

Manhattan Coin Club Minutes

January 08, 2019

President Randy L. called the meeting to order. There was a good attendance. There were no new members or guests present.

Old Business

President Randy L. reviewed the minutes from the previous meeting. Programs still open will be filled later. The coins club will have displays provided by members at the coin show with the public voting on them. The prizes will be \$50, \$20, and \$10 in gold. I may have the gold wrong.

Treasurer Report

Dave S. was unable to attend due to illness. A card was passed around for members to sign.

New Business

Matt O. said he has put in an ad in the KNA newsletter for the coin show on March 17th. Matt also said he received a renewal notice from our web page hosting services for \$144 for two years. The club voted to approve that amount.

The question on having an additional person signed onto the clubs checking account and Chuck T. was asked by the President if he would get with Dave to get on the account's signature card. Chuck stated he would.

Guy C. told the club that Denny's at 204 Tuttle Creek Blvd. has a display and silent auction of sports memorabilia.

Auctions

Doyle R. informed the club that three coin auctions were going to be held this Saturday in Portis, Garden City, and Pittsburg and another auction in Junction City would have auctions. Doyle also said there would be a gun show in Abilene on February 2-3. Other auction information may be found at <https://kansasauctions.net>.



Program

Allan T. did the program on 'Black Americans Portrayed on Coins and Medals'. Allan is going to work on his display and will be entering it in the coin show competition.

A quiz for January was passed out and the answers were provided on the back this time.

The door prize was won by Jon S. and the child's prize was won by Brennen F. The prizes will be passed out at the next meeting.

Following the silent auction with no further business the meeting adjourned.



I found the following series of articles and while long, I thought I would include it for everyone's benefit. It has been reformatted and may also be found on the Internet.

By Charles Morgan and Hubert Walker for CoinWeek, 2016

For instance, did you know that an African-American wasn't honored on a business-strike coin until Duke Ellington on the reverse of the 2009 Washington, D.C. District of Columbia and U.S. Territories quarter? It's true... soft of; the story gets complicated. Fact is, there's an untold story behind the role of African-Americans on our coinage that isn't familiar to most people. From the beautiful goddess-like body forever immortalized on one of the United States' most significant designs, to a recent commemorative featuring nine courageous children whose footsteps changed the world, there's a lot we don't realize about the people on our coins and why they're there. Our next two articles will focus on this fascinating history. A First... but Why?

From Slave Cabin to Hall of Fame: The long-running Booker T. Washington Commemorative half dollar



Large mintages for certain issues leave many believing that the BTW half is common, but surprise! Many coins in the series have net mintages below 8,000.

Doing the research convinced us to take a step back for a moment and write about two coin series outside of our usual modern milieu. We could see how undervalued the first African-American commemoratives really are, and felt compelled to bring them to the attention of a modern hobby. Not only that, but by writing about them we give the recent changes in contemporary coin design a bit of much needed context.

Background

Sydney “S. J.” Phillips was a former student of Washington’s who devised a plan to buy the Virginia farm on which Booker T. Washington was born into slavery in 1856. To accomplish this goal, and give himself an air of legitimacy as the caretaker of Washington’s legacy, he teamed up with Washington’s daughter (to whom he promised a portion of the proceeds) to create and sell a commemorative coin honoring her father. Publicly, however, Phillips’ plan was to sell the half dollars, primarily to African-Americans, in order to establish a memorial to the great African-American educator.

So Phillips reached out to Congress, enlisting the help of Idaho Democratic Representative Compton Ignatius White. White, who sat on the Committee on Coins, Weights and Measures, introduced House Resolution 6528, an act to authorize the coinage of 50-cent pieces to commemorate the life and “perpetuate the ideals and teachings” of Booker T. Washington.

In remarks published in the Congressional Record for September 23, 1950, on the eve of the release of a second commemorative coin honoring (Booker T.) Washington, the Carver Washington Commemorative (which we discuss shortly), White spoke highly of his desire

to work with Phillips and the Washington Birthplace Memorial Commission, and said “The Negro makes up America’s largest minority group. He has grown sufficiently large in numbers to make a definite contribution to national welfare or to serve as a menace to national progress- depending upon the opportunities for development or the lack of it whichever is afforded him.”

In a contemporary context, this is a remarkable statement, and unfathomable by today’s standards. But such rhetoric was commonplace before *Brown v. Board of Education* and the period that we now know as the Civil Rights era. This language, plus the racial bias against the coins (see *Authors’ note* at the end of the article), confronts us with the uncomfortable notion of a false binary that “blacks” as a whole are either a contributing part of society or a fifth column waiting to undermine “American” values. No matter how well-intentioned the commemoration was, we cannot escape these implications. It’s also important to note that there was clear historical precedent in American coinage for promoting the ideal of Liberty and valorizing a people while denying them their basic human rights in reality; consider the use of Native Americans and Native American headdresses on American coinage, starting with the Indian Head cent in 1859 and continuing through the first third of the 20th century.

