal was engraved by William H. Key (1820-ca. 1902).<sup>62</sup> William Key, born in Brooklyn, was a diesinker and engraver in Philadelphia from about 1844 to 1860 and Assistant Engraver to William E. Barber at the Philadelphia Mint from 1864 to 1885. When issued in

<sup>60</sup>United States Centennial Commission. *Official Catalogue of the U.S. International Exhibition*, 1876. Philadelphia: John R. Nagle & Co. 1876. p. vii. 1876

<sup>61</sup>Pennsylvania Board of Centennial Managers, *Pennsylvania and the Centennial Exhibition*. Philadelphia: Gillin & Nagle, 1878.

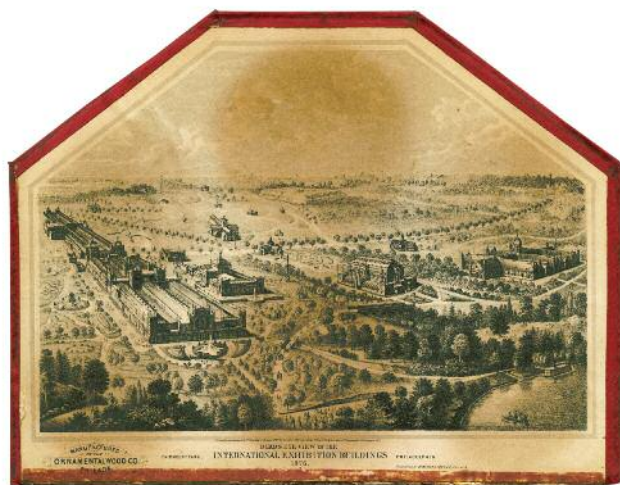
<sup>62</sup>Holland, H. W. Centennial Medals. *American Journal of Numismatics*, January 1876. pp. 64-65.

wood the diameter was increased from 41mm to 76 mm. The reverse of this medal contains the exact wording and positioning as the other 76mm medals. Holland, who listed only issues he had personally seen identified this piece as “one of seven wooden medals [the others: Hawley, Goshorn, Washington (large & small head), Main (76 mm, no ground), and Independence Hall] produced by the Philadelphia Ornamental Wood Co. and only in black walnut.”<sup>63</sup>

## 1876 Centennial Boxed Sets of Round Medals

Two types of boxed sets were issued differing by the picture displayed on the inside cover of the lid.

PHOTO: ROBERT B. KELLEY



▲ BIRD'S EYE VIEW



▲ MULTIPLE VIEWS

For each type variations are found in the exterior color of the box, the color of the inner insert holders, and the presence or absence of foreground on the 76mm Memorial Hall Medal. The shape of all boxes is as shown in the illustration. The most frequent exterior color of the box is black with a few in blue and in red. The interior of each box has a cardboard insert holding each medal in position and bearing one of the following pastel colors - Blue, Gray, Green, Magenta, Orange, Pink or Red.

PHOTO: ROBERT B. KELLEY



◀ **PASTED ON THE BOTTOM OF THE BOX** under the lower large medal in approximately half the boxes is found a 3" diameter label reading *Philadelphia Ornamental Wood Co.*

<sup>63</sup>Holland, H. W. Centennial Medals. *American Journal of Numismatics*, January 1876. pp. 64-65.

Each box contains the same four 62 mm round medals depicting George Washington [1876-3], Gen'l Joseph R. Hawley [1876-6], Alfred T. Goshorn [1876-7] and Independence Hall [1876-8]. The two larger medals, 76 mm in diameter in boxed sets, depict the Main Building [1876-9] and either the Memorial Hall [1876-11] or the Memorial Hall or Art Gallery [1876-13] medal.

**Type I (Birds Eye View)**     *Prime \$1,500*     *Average \$1,250*

The inner lid of this box depicts an overview of the Centennial grounds and reads “Birds Eye View of the / International Exhibition Buildings / 1876 / Fairmount Park, Philadelphia, published by Breuker & Kessler, Phila.” To the left reads “Manufactured / by the / Ornamental Wood Co. / Philada.” In fine print immediately under the picture reads “Entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1875 by Breuker & Kessler in the Office of the Librarian of Congress at Washington, DC.” A sample of boxed sets shows that 87% depict the Birds Eye View.

**Type II (Multiple Single Views)**     *Prime \$2,000*     *Average \$1,750*

The inner lid of this box shows separate pictures of five buildings, namely Memorial Hall, Machinery Hall, Main Exhibition Building, Agriculture Hall and Horticultural Hall. On the lower left in small print reads “*Breuker & Kessler, lith. Phila.*” Only 13 percent of a sample of boxed sets depicts Multiple Single Views of the Centennial on its inner lid and only these boxes have the magenta colored insert holders. Freedley (1867) describes the Breuker & Kessler Company as “extensively engaged in general lithographic engraving & printing, producing perfumers & druggists labels, plain or in color, wine & liqueur labels, designs & sketches for show cards, in elegant style.”<sup>64</sup> Henry Clay Kessler (1844-1907) was a principal of this company.

