

Worcester County Numismatic Society

Founded 1946

Meets 2nd Friday of the month except July and August

December
2018

WCNS
Monthly
Newsletter

Club Address: WCNS, P.O. Box 1079, Douglas MA 01516

Club Website: www.worcestercoinclub.org

Contact phone number: Mike at 508-667-9968

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Next meeting: Friday December 14

St. Josephs Parish Center
68 Central Street, Auburn MA

Doors open at 6:00 p.m.

Meeting: 7:00 p.m.

YN meeting: 6:15 p.m.

Educational Program:

Expanded Show & Tell, by everyone, so please bring something!

YN program:

"Fun with Coins!"

WCNS Leadership

Officers

Co-Presidents: Mike Simpson & John Frost

Vice President: Jim Turner

Secretary: Maria Matys

Treasurer: Stanley Sobiech

Director at Large: Bob Moffatt

Programs

Speaker Bureau: Bob Moffatt

YN Coordinator: Mark Matys

Newsletter Editor: John Frost

Hi everyone,

It's the end of yet another year, and it is time for annual December Meeting and Holiday Party. El Co-Presidente and Chef Mike will once again prepare a pasta feast for our enjoyment. As usual, we are asking people to **bring a pot luck dessert**, as Mike is, as usual, providing everything but. For simplicity, if you are bringing a pie or cake, if you can pre-cut it into small slices, it will make things much easier, rather than us having to cut them at the meeting.

In lieu of an educational program, we will, as usual, have an expanded Show and Tell. So please bring something with you – perhaps that special item you found during the course of the year.

Also at the meeting, as has become a tradition, our special raffle with upgraded prizes, plus our "dime raffle." These two raffles are always a source of fun. Especially for those items that are gift-wrapped. A reminder that there is no auction this month because of the other festivities.

The YNs also wrap up 2018 with this month's topic, "Fun with Coins!" All members are invited to participate.

One final reminder – at the January meeting, two-year terms for Vice President and Treasurer will be up for election. If you wish to serve the club in one of these positions, have somebody nominate you or plan to come to the meeting in January for the election.

Hope to see you all on the 14th!

- John and Mike

Upcoming Events

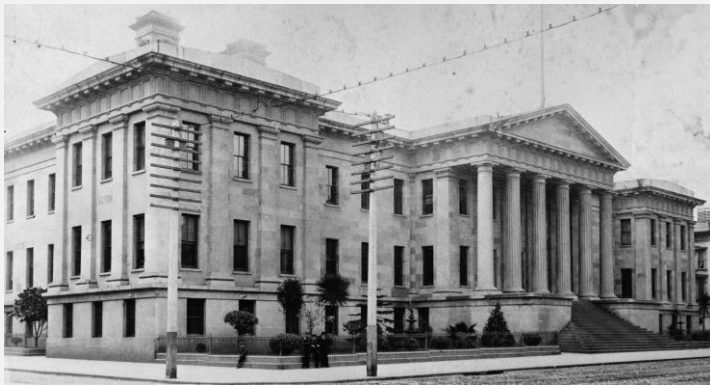
- **Greater Worcester Coin Show**, Elks Club, U.S., Auburn MA, Sunday December 9, 9:30 a.m.
- **Nashua 3rd Sunday Show**, Holiday Inn, Nashua NH, Sunday December 16, 8:00 a.m.
- **Blackstone Valley 3rd Wednesday Show**, VFW Post #1385, Uxbridge MA, Wednesday December 19, 3-8 p.m.
- **Devens Coin Show**, Devens Common Center, Andrews Pkwy, Devens MA. Sunday December 23, 9:00 a.m.
- **FUN 2019**, Orange County Convention Center, Orlando FL. January 10-13.
- **NY International Numismatic Convention (NYINC)**, Grand Hyatt Hotel, New York NY. January 10-13.



Coin in the Spotlight: 1870-S Liberty Seated Dollar

The 1870-S Seated dollar is the rarest of all U.S. silver dollars. Yes, even rarer than the 1804! With only nine examples known, the very existence of this coin was purely accidental! It was never originally planned to be made.

In 1870, construction of the new San Francisco Mint began. A grand Masonic ceremony was planned for May 25th 1870 for the laying of the cornerstone. It was desired for the ceremony to have 1870-dated examples of all denominations to place in the cornerstone. Accordingly, the Superintendent of the SF Mint ordered 1870-dated dies of all denominations (including the half dime and \$3 gold). As part of the order, the Superintendent apparently had requested a “dollar” reverse. He *meant* dies for the **gold** dollar (date is on the reverse). But he didn’t specify gold.



“The Granite Lady” – Old SF Mint [photo usmint.gov]

When the Philadelphia Mint received the order for dies from San Francisco, Chief Engraver William Barber was preparing the shipment of dies for the trip westward. However, Barber had a dilemma. The order from San Francisco for the “dollar reverse” dies did not specify whether they meant the gold dollar or the silver dollar (last minted in SF in 1859). Therefore, Barber shipped both.

Just a week before the laying of the cornerstone, the coiner in San Francisco unexpectedly found himself with an S-mintmarked silver dollar reverse die. But they had no obverse silver dollar die dated 1870! It was now too late to request one from Philadelphia and have it shipped 3,000 miles to SF in time for the ceremony.

Deciding they really should have a silver dollar for the cornerstone, the Superintendent contacted Abraham Curry of the Carson City mint, and arranged for one of their 1870-dated Liberty Seated obverse dies to be shipped

the mere 250 miles to San Francisco. It was received, polished, and used to strike the cornerstone coin.

This theory of where the obverse die came from was postulated by John Dannreuther (JD), and proved by the team of Dick Osburn and John Frost, who matched the die characteristics of the 1870-S with a known 1870-CC dollar. This proved that Carson City had sent SF a **used** obverse die, and not a new, unused one! This discovery was made possible by Dick and John having the opportunity for an hour to study and photograph the second-finest-known example of the 1870-S (a \$2,000,000 coin).

Walter Breen had suggested that the silver dollar reverse die originally had no mintmark, and the coiner hand-engraved it. Frost discovered through microscopic examination that the mintmark was punched, and in fact is a slightly **repunched** mintmark, thus certainly not hand-engraved.



**Repunched S
(see serif)**

Today, there are nine known examples, believed to be duplicates of the cornerstone coin, with perhaps a dozen or so presented to the Masons on hand at the ceremony. No records were kept on the total mintage. All but two were apparently spent or used as pocket pieces. One is known in MS, plus a second slightly mishandled AU58. Other coins grade from VG to AU.



1870-S, PCGS AU58, H.O. Granberg specimen

Deadline for next issue: December 28th