Design

Numismatists who have studied this series are well aware of the controversy surrounding the coin’s design. To summarize, Phillips initially turned to Washington’s longtime friend and confidential secretary, Dr. Emmett J. Scott, to find an artist. Dr. Scott nominated the sculptor Charles Keck, who had made a statue of Booker T. Washington in 1927 entitled “Lifting the Veil of Ignorance”. The sculpture depicted the great educator raising the “Veil of Ignorance” from the head and shoulders of a black man through education and industry. At some point, an artist and student of Washington’s named Isaac Hathaway approached Phillips and proposed that he could accurately depict Washington due to the fact that he had in his possession a life mask of Washington’s (or so the story goes). While this account may be factual, I find that the bust on the coin bears an uncanny resemblance to a 1916 [photograph](#) taken by Washington’s friend and the editor of the Journal of the National Medical Association, Dr. C. V. Roman.

Whatever the origin of the image, both Keck’s and Hathaway’s designs were submitted to the Mint and the Commission of Fine Arts. They went with Hathaway. A logical choice, considering that he offered his services for free. Keck was understandably furious, but got paid for his design anyway. Hathaway became the first African-American artist to design a U.S. Coin.

Distribution

The Act called for the mint to produce up to five million coins for up to five years following enactment on August 7, 1946. According to Swiatek and Breen, Phillips felt that a groundswell of support among blacks would help him sell through the authorization amount within ninety days. Unfortunately, this didn't happen. Once he realized he couldn't handle it himself, Phillips scrambled to find a new distribution channel for his coins. Again, according to Swiatek and Breen, "Stack's was appointed the authorized agent, according to The Numismatist of February, 1947 [but] Phillips appears to have quarreled with this firm and appointed A. E. Bebee... as his agent for the 1948-1951 issues." Bebee didn't fare much better as the '48 and '49 issues are among the lowest of the series, and half of a million coins minted in 1950 and 1951 were returned for melting and used for the subsequent Carver Washington half dollar. Of the 3.16 million pieces coined, it is estimated that 1.6 million were melted and some percentage of the coin were released into circulation.

The Market Today

The market for Booker T. Washington half dollars has been soft the past two years, but then again so has most of the classic silver commemorative market. For those simply looking for a commemorative type-set, there are a number of issues that are abundant and cheap. The most common are 1946 PDS, 1950 S, and 1951 P. From this, one might get the impression that it's a starter set.

This notion couldn't be farther from the truth, as the Booker T. Washington set has a number of issues with a net mintage of 8,000 or less. What helps keep prices of these rarer dates and mints low is the fact that fewer collectors have the means or desire to put together a complete 144-coin commemorative set, complete with every version of every coin released. This keeps some of the pressure off of the rarer dates, which could prove to be either a short-sighted mistake on the part of modern-day collectors or an unbreakable trend caused by logical and unchanging market behavior. Select coins with little to no abrasions on Booker T. Washington's face or in other focal areas are certainly worth your consideration as they're uncommon even in MS-65.

OSTENSIBLY TO FIGHT THE SPREAD OF COMMUNISM

If at first you don't succeed...



Congress's fear of communism collided with its fear that certain leaders in the African-American community might hold such beliefs got us the Carver Washington Commemorative, which touts "AMERICANISM".

MOTIVES OPEN TO INTERPRETATION

Despite the fact that the Booker T. Washington half dollars failed to deliver the kind of financial windfall Phillips was expecting, he decided to go to the well again and get legislation passed to authorize a new commemorative coin. This coin would honor not just one but TWO great black figures, this time adding the revered botanist and agricultural scientist George Washington Carver, a friend and colleague of Booker T. Washington. Intriguingly, an incongruous anti-communist theme was tied to the coin, ostensibly a tactic to win legislative approval. Seemingly well-intentioned, yet one may assume, still-racist legislators imagined the spread of communism within the Black community as a real threat to the American system, and in a stroke of political genius Congress thought that a good way to stem the red tide was to issue novelty half dollars.

By the end of the Carver Washington production run, disillusionment with S. J. Phillips had set in, not only with his white legislative benefactors but also among prominent members of the black community. They saw him as nothing more than a shameless self-promoter with no real intention of doing anything but enrich himself. Nothing crystallizes this more than a letter dated "spring '53" written to author Ralph Ellison by his friend Albert Murray:

"One S. J. Phillips of the Booker T Fourbits & the Booker T Birthplace & Booker T Sales Agency & George Washington Carver Birthplace notoriety...." He goes on to say, "Here's a sonofabitch who's been literally swindling off thousands of dollars from people who thought they were making contributions to Tuskegee and Tuskegee Sponsored projects.... Here's this anachronistic fourflusher (perhaps the greatest smoke defrauder of our day-who else has ever gotten the US Government to make a MILLION HALF-

dollars and let him SELL them for WHOLE dollars and more?) whom any kind of investigation would land in the pen.... Here he is with his good southern whitefolks completely sold and gone on the idea that HE is not only the greatest living exponent but also the ONLY living heir and continuator of the true gospel of Booker T Washington (most of Booker T's offspring work for him- for whiskey money)...."

Running counter to this impression was some genuine good work on the part of Phillips and his group. During his stewardship, the Booker T. Washington Birthplace Memorial made a number of improvements to the birthplace site, including road improvement, the construction of new buildings, the renovation of existing buildings, and the construction of a replica of Washington's birth cabin. Phillips also corrected a glaring wrong; by donating land to the local school board, he ensured that a black elementary school could be built to the same standards as the local white schools. This school closed in 1966, after Virginia's segregationist legislature and governor relented on Massive Resistance, Virginia's effort to shut down public education in the state and establish private academies in order to subvert federally-mandated integration.