### Characteristics of Boxed Sets

	<b><i>Percent</i></b>
Exterior color of Box Cover	
Black	67
Blue	20
Red	13
Pictured on inner lid	
Birds Eye View	87
Multiple Single views	13
Large 76 mm Medals	
Have foreground	87
No foreground	13
Color of paste-in advertising label (under the lower large medal)	
(No label)	53
Blue	33
Red	13

<sup>64</sup>Freedley, Edwin T. *Philadelphia and its Manufacturers: A Handbook of the Great Manufactories*. Philadelphia: E. young, 18767. p. 541.



## 1876 Centennial Wooden Rectangular Plaques

### Depictions

Different buildings of the Centennial were depicted on the obverse of each of five rectangular plaques, namely Agricultural Hall, Horticultural Hall, Machinery Hall, Main Building and Memorial Hall. Each of these depictions was issued in two types, one with an embossed reverse and the other with a blank reverse. Cataloging by Holland suggests the blank reverse plaque may have been produced only after the Exposition; writing at the time he did not list this type although he did list the type having an embossed reverse. (Frossard listed none of the rectangular plaques).

### Designers, Engravers and Producers

All five plaques were designed by Thomas R. Hartell (aka T. Rollason Hartell) with assistance by John Letchworth on designs for the Agricultural Hall and the Main Building. The initials "A.H." of the engraver Adolph A. Hartmann (1817-1887) are shown on four of these plaques. Born in Germany Hartmann came to America prior to 1857 and worked for a time at Scovill in Waterbury, Connecticut. With the recent discovery of 1876 [24] there is now documentation that the Philadelphia Ornamental Wood Company produced the five rectangular plaques, each having two versions, an embossed reverse and a blank reverse.

Sometime after close of the Exposition the Adams & Co. of Philadelphia advertised a five-piece set of the rectangular plaques with embossed reverses for sale at 75 cents stating

"Each building is carved (sic) in a solid block of Black Walnut wood, and will never warp or change in any manner, in any climate, in any length of time. These goods were in such great demand during the Exposition that thousands were unable to purchase them, the supply being entirely inadequate to the demand. We make exact duplicates of those sold at the Exposition, except not manufacturing them so hurriedly, we give them a much finer and more elegant finish.... Please examine both sides carefully."

The suggestion by the Adam & Co. to "examine both sides carefully" confirms that the Type I medal (embossed reverse) continued to be made after close of the Exposition.

### Type I (Embossed reverse)

Wording on the reverse of all issues with the embossed reverse is identical and reads "1776 1876 / Three Millions of Colonists / on a Strip by the Sea / Now Forty millions of / Freeman / Stretching / from Ocean / to Ocean."

Extremely Elegant! Extremely Novel! Extremely Cheap!  
Did you ever see anything like them?

We leave for your examination a complete set of our Centennial Souvenirs. You will find the five Centennial Buildings, viz.:

MAIN BUILDING, MEMORIAL HALL,  
MACHINERY HALL, HORTICULTURAL HALL,  
AGRICULTURAL HALL.

Each Building is carved in a solid block of Black Walnut wood, and will never warp or change in any manner, in any climate, in any length of time.

Our Agent will call to-morrow, and if you desire to purchase the goods he will sell you the entire set for 75 cents.

These buildings are manufactured by a new patent process, and nothing like them could be made by the old style of hand carving. The nearest approach to them made by hand carving would cost fully One Hundred Dollars apiece, and then they would be but rude and in-artistic imitations of those we place before you. Please examine both sides carefully.

These goods were in such great demand during the Exposition that thousands were unable to purchase them, the supply being entirely inadequate to the demand. Every one who saw them desired to get a set, and many had to leave unsatisfied. We make them exact duplicates of those sold at the Exposition, except not manufacturing them so hurriedly, we give them a much finer and more elegant finish.

Truly yours,  
**ADAMS & CO.,**  
POST-OFFICE BOX 1860,  
Philadelphia, Pa.

Manufactory, Howell's Marble Building,  
9th & CHESTNUT STREETS,  
Entrance 9th St., near Chestnut.

The Cheapest and most beautiful Centennial Souvenirs.  
Only Seventy-five cents for the entire set.

DO NOT LET THIS SET GO OUT OF YOUR HOUSE,  
UNLESS YOU SEND IT AS A PRESENT TO A FRIEND.

DO NOT LET THIS SET GO OUT OF YOUR HOUSE,  
UNLESS YOU SEND IT AS A PRESENT TO A FRIEND.

One-third of my sample of rectangular plaques is of Type I. In comparison to Type II their size is a bit smaller and consistent at 68mm X 98mm, and a planchet 2mm less in width. Thickness of this variety averages 9mm with a range between 8 and 9 mm. The images on this type tend to be sharper.

### **Type II (Blank reverse)**

This variety with a blank reverse is the more common appearing on two-thirds of the rectangle plaques. Their size is uniform at 68mm X 100mm. Although the average thickness is 10mm there exist variations between 8 and 11mm thick – a range larger than is found on Type I plaques, those with an embossed reverse. Dies were altered for pressing the obverse of plaques with blank reverses. Slight changes were made in each obverse field and the edging differed.

### **Planchet and Lettering Sizes**

Variations in size for both types, sometimes as much as 3mm in thickness and 2mm in overall length and with all images centered, suggest planchets were likely fed to the stamping press one at a time. Three plaques carry 3 mm lettering on the obverse, namely 1876[17], 1876[23] and 1876[24] while the eight other plaques carry 4 mm lettering on the obverse.

### **Cardboard Boxes**

These plaques were delivered singly in cardboard boxes, the bottom measuring 73mm x 106mm and the fully removable lid measured 76mm x 109mm. Boxes were of the following pastel colors – Blue, Gray, Pink, Red and Yellow. Appearing on 15% of the underside of the lids was a paste-in label reading “From Adams & Co., / Post Office Box 1660 / Philadelphia, PA. / Orders by mail promptly filled. / Manf’y, Howell’s Marble Build- / ing, 9th & Chestnut Sts. / Entrance 9th St. near Chestnut.”



PHOTO: ROBERT B. KELLEY

### 1876 [14] Agricultural Hall (Embossed Reverse)

Rarity 4   Prime \$150   Average \$125

Agricultural Hall Centennial Plaque (embossed reverse), 1876. 68mm X 98mm (9mm). Black Walnut. Unlisted by Frossard, Haseltine; Holland, 71; Spangenberg, 1876-12.

PHOTO: ROBERT B. KELLEY



Actual Size 68 mm x 98 mm

▲ **OBVERSE** In center, Agricultural Hall with a single large foreground plant to the L. Above in an arc in 4mm letters, CENTENNIAL EXPOSITION. Below, 4mm letters in a straight line, AGRICULTURAL HALL. Signed lower R, A. H. Beaded edge around.

▲ **REVERSE** In 4 mm letters, 1776 1876 / THREE MILLIONS OF / COLONISTS / ON A STRIP BY THE SEA / NOW FORTY MILLIONS OF / FREEMEN / STRETCHING / FROM OCEAN / TO OCEAN with flourishes & two hands pointing to center. Beaded edge around.

### 1876 [15] Agricultural Hall (Blank Reverse)

Rarity 3   Prime \$125   Average \$100

Agricultural Hall Centennial Plaque (blank reverse), 1876. 68mm X 100mm (10 mm). Black Walnut. Unlisted by Holland, Frossard; Haseltine, 331; Spangenberg, 1876-17.

PHOTO: ROBERT B. KELLEY



Actual Size 68 mm x 100 mm

▲ **OBVERSE** In center, Agricultural Hall with small foreground plant to the R. Below, 4mm letters in a straight line, AGRICULTURAL HALL. Rope edge around.

▲ **REVERSE** BLANK



Construction of Agricultural Hall began in September 1875 and was completed April 1876. These rectangle plaques were sold singly in pastel-colored boxes some with a paste-in label showing Adams & Co. of Philadelphia as the selling agent. No patent is known for these two medals depicting the Agricultural Hall. However, use of "Centennial" on type I of this plaque suggests it was designed by Thomas R. Hartell & John Letchworth both of Philadelphia. Type II plaques (Blank Reverse) may have been produced later than Type I as they were unknown to Holland writing at the time. The die for the obverse of this Agricultural Hall plaque with an embossed reverse differs from the obverse die for the blank reverse. Its design is sharper, it shows a larger plant in the foreground, it has a rope edging rather than a beaded edge and it shows the die sinker's signature "A. H." in the lower right. A. H. is most likely Adolph A. Hartmann, Sr. (1817-1887). Born in Germany he came to America prior to 1857 and worked for a time at Scovill in Waterbury, Connecticut.