Ultimately, whatever self-valorization Phillips sought did not come to fruition. The sale of both commemorative coins didn't generate enough revenue to fund the Booker T. Washington Memorial, and eventually Phillips' stake was sold to the State of Virginia, which then sold it to the Federal Government. Washington's birthplace became a National Monument (the best possible outcome, in our opinion). Financial promises he made, including to Portia Washington Pittman, Booker T. Washington's daughter, were broken. Mrs. Pittman, brought on as Phillips' partner to give him credibility, filed a lawsuit against him alleging breach of contract and that he owed her more than \$20,000 of the promised

\$25,000. Mrs. Pittman said that she'd been paid only \$3,900 plus an additional \$350 in the form of 700 of the coins themselves.

Booker T.'s Daughter Sues Memorial Head

Mrs. Portia Washington Pittman, daughter of famed educator Booker T. Washington, filed a \$20,750 suit against Dr. S. J. Phillips and the Booker T. Washington Birthplace Memorial in Franklin County, Va. Mrs. Pittman charged that Phillips had breached a contract calling for \$25,000 payment to her over a five-year period dating from September, 1951, when Congress authorized coinage of Booker T. Washington memorial half-dollars.



Mrs. Pittman

She said Phillips, who heads the memorial at Hales Ford, Va., paid her only \$3,900 and gave her 700 half dollars. She sued for the remainder. She was joined in the suit by Robert L. Ephraim, president of Booker T. Washington, Inc., of Washington, D. C., who asked \$25,000 damages. Under Congressional authorization, the half-dollars have been sold for a dollar with proceeds to be used to finance the memorial at Hales Ford.

One wonders if Mrs. Pittman is one of the individuals explicitly mentioned by Albert Murray in his letter.

Undaunted, the deeply-in-debt Phillips went back to the well a third time to get a Booker T. Washington Centennial coin legislated. By this time Congress

had run out of patience with Phillips and the commemorative coin program. It would take twenty-eight years before Mint Director Donna Pope would helm the resurrection of the program.

DESIGN

Hathaway returned to design the Carver Washington half dollar. This time he adapted a design similar to that used on the 1936 Norfolk Bicentennial and 1937 Roanoke half dollars, both of which surrounded the central motif with rings of text. In the case of the Carver Washington obverse, Hathaway presented a side profile image of the two men in jugate. The date, which is presented in a modestly-sized font behind Carver's ear, is practically lost in the scroll of inscriptions.

Hathaway's original reverse, provided to Don Taxay for use in his book, *An Illustrated History of U.S. Commemorative Coins (1967)*, is a cluttered mess of obvious jingoism and Phillips' affiliated memorials; it read: "Booker T. Washington Birthplace Memorial, VA", "George Washington Carver Nat'l Monument Foundation, MO", "United Against the Spread of Communism", National Americanism Commission" ... all of which surround the seal of the American Legion. Mercifully, this reverse wasn't approved.

The approved design would eventually feature a not-quite-right map of the United States with the inscriptions "Freedom and Opportunity for All" and "Americanism". Considering the target demographic and the social climate at the time, these words were the height of irony.

THE MARKET TODAY

Of the 2,4220,00 Carver Washington half dollars coined, 1,091,198 are known to have been melted, 94% of the known surviving population ("known" being the key word) comes from one of four issues: 1951 P, 1952 P, 1953 S, and 1954 S. The other eight issues in the series all have net mintages of 10,000 coins or below.

The series wasn't particularly lauded upon its release, and by all accounts, the lower mintage three coin sets sold out (none were returned to the mint for melting until 1954, when Phillips' finances were especially dire), while the over-produced single coin offerings gathered dust. It was possibly more out of boredom than racial intolerance that the coins didn't catch on with numismatists of the period. By the time the Act authorizing production of Carver Washington coins expired on August 7, 1954, the commemoration of Booker T. Washington had gone on for eight years, and except for the Iowa Centennial no one and nothing else had been honored on United States commemorative coins since the end of World War II.

Perhaps it's because of the coin's place as the last of the classic commemoratives that it fares better than the Booker T. Washington series. Or maybe it's because Swiatek and Breen included the series in their list of The Big Six commemorative coins and series to invest in that a majority of the lower-produced dates were scooped up and coveted. The market today does not bear out Swiatek and Breen's optimistic sentiment – there are far better plays to make in the classic commemorative series – but from a historical perspective, both the Carver Washington and Booker T. Washington half dollars are important coins *and* cultural artifacts. They are the first two U.S. issues to honor African-Americans and the only ones released before the mid-century Civil Rights Movement peaked in the 1960s.

The Acts that authorized them and the men who supported the creation of two of our nation's most interesting coins reveal much about America's struggle with race and liberty. By the time the next African-American appeared on US coinage, America was a much different place socially.

Twenty-eight years passed between the last Carver Washington half dollar and the George Washington 250th Birthday half dollar. The purpose, scope, and distribution of commemorative coins under the resurrected program bore no resemblance to that which came before. There were still those, like Armand Hammer, who sought to profit from of bloated commemorative series of their own design, but for the most part the deeply corrupt practice of the government minting collectible coins for the benefit of one individual or organization had come to an end.