# 1876 [16] Horticultural Hall (Embossed Reverse)

Rarity 4

Prime \$150

Average \$125

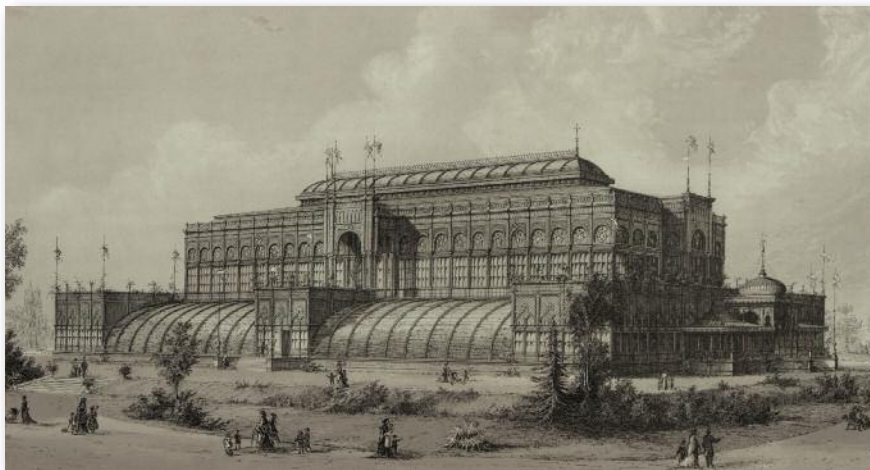
Horticultural Hall Centennial Plaque (embossed reverse), 1876. 68mm x 98mm (9mm). Black Walnut. Unlisted by Frossard, Haseltine; Holland, 70; Spangenberg, 1876-11.



Actual Size 68 mm x 98 mm

▲ **OBVERSE** In center, Horticultural Hall with small foreground plants, three flag poles on R, flags flying L. Above, 4mm letters in an arc, CENTENNIAL EXPOSITION. Below, 4mm letters in a straight line, HORTICULTURAL HALL. Signed lower R, A. H. Beaded edge around.

▲ **REVERSE** In 4 mm letters, 1776 1876 / THREE MILLIONS OF / COLONISTS / ON A STRIP BY THE SEA / NOW FORTY MILLIONS OF / FREEMEN / STRETCHING / FROM OCEAN / TO OCEAN with flourishes & two hands pointing to center. Beaded edge around.



◀ **HORTICULTURAL HALL**  
as seen in 1876.

**1876 [17] Horticultural Hall (Blank Reverse)***Rarity 2**Prime \$100**Average \$75*

Horticultural Hall Centennial Plaque (blank reverse), 1876. 68mm x 100mm (10mm). Black Walnut. Un-listed by Holland, Frossard; Haseltine, 331; Spangenberg, 1876-16.

PHOTO: ROBERT B. KELLEY



Actual Size 68 mm x 100 mm

▲ **OBVERSE** In center, Horticultural Hall with large foreground plants, two flag poles on R, flags flying R. Below, 3mm letters in a straight line, HORTICULTURAL HALL. Signed lower R, A. H. Rope edging around.

▲ **REVERSE** BLANK

Construction of Horticultural Hall began May 1, 1875 and was completed April 1, 1876.

Although the obverses of these two Horticultural plaques were pressed from different dies, the initial Design No. 8,285 for the Horticultural Hall Centennial plaque shows this patent was issued April 27, 1875 to Thomas R. Hartell of Philadelphia for a term of 3 ½ years. The die for the obverse of this Horticultural Hall plaque with an embossed reverse (Type I) differs from the obverse die for the blank reverse (Type II). Its design is sharper; it shows smaller plants in the foreground, it has beaded edging rather than a rope edging, a different number of flag poles, each waving in different directions and a different sizing to the lettering. Both types show the die sinker's signature "A. H." in the lower right. A. H. is most likely Adolph A. Hartmann, Sr. (1817-1887). Born in Germany he came to America prior to 1857 and worked for a time at Scovill in Waterbury, Connecticut. These rectangle plaques were issued singly in pastel-colored boxes some with a paste-in label showing Adams & Co. of Philadelphia as the selling agent.

**1876 [18] Machinery Hall (Embossed Reverse)***Rarity 3**Prime \$125**Average \$100*

Machinery Hall Centennial Plaque (embossed reverse), 1876. 68mm x 98mm (9mm). Black Walnut. Un-listed by Frossard, Haseltine; Holland, 72; Spangenberg, 1876-13.

PHOTO: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

**MACHINERY HALL ►**  
at International Exhibition  
in Philadelphia.







PHOTO: ROBERT B. KELLEY

Actual Size 68 mm x 98 mm

▲ **OBVERSE** In center, Machinery Hall with five small human figures on island, twelve flags flying L. Above, 4mm letters in an arc, CENTENNIAL EXPOSITION. Below, 4mm letters in straight line, MACHINERY HALL. Beaded edge around.

▲ **REVERSE** In 4 mm letters, 1776 1876 / THREE MILLIONS OF / COLONISTS / ON A STRIP BY THE SEA / NOW FORTY MILLIONS OF / FREEMEN / STRETCHING / FROM OCEAN / TO OCEAN with flourishes & two hands pointing to center. Beaded edge around.

### 1876 [19] Machinery Hall 1876 (Blank Reverse)

Rarity 3

Prime \$125

Average \$100

Machinery Hall Centennial Plaque (blank reverse), 1876. 68mm x 100mm (10mm). Black Walnut. Unlisted in Holland, Frossard; Haseltine, 331; Spangenberg, 1876-18.



PHOTO: ROBERT B. KELLEY

Actual Size 68 mm x 100 mm

▲ **OBVERSE** In center, Machinery Hall with five large human figures on island, fourteen flags flying L. Above, 4mm letters in an arc, CENTENNIAL EXPOSITION. Below, 4mm letters in straight line, MACHINERY HALL. Rope edging around.

▲ **REVERSE** BLANK

Construction of Machinery Hall began January 25, 1875 and was completed October 1, 1875.

Although the obverses of these two Machinery Hall plaques were pressed from different dies, the initial Design No. 8,285 for the Machinery Hall Centennial medal shows this patent was issued April 27, 1875 to Thomas R. Hartell of Philadelphia for a term of 3 ½ years. The die for the obverse of the Ma-



chinery Hall plaque with an embossed reverse (Type I) differs from the obverse die for the blank reverse (Type II). Its design is sharper, a different number of human figures on the island, a different number of flags flying and a beaded edging rather than a rope edging. These rectangle plaques were issued singly in pastel-colored boxes some with a paste-in label showing *Adams & Co.* of Philadelphia as the selling agent. Type II plaques appear to have been produced later than Type I.

**1876 [20] Main Building (Embossed Reverse)**      *Rarity 4      Prime \$150      Average \$125*

Main Building Centennial Plaque (embossed reverse), 1876. 68mm x 98mm (9mm). Black Walnut. Unlisted in Frossard, Haseltine; Holland, 68; Spangenberg, 1876-14.

PHOTO: ROBERT B. KELLEY



Actual Size 68 mm x 98 mm

▲ **OBVERSE** In center, Main Building, a solitary plant centered in foreground, partial shrub on R, twenty four flags flying R. Above in an arc of 4mm letters, CENTENNIAL EXPOSITION. Below, 4mm letters in straight line, MAIN HALL. Beaded edge around.

▲ **REVERSE** In 4 mm letters, 1776 1876 / THREE MILLIONS OF / COLONISTS / ON A STRIP BY THE SEA / NOW FORTY MILLIONS OF / FREEMEN / STRETCHING / FROM OCEAN / TO OCEAN with flourishes & two hands pointing to center. Beaded edge around.

**1876 [21] Main Building (Blank Reverse)**      *Rarity 3      Prime \$125      Average \$100*

Main Building Centennial Plaque (blank reverse), 1876. 68mm x 100mm (10mm). Black Walnut. Unlisted by Holland, Frossard; Haseltine, 331; Spangenberg, 1876-19.

PHOTO: ROBERT B. KELLEY



Actual Size 68 mm x 100 mm

▲ **OBVERSE** In center, Main Building. Island demarcation and twenty seven flags flying L. Above in an arc, 4mm letters, CENTENNIAL EXPOSITION. Below, 4mm letters in straight line, MAIN BUILDING. Signed lower R, A. H. Rope edging around.

▲ **REVERSE BLANK**



◀ **MAIN BUILDING** at the 1876 Centennial Exposition.

PHOTO: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Construction of the Main Building, the largest of the Centennial at 21.5 acres, began August, 1874 and was completed February 14, 1876.

Although the obverses of these two main building plaques were pressed from different dies, the initial Design No. 7,828 for the Main Building plaque shows the patent was issued November 3, 1874 to Thomas R. Hartell and John Letchworth, both of Philadelphia for a term of 3 ½ years. The die for the obverse of Type I (embossed reverse) differs from the obverse for Type II (blank reverse). Its design is sharper, a different number of flags are flying and in a different direction, and the edging differs. The signature "A. H." in the lower right of Type II indicates that Adolph A. Hartmann, Sr. (1817-1887) was the die sinker. Born in Germany he came to America prior to 1857 and worked for a time at Scovill in Waterbury, Connecticut. These rectangle plaques were issued singly in pastel-colored boxes some with a paste-in label showing Adams & Co. of Philadelphia as the selling agent. Plaques with blank reverses (Type II) appear to have been produced later than Type I.

#### **1876 [22] Memorial Hall (Embossed Reverse)**

*Rarity 4    Prime \$150    Average \$125*

Memorial Hall Centennial Plaque (embossed reverse), 1876. 68mm x 98mm (9mm). Black Walnut. Unlisted by Frossard; Haseltine; Holland, 69; Spangenberg, 1876-15.



PHOTO: ROBERT B. KELLEY

Actual Size 68 mm x 98 mm

▲ **OBVERSE** In center, Memorial Hall, L entrance unadorned, abundant shrubbery below. Above, 4 mm letters in an arc, CENTENNIAL EXPOSITION. Below, 4mm letters in straight line, MEMORIAL HALL. Beaded edge around.

▲ **REVERSE** In 4 mm letters, 1776 1876 / THREE MILLIONS OF / COLONISTS / ON A STRIP BY THE SEA / NOW FORTY MILLIONS OF / FREEMEN / STRETCHING / FROM OCEAN / TO OCEAN with flourishes & two hands pointing to center. Beaded edge around.