During this twenty-eight year gap, America bore witness to tremendous social change. In 1954, the Supreme Court decided in *Hernandez v. Texas* that the 14th Amendment of the Constitution gave equal protection to Mexican-American citizens as well as citizens from all other racial groups. Two weeks later, the court struck down the fifty-eight year old ruling in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, siding against the Topeka, Kansas Board of Education that sought to maintain segregated schools.

Of course, the decision in *Brown* did not instantly bring fairness and equality to the nation's public schools, especially those in the south. At first, many states sought to stall integration. They employed bullying tactics, sometimes stooping to mob violence and even murder. Politicians, ever quick to seize political advantage from the sentiment of the day, mounted campaigns to defy federal law. In some states, such as Booker T. Washington's birth state of Virginia, a campaign of massive resistance was undertaken and many public school systems were shut down.

America was tearing itself to pieces over a social system that had deep cultural roots but no legitimacy in a Constitutionally-governed society. These growing pains continued for

more than a decade of *Grand Guignol* violence, political assassinations and war in Việt Nam.

By the time the next African-American appeared on a U.S. coin, most of the tensions of the forties, fifties, and sixties were in the past. Pockets of antagonism still existed, prejudice and inadequate social infrastructure was still with us, but culturally America was ready to at least acknowledge black figures and entertainers, sit beside black men and women on buses and trains, attend public schools and universities with black children, and even fight and die alongside black service members.

Jackie Robinson's Legacy of Courage goes far beyond the baseball diamond



The Jackie Robinson Commemorative dollar remains popular; the gold \$5 coin (not pictured) is one of the key coins from the modern gold commemorative series.

A Civil Rights Pioneer

Even before Jackie Robinson made baseball history, he was a fearless advocate for justice and equality. Knowing that the Army had adopted a desegregationist policy, Robinson refused to give up his seat on an Army chartered bus when the driver, seeing him sitting next to a woman he thought was white (she wasn't), ordered Robinson to move.

Jules Tygiel, author of *Baseball's Greatest Experiment: Jackie Robinson and His Legacy*, wrote that Robinson faced an all-out assault of humiliations coming from senior officers and even a female civilian stenographer who would pepper the Army's interrogation with questions like: "Don't you know you have no right sitting up there in the white part of the bus?" Because of the incident, and Robinson's unwillingness to yield, he was charged with a number of offenses, including insubordination and an absurd charge of public drunkenness.

Most of the counts were dropped by the time Robinson went to trial, and he was acquitted of the only two charges he faced. Three months later he separated from the Army. Once

released, Robinson tried out for the Kansas City Monarchs, one of the top teams in the Negro American League. In his only season with the team, Robinson hit over .400.

Crossing the Color Line

Jackie Robinson broke baseball's color barrier in 1945 when he was signed by Brooklyn Dodgers' General Manager Branch Rickey to a minor league contract on August 28. The following season Robinson and Johnny Wright, a willowy twenty-six year old standout from the Negro Leagues, started with the Dodgers' AAA team in Montreal. Wright, a year younger than Robinson and considered by some the better prospect, never lived up to his potential and was let go at the end of the season. Robinson, however, went on to be the first African-American player in Major League Baseball since Moses Fleetwood Walker and his brother Weldy played for the Toledo Blue Stockings in 1884 – before the institution of the “color-line”.

Robinson was brilliant on the field throughout his ten year major league career, but he endured a relentless torrent of abuse at the beginning. He was accused of being too proud, too bullheaded. Dodger Owner Martin O'Malley is said to have called him “Rickey's prima donna”. At the end of the 1956 season, the Brooklyn Dodgers traded Robinson to the New York Giants for the equivalent of a sack of baseballs, a well-traveled yet not particularly effective left handed relief pitcher named Dick Littlefield, who had a peculiar knack for being traded mid-season (twice in 1956). Robinson, however, was done with baseball. He never reported to the Giants, hung up his cleats, and took a job as the Vice President of New York-based coffee company, Chock full o'Nuts.

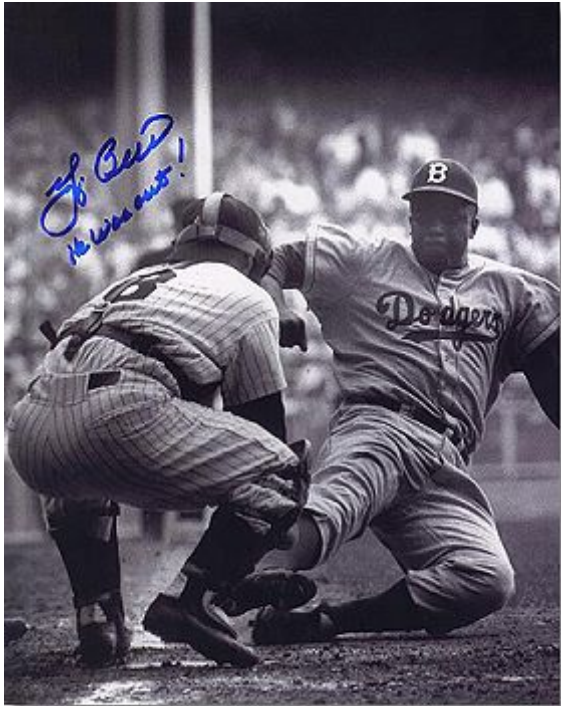
Despite being celebrated in the black community as a ballplayer and cultural icon, Robinson was investigated by the FBI and compelled to testify in front of the House Un-American Activities Committee against actor and social activist Paul Robeson (who would find himself blacklisted due to his criticism of the American government). He was the victim of an extortion attempt in 1953, and again investigated by the FBI for participating along with Martin Luther King, Jr. in James Meredith's March Against Fear.