**1876[23] Memorial Hall (Blank Reverse)***Rarity 3**Prime \$125**Average \$100*

Memorial Hall Centennial Plaque (blank reverse), 1876. 68mm x 100mm (10mm). Black Walnut. Unlisted by Holland; Frossard; Haseltine, 331; Spangenberger, 1876-20.

PHOTO: ROBERT B. KELLEY



Actual Size 68 mm x 100 mm

▲ **OBVERSE** In center, Memorial Hall, L entrance adorned with two horses, two lamp posts, minimal foliage below at mid level. Below, 3mm letters in straight line, MEMORIAL HALL. Signed lower R, A. H. Rope edging around.

▲ **REVERSE** BLANK

**1876 [24] Memorial Hall (Philadelphia Ornamental Wood Co. Reverse)***Rarity 8**Unique \$2,500*

Memorial Hall Centennial Plaque (Philadelphia Ornamental Wood Co reverse), 1876. 68mm x 100mm (10mm). Black Walnut. Unlisted by Holland; Frossard; Baker; Haseltine; Spangenberger; Rulau & Fuld.

PHOTO: ROBERT B. KELLEY



Actual Size 68 mm x 100 mm

▲ **OBVERSE** In center, Memorial Hall, L entrance adorned with two horses, two lamp posts, minimal foliage below at mid level. Below, 3mm letters in straight line, MEMORIAL HALL. Signed lower R, A. H. Rope edging around.

▲ **REVERSE** In center, framed display of five exemplar products. Above 4 mm letters PHILADELPHIA ORNAMENTAL WOOD CO and below MANUFACTURERS EVERY DESCRIPTION / OF / FANCY WOOD ORNAMENTS. / 1129 CHERRY ST. PHILAD'A. PA. Turned 90° to R, MEDALLIONS, / BRACKETS, / BUTTONS, / ETC. ETC. Turned 90° to L, KNOBS ALL KINDS / BUSINESS CARDS / ESCUTCHEONS / ETC. ETC. ETC. Beaded edge around.



Construction of Memorial Hall began 4 July 1874 and was completed 1 March 1876.

No patent designation is shown on these three Memorial Hall plaques. Although the obverses of 1876 [22] and 1876 [23] were pressed from different dies, several indications suggest the original design for all three of the obverses for the Memorial Hall Centennial Hall Plaque came from Patent No. 7,827 granted 3 November 1874 for a term of 3 ½ years to T. Rollason Hartell & John Letchworth, both of Philadelphia. The obverse for Type I (embossed reverse) and Type II (blank reverse) plaques differ in several ways. Type I shows sharper features, no adornment of the left entrance, absence of horses and lamp post, larger size of lettering and beading edging around. The signature “A. H.” in the lower right indicates that Adolph A. Hartmann, Sr. (1817-1887) was the die sinker. Born in Germany he came to America prior to 1857 and worked for a time at Scovill in Waterbury, Connecticut.

The illustration shown in the patent application depicts the Art Gallery. However, when issued this plaque carried the name Memorial Hall, not a surprise as an agreed-upon name for this structure had been uncertain from the beginning. A list of buildings in the Official Catalogue of the Centennial Exhibition made no mention of a Memorial Hall.<sup>65</sup> However, later in a section of this same catalog describing the Art Gallery, the text labels its description as pertaining to Memorial Hall. Most publications of the era describing the Centennial use the title Art Gallery, only briefly mentioning Memorial Hall as an attachment to the rear of the Art Gallery, the two buildings totaling 1 ½ acres. Contrary to this an 1878 report from Pennsylvania identified this building as Memorial Hall adding that its annex houses the Art Gallery.<sup>66</sup> Some clarity is achieved when there appears in the official catalog a picture of a building showing its title as “Art Gallery, or Memorial Hall.” In any case it is important to use the titles Art Gallery and Memorial Hall as interchangeable.

Incidentally, all the Hartell & Letchworth patents for wooden medals and plaques were granted before any of the patents of Schreiner and before incorporation of the Philadelphia Ornamental Wood Co. 29 April 1876 (but filed for on 29 April 1874). These rectangular plaques were issued singly in pastel-colored boxes some with a paste-in label showing *Adams & Co.* of Philadelphia as the selling agent. Plaques with blank reverses (Type II) appear to have been produced later than (Type I).

Plaque 1876 [24] confirms Philadelphia Ornamental Wood Co. as the producer of Centennial rectangular plaques. Previous to the recent discovery of this plaque only the identity of the producer of the round medals was known by labels affixed to the bottom of boxed sets. Characteristics of this plaque show it obverse to be an exact fit to the obverse of the 1876 [23] Memorial Hall plaque, namely its 68 mm x 100 mm dimensions, a thickness of 10 mm, wording, use of rope edging, location & signature of “A. H.” Plaque 1876 [24] exhibits the only instance where the edging on the obverse and reverse differs. **Provenance.** Early in September 2013 this plaque was purchased on eBay from Richard DeLeo of Mt. Bethel, Pennsylvania who described this item as from an auction by a “well-off family with connections to a local company involved with building cranes...The family name I believe was Maris.” A catalog of 1895 show the Maris Brothers Company of 2343 & 2345 Callowhill Street, Philadelphia (successors to the Maris & Beekley Co.) produced cranes, trolleys, portable hoists and overhead track.