Robinson's Image Reborn

By 1997, Jackie Robinson's legacy as a baseball player and a civil rights pioneer were beyond reproach. His successes on and off the diamond were celebrated. The Rookie of the Year award was renamed the Jackie Robinson Award in 1987 to coincide with the 40th anniversary of his inaugural season. In 1997, Major League Baseball retired Robinson's jersey number “42”, grandfathering then-active players who wore it. To this date, only Yankees pitcher Mariano Rivera wears the number 42 and Rivera's career accomplishments mean that the “42” jersey would have undoubtedly been retired by the New York Yankees even without the commissioner's edict.

The Coins

To tie-in with Major League Baseball's celebration, Congress authorized the issuing of two Jackie Robinson coins. The coins were part of an "omnibus coin bill" that also included authorizations for a coin commemorating the 150th anniversary of the death of Dolley Madison, \$5 gold coins honoring George Washington and Franklin Delano Roosevelt, a dollar honoring the 125th anniversary of the establishment of Yellowstone National Park, as well as a dollar commemorating the 275th anniversary of the birth of Crispus Attucks (more on this coin in a bit), as well as authorization for a study of a fifty state commemorative coin program, which became the State Quarters series of 1999-2008.

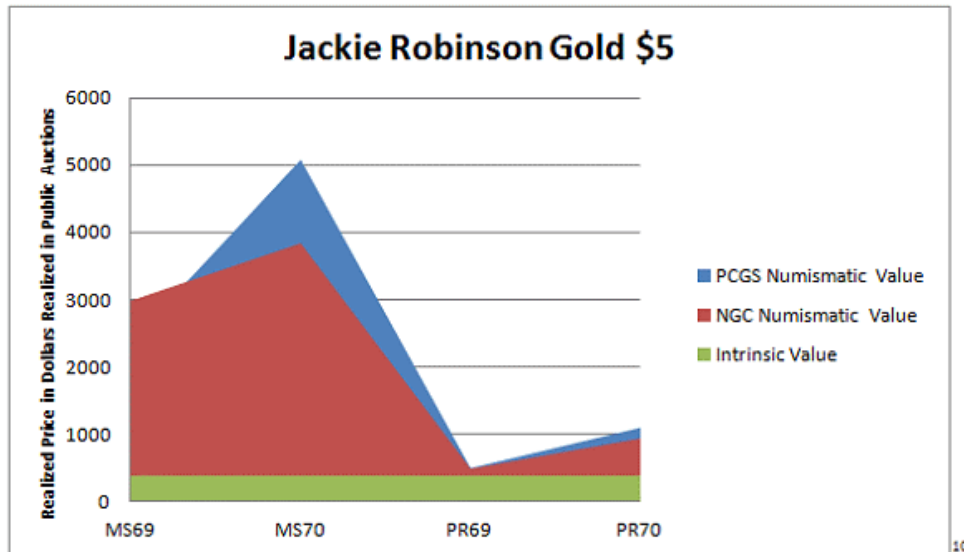


The commemorative \$5 gold and silver dollars honoring Robinson celebrate his impact on baseball. The obverse of the dollar shows Robinson's daring steal of home in game one of the 1955 World Series against the New York Yankees. This is one of the defining moments of the Hall of Famer's career, though not without controversy: Yankees catcher [Yogi Berra](#) maintains to this day that Robinson was out!

The reverse features Major League Baseball's "Jackie Robinson: Breaking Barriers 50th Anniversary" logo accompanied with inscriptions honoring his 1947 Rookie of the Year Award and 1962 induction into the Baseball Hall of Fame. Credit for the design went to William C. Cousins and James Peed. Business strikes are scarcer than proofs, but both versions are

popular with collectors. Significant premiums go for coins certified MS-70.

The Jackie Robinson \$5 gold coin focuses on the totality of Robinson's achievements as an American. The obverse features a portrait of an older Robinson while the reverse features a baseball with the inscription "1919-1972 Legacy of Courage". The coin was also designed by William C. Cousins and James Peed. Initially offered at \$180, the gold business strike version sold incredibly poorly, moving only 5,174 pieces. Proofs sold better, moving 24,072 pieces. Because of the low mintage (read: immense buyer apathy) of the uncirculated version, the Jackie Robinson \$5 became the key issue from the modern gold commemorative series and quickly commanded a significant premium. The chart below shows recent price performance for both versions.



A premium price is paid for PR70 pieces, while PR69 coins sell for close to spot. Business strikes sell for significant premiums.

A Man John Adams Didn't Think Much of...

Crispus Attucks, "Black Revolutionary War Patriot"



John Adams got Attucks' killers acquitted in a famous pre-Revolutionary War trial. He was one of five men assembled in Boston killed by the undisciplined fire of British troops

Not much is agreed about concerning Crispus Attucks, who is believed by some to have been a mixed race (African and native Wampanoag) merchant seaman residing in Boston. In 1770, he was at the front line of a scrum with British troops that resulted in the shooting death of Attucks, along with four other men. Six additional colonists were wounded.

At trial, Boston lawyer and future President of the United States John Adams defended the British troops, calling Attucks and his companions that evening a "motley rabble of saucy boys, negros and molattoes [sic], Irish Teagues and outlandish jack tars".

Adams got the soldiers acquitted, but the incident proved a catalyst for the propaganda war leading up to the American Revolution. Two years after the incident, Samuel Adams dubbed the event “The Boston Massacre”.

In 1998, to commemorate Attucks’ role as a “Revolutionary War Black Patriot”, a commemorative dollar bearing his supposed likeness was issued.

A Memorial Stalled...

Ostensibly, proceeds from the sale of the Attucks dollar were earmarked to go to the Secretary of the “Black Revolutionary War Patriots Foundation for the purpose of establishing an endowment to support the construction of a Black Revolutionary War Patriots Memorial” in Washington, DC.

In an article published in the Washington Post, staff writer Petula Dvorak described the would-be monument as an “arcing granite wall across from a similarly long and curving bronze statue built into the crook of a pathway through Constitution Gardens”. The plans were drawn up by Ed Dwight, the artist also responsible for the Attucks commemorative dollar reverse.

Unfortunately for the memorial organizers, the National Park Service placed a moratorium on the construction of new monuments on the Mall in 2003 and the foundation’s authorization to use their proposed site expired in 2005. The effort to raise capital was not much boosted by the sale of the commemorative dollars. Though the coin wasn’t a spectacular failure (its combined 112,280 coins sold being typical for the period), the Foundation wasn’t able to raise enough funds to begin construction.

With the planned construction a bust, a new group headed by Maurice Barboza set out to resuscitate the plan, testifying before Congress on September 16, 2010 about the importance of the contributions of African-Americans during the Revolutionary War and his plans to “instruct the landscape of Washington in the unifying narrative of African-American patriots and freedom seekers of the Revolutionary War”

To date the memorial has not been built.

Brave beyond their years...



The Problem We All Lived With

A color line of a different sort was crossed by nine brave children in Little Rock, Arkansas in September, 1957. The Little Rock Nine, as they became known, were normal American children with only one skin-deep feature standing between them and living a life of dignity.

Amazingly, Little Rock was a fairly progressive southern city in terms of race relations going into the 1957-1958 school year, having already desegregated their public libraries and bus system. But the idea of opening up all-white schools to African-American children struck a nerve with many of the city's residents, who then mobilized to stop integration through physical threats, verbal abuse, and political pressure against the federal mandate. Many saw no problem operating separate schools in order to maintain the status quo. But those who argued that African-American children were benefiting from separate-but-equal schooling ignored the myopic graduation rates at all-black schools, the poor condition of the facilities, and the generations-old books passed down to the black schools once the white schools moved on to newer ones (many of these hand-me-down books had racial epithets written in the margins). The humiliation and oppression was palpable in obvious and not-so-obvious ways.

Unfortunately, the story didn't end there. The 1958-1959 school year became known as "The Lost Year" after Governor Orval Faubus called a special session of the Arkansas General Assembly to pass a bill called Act 4, which gave municipalities the authority to shut down schools threatened with integration. Another bill provided students displaced by school closures with funding to attend the school of their choice. Compare this bit of legislation to current "school choice" initiatives, there are similarities.

Further federal court intervention took the power out of the governor's and the state's hands. By order of the court, the closed schools in Little Rock reopened, a nationwide

program of busing integrated all public schools. Gradually the state of emergency shifted from the repercussions of forced integration to public arguments over the utility of public education, the funding of it, and the nature of what's being taught.

The Little Rock Nine: Then and Now

Ernest Green was an Eagle Scout and an active churchgoer. He was the first African-American to graduate from Little Rock Central High School. Martin Luther King, Jr. attended his graduation. Green served as Assistant Labor Secretary in the Carter Administration and later worked for Lehman Brothers.

Minnijean Brown was suspended and later expelled for reacting to taunts from white students. She was an American expatriate living in Canada for a number of years and later served as the Deputy Assistant Director of the Interior in the Clinton Administration. Carlotta Walls LaNier's father was a veteran of World War II. Carlotta had to take correspondence courses in 1958-1959 when Little Rock high schools were closed. She returned the following year and graduated. She later attended Colorado State College and is now a real estate broker and author.

A white student tried to blind Melba Beals by throwing acid into her eyes. She moved to Santa Rosa after the school was shut down in 1958-1959. Beals earned a Master's degree in Journalism from Columbia University and teaches Journalism at Dominican University of California.

Elizabeth Eckford's humiliation and abuse was forever memorialized in a snapshot from Will Counts. Counts, a photographer for UPI, caught Eckford in the eye of the storm, being jeered at and taunted by white schoolmates and townsfolk. Just behind her was a screaming white teenage girl named Hazel Massery. Massery tried to make amends with Eckford years later, and for a time the two were friends. But those who've known her over the years say that the experience really affected her, and that she doesn't much like discussing that period as it brings back a flood of painful memories.

Despite having a heart condition, Thelma Mothershed braved torment and attended Little Rock Central High School as a junior in 1957-1958. During that school year her parents sent President Eisenhower a letter thanking him for sending the 101st Airborne Division to protect their daughter. He wrote back thanking them for having the courage to send their daughter to the all-white school. She completed her senior year through correspondence courses and received her diploma from Central High School by mail. She earned a Master's degree from Southern Illinois University and taught Home Economics in the East St. Louis School System for nearly 30 years.

Gloria Ray Karlmark remembered counting each day to make sure that the nine African-American kids that went to school that day were all accounted for before they left to go

home. She was fifteen years old in 1957. Later, Karlmark went on to earn a Bachelor's degree in Chemistry and Mathematics. She now resides in the Netherlands.

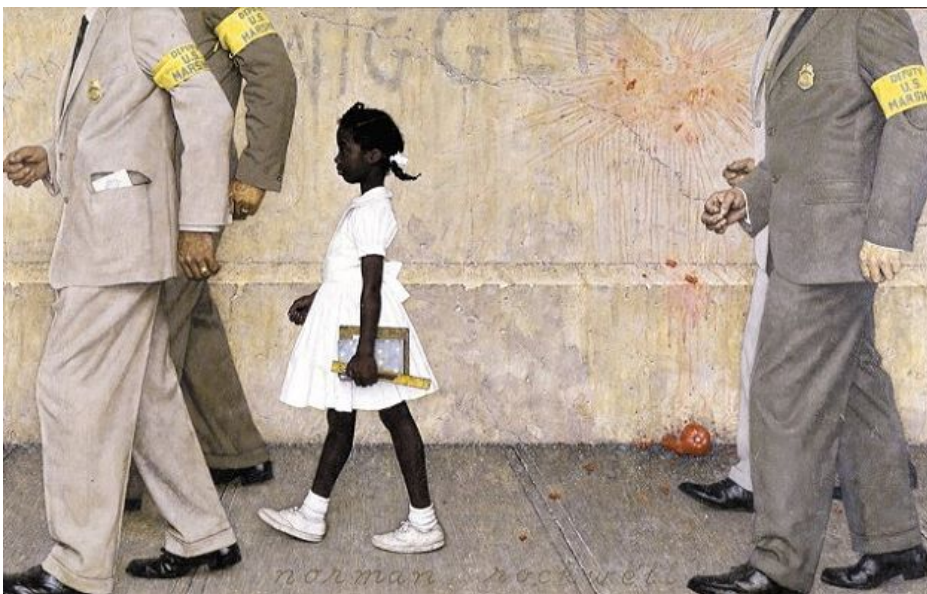
Terrence Roberts was also fifteen when he attended Little Rock Central High School. When the school was shut down the following year he was forced to complete his studies in Los Angeles. Roberts earned a Ph.D. in Psychology from Southern Illinois University and taught at Antioch University in Los Angeles.

Jefferson Thomas entered Little Rock Central High as a sophomore. He graduated from the school in 1960 and went on to serve as an Army infantryman during the war in Việt Nam. He earned a Bachelor's degree from Los Angeles State College and spent the majority of his career working as an accounting clerk with the Department of Defense. Thomas died of pancreatic cancer in 2010.

A Most Political Piece

The coin's obverse features a letterboxed vignette of nine teenage school children being escorted by a member of the 101st Airborne, sent to Little Rock by President Eisenhower to serve in a protection detail. The image recalls Norman Rockwell's famous illustration "The Problem We All Live With". Above this image are nine stars, each representing a member of the Little Rock Nine.

The coin is also notable for depicting living persons, technically illegal after an 1866 Act of Congress. The Little Rock Nine joined Governor Thomas Kilby (1921 Alabama Centennial half dollar), Calvin Coolidge (1925 Sesquicentennial of American Independence half dollar), Carter Glass (1936 Lynchburg Sesquicentennial half dollar), and Senator Joseph Robinson (1936 Robinson-Arkansas half dollar). Also interesting is the design choice to depict only legs and feet.



Ruby Ridges (age 6) being escorted to school by the U.S. Marshalls as depicted by Norman Rockwell (Originally published in Look Magazine).

Beneath is the inscription DESEGREGATION IN EDUCATION. The reverse shows the beautifully detailed rendering of the Little Rock Central High School. The

obverse was designed by Richard Masters and Charles Vickers. The reverse was designed by Don Everhart.

As U.S. Commemoratives go, The Little Rock Central High School Desegregation dollar is probably the most politically sensitive coin ever released. While the classic and modern commemorative series each had their fair share of controversial figures playing some role behind the scenes, the coins themselves had always been innocuous and non-assuming. Celebrating desegregation on a coin in some ways serves as the federal government's *mea culpa* for its poor record of demanding and insuring liberty for all.

The coin sold fairly well, with 124,678 business strikes minted and 66,093 proofs (an unusual reversal as most modern commemoratives see a much higher demand for proofs than business strikes).

African-Americans have also appeared on other commemorative coins, more or less as athletic archetypes, or in the case of the Jamestown 400th Anniversary dollar (2007) as an unnamed slave woman. We find that the coins that we've discussed above are the most significant of the modern commemorative series up to now.