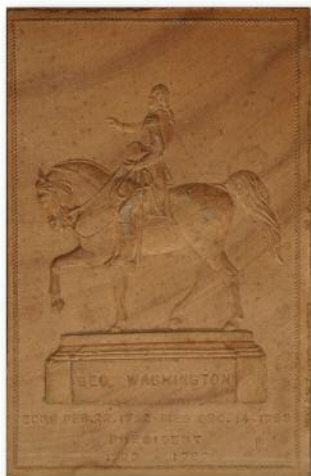
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<sup>65</sup>United States Centennial Commission. *Official Catalogue of the U.S. International Exhibition*, 1876. Philadelphia: John R. Nagle & Co. p. vii.. 1876

<sup>66</sup>Pennsylvania Board of Centennial Managers. *Pennsylvania and the Centennial Exhibition*. Philadelphia: Gillin & Nagle, 1878.

George Washington, Mounted on a Horse Plaque, (1876). 69 mm x 104 mm. (8 mm). Black Walnut. Un-listed in Holland; Frossard; Baker; Haseltine; Spangenberg; Rulau & Fuld.

PHOTO: ROBERT B. KELLEY



Actual Size 69 mm x 104 mm

▲ **OBVERSE** In portrait position, statue of George Washington mounted on horse facing L, R arm outstretched. On statue base GEO. WASHINGTON. Below, BORN. FEB. 22, 1732 \* DIED DEC. 14, 1799 / PRESIDENT / 1789 - 1797. Engraver's mark is at lower R, Rope edging around.

▲ **REVERSE** In landscape position, serrated border. FIRST IN WAR / FIRST IN PEACE / FIRST IN THE HEARTS / OF HIS COUNTRYMEN. Lower R, W. S. & CO. Beaded edge around.

The Image shown here of *Washington, Mounted on a Horse*, is similar to the reverse of Baker #317, *Brown's Equestrian Statue, Washington Statue, Union Square, New York*.<sup>67</sup> George Fuld attributes this rendition of the statue of Washington to George Hampden Lovett (1824-1894) who was in business with his father Robert Lovett, Sr. from about 1848 to 1893. Identity of the engraver is unknown. Lost is any reference authenticating the identity of "W. S. & Co." However, I believe the following gives sufficient evidence the next two plaques were produced at the Centennial by the William Sellers Company of Philadelphia - a firm which would continue until 1947.

### William Sellers & Co. (1855-1947)

William Sellers (1824-1905) was a civil and mechanical engineer and inventor earning over 90 patents, his earliest in 1857 with some still pending at the time of his death in 1905. He was a Trustee of the University of Pennsylvania from 1866 to 1905. He was a five-term President of the Franklin Institute of Philadelphia which was instrumental in harnessing Niagara Falls for electricity and, in 1873, was elected to the National Academy of Sciences. Beginning in 1845 he ran, what became, the Corliss Steam Engine Company - a firm which provided motive power for all the equipment operating in Machinery Hall at the Centennial Exposition.<sup>68</sup> From 1864 to 1892 Sellers served on the Board of Managers of the Franklin Institute of Philadelphia and from 1868 was an early supporter for locating the Centennial Exposition at Fairmount Park in Philadelphia. In the same year he created the Edge Moor Iron Company which would later provide all the iron and steel for construction of Centennial buildings and

<sup>67</sup>Rulau, Russell and George Fuld. *Medalic Portraits of Washington*. Iola, Wisconsin: Krause Publications. 1999. p. 149.

<sup>68</sup>McCabe, James Dabney. *The Illustrated History of the Centennial Exhibition: Held in Commemoration of the 100th Anniversary of American Independence*. Philadelphia: National Publishing Company. 1876.

later for the Brooklyn Bridge.<sup>69, 70, 71</sup> At the 1872 organization of the Centennial Board of Finance Sellers was elected its initial Vice President.

The William Sellers Company was a major exhibitor at the Centennial displaying numerous presses in Machinery Hall under the category “Machines & tools for working metal, wood, & stone” and in class 515 which included machines for “...punching, stamping, cutting and coining machines.” Sellers was such a major exhibitor at the Centennial that it took Sandhurst fourteen pages to describe his 4,500 square feet of exhibits.<sup>72</sup> One of his major product lines was stamping presses, advertised as “Hand acting 1,500 pound & 5,000 pound Steam Hammers.” Displaying hydraulic medal presses, I do believe his firm pressed as a showpiece memento of the Centennial this wooden plaque of *Washington, Mounted on a Horse* carrying his signature “W.S. & Co.”. One other wooden plaque carrying his signature “W.S. & Co.” was produced at the Centennial - it depicts the Liberty Bell (1876 [26]). Describing Sellers’ exhibits, Centennial judges reported “This collection of machine tools is without parallel in the history of exhibitions, either for extent, or money value, or for originality and mechanical perfection.” His company would continue to earn countless awards in International Expositions.