Not Without Controversy - The first historical African-American appears on a business strike U.S. coin



The original artwork featured Lewis & Clark (left), while the minted coin features a third man, Clark's slave York. Original artwork by Paul Jackson, all rights reserved.

York

The first historical African-American to appear on a circulating United States coin was William Clark's slave York. Based upon the paltry amount of information we have about him, we know that York was roughly the same age as Clark and lived with him throughout

childhood. York was Clark's "body slave" – that is, if you can imagine such a thing, a put-upon – and in the case of York, a constantly put down, personal valet. Brian Hall, who researched extensively the way York was treated by Clark and Lewis for his novel *I Should Be Extremely Happy in Your Company*, says Clark's "callousness toward York sits awkwardly with his portrayal as an American hero."

In fact, it is the very depiction of York rowing a canoe in the shadow of Eero Saarinen's St. Louis Gateway Arch that is emblematic of the cruelest aspect of York's life. After having accompanied Lewis, Clark, and their personally-selected group of adventurers and military men, York expected some consideration for his contribution to the celebrated journey. Each of the other members of the group was compensated. Lewis was given a significant political position as the second American governor of the Louisiana Territories (replacing the treasonous [James Wilkinson](#)). Sacagawea is said to have settled with her husband Charbonneau in St. Louis (at Clark's request), bearing a boy and a girl before dying from illness in 1812. Some oral traditions have her returning home to Shoshone country and living to the ripe old age of 96. But the freedom York sought was denied him by Clark, who ordered him to leave his wife (slave marriages not being legally binding) and come with him to St. Louis.

What happened to York after this point is anyone's guess. The black adventurer the Arikara people dubbed "Big Medison" could have met any number of fates. Clark told Washington Irving in 1832 that he had set York free but that he had failed as a free man and was trying to make his way back to St. Louis to return to Clark's service when he died. As with the Sacagawea story, some speculate that York made his way back out to the frontier and lived a noble life amongst the native peoples. Perhaps this myth sits well with the American soul and the mystical nature of the American frontier.

However, how York came to be included in the design is one of the great stories surrounding modern coinage.

Quartergate

When the Mint revealed the design that had been selected for the Missouri quarter, Columbia, Missouri-based watercolorist **Paul Jackson** was incensed. Jackson, who several months earlier had submitted the winning entry, was appalled at the artistic liberties Mint sculptors had taken with his piece. While in another high-profile contest (for the Bicentennial commemoratives) Chief Engraver Frank Gasparro made several changes to the winning designs "to better facilitate their coinage on high speed presses", those artists were still credited for their designs. In this case things were different.

In Jackson's mind, they had dumbed down his carefully considered piece of art, and worse yet, taken credit for its design. He launched a campaign at the state capital to convince

Governor Bob Holden (D) and his wife Lori Hauser Holden (who publicly spearheaded the design competition), to convince the Mint to use his original design instead. When that went nowhere, he traveled to the nation's capital to see if he could be a more visible thorn in the Mint's side. Jackson was onto something. Several artists from other states had seen their jubilation turn to disappointment when mint sculptors altered their designs and took credit for their work. He continued to speak out and luckily for him, the media began to take notice.

Despite what Jackson believed he was signing up for when he entered the contest, the Mint was perfectly within their rights. The artwork submission guidelines stated that the Mint would produce drawings of all design concepts. Even though Jackson's artwork was clearly an improvement over every version attempted by mint artists, the Mint was under no obligation to use any original artwork from an outside artist. Furthermore, the 50 States Commemorative Coin Program Act – Public Law 105-124 – stated that each of the 50 designs were to be selected by the Secretary of the Treasury after consultation with the Governor of the State being commemorated. This didn't preclude the Mint from making an exception, and certainly a case can be made that if the Mint's artists weren't improving or finishing a design concept but merely plagiarizing a finished piece of art, then some credit on the coin should have gone to Paul Jackson. Of course, Chief Engraver Frank Gasparro shared no credit with Michael Collins, the designer of the Apollo 11 mission insignia, when he lifted it for use on the reverse of the Eisenhower and Susan B. Anthony dollars. So how did York make it onto the coin? The answer is shrouded in mystery and involves an artist's hurt feelings, claims of plagiarism and unfair profit-taking, all of which caused enormous embarrassment for the U.S. Mint and the State Quarter program. We reached out to Paul Jackson to ask him about his design and find out his feelings on the matter, and to find out if there were versions of his design that *did* include York. Jackson responded, saying that he had tinkered with the idea of including York on the coin, but felt that putting another person on the coin made it too crowded. So instead he put Lewis and Clark together in a canoe, a design meant to be emblematic of the Corps of Discovery's expedition, not a factual representation of the group. He felt that Mint engraver Alfred Maletsky changed the design just enough to be able to take credit. He cites a conversation he had with a Mint official that told him that to have his initials on a circulating U.S. coin could be worth millions of dollars and that they had no interest in bestowing such an honor onto him.

Whatever the Mint's motives and whether or not you believe Jackson's account of the meeting, [don't want to sound too harsh but at the same time just b/c someone spoke to us is no reason to take their word over all others] it's clear that