Five years later Sellers would produce a third signed “W. S. & Co.” wooden plaque - one depicting the U. S. Capitol Building on the obverse and on the reverse a listing of Presidents through the September 19, 1881, inauguration of Chester A. Arthur. Six years later, there appeared a pressed wood plaque fully similar in design and execution to the three plaques mentioned above and featuring the 1887 St. Paul Ice Palace plaque, but with no “W.S. & Co.”

## 1876 [26] Liberty Bell      Rarity 7      \$1,500

[The only other known copy is painted white].

Liberty Bell Plaque, (1876). 69 mm x 105 mm. (7 mm). Black Walnut. Unlisted in Holland; Frossard; Haseltine; Spangenberg 1876-21.



Actual Size  
69 mm x 105 mm

▲ **OBVERSE** In portrait position, Liberty Bell hanging from wooden harness. Faint inscriptions on the cracked side. Below, LIBERTY BELL. Engraver’s mark is at lower R. Beaded edge around.



▲ **REVERSE** In landscape position. Centered, THAT OLD STATE HOUSE IS SILENT / HUSHED IS NOW ITS GLAMOROUS TONGUE / BUT THE SPIRIT IS AWAKENED / STILL IS LIVING – EVER YOUNG. Lower R, W. S. & CO. Rope edging around.

<sup>69</sup>Hall, Carl, W. *A biographical dictionary of people in Engineering: From the earliest records until 2000*. West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press. 2008.

<sup>70</sup>F. R. Hutton. *William Sellers (1824-1905), Fellow in Class I, Section 4, 1875*. Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences, Vol. 53, No. 10. Boston: American Academy of Arts & Sciences. September 1918. pp. 861-863.

<sup>71</sup>Young, John Russell, H. M. Jenkins, G. O. Seilhamer. *Memorial history of the city of Philadelphia, from its first settlements to year 1895*. New York: New York History Company. 1898. p. 366.

<sup>72</sup>Sandhurst, Phillip T. and others. *The Great Centennial Exhibition: Illustrated*. Philadelphia: P. W. Ziegler & Co. 1876. pp. 345-358.



The Liberty Bell is an iconic symbol of American Independence, located in Philadelphia. Formerly placed in the steeple of the Pennsylvania State House (now renamed Independence Hall), the bell was commissioned from the London firm of Lester and Pack (today the Whitechapel Bell Foundry) in 1752, and was cast with wording from Leviticus 25:10 “Proclaim LIBERTY throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof.” It originally cracked when first rung after arrival in Philadelphia, and was twice recast by local workman John Pass and John Stow, whose last names appear on the bell. In its early years, the Liberty Bell was used to summon lawmakers to legislative sessions and to alert citizens to public meetings and proclamations.

Identity of the engraver is unknown. Lost is any reference authenticating the identity of “W. S. & Co.” However, I believe information for the previous piece (1876 [25]) gives sufficient evidence this plaque was produced at the Centennial in 1876 by the William Sellers Company of Philadelphia – a firm which would continue until 1947.

**1876 [26] Souvenir D’Amerique**    *Rarity 3*    *Prime \$ 125*    *Average \$100*

Souvenir D’Amerique Medal, 1876. 36 mm (6 mm). Wood Composition. Unlisted in Holland; Frossard; Haseltine; Spangengerger.

PHOTO: ROBERT B. KELLEY



▲ **OBVERSE** Hole through upper part. In center U. S. shield. Around, SOUVENIR D’AMERIQUE / \* 1776 \* 1876 \*.

Actual Size  
36 mm



▲ **REVERSE** Center, shield with three lions. Around, AMULETTE ODORIFERANTE / De PERSE.

Saturated with perfume for use in a ladies purse this piece was likely given out at the exhibit of Turkey as a memento of the Centennial. Translated “Amulette Odorifferante De Perse” means Fragrant Persian Amulet. An amulet is a small object worn to bring good fortune or to ward off evil, harm or illness. ■

# DONALD TRITT



PHOTO PROVIDED BY: DONALD TRITT, © CREATIVE IMAGES

A 55-year member of the ANA, **Donald Tritt** also belongs to the Token and Medal Society and Medal Collectors of America. As a boy, he used his paper-route earnings to pay for key Indian Head cents. An emeritus professor of psychology at Denison University in Granville, Ohio, Tritt earned a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in 1959, during which time he was mentored by noted collector Glenn Smedley. He serves on the advisory board of the Swiss-American Historical Society and is a founder of the Swiss Center of North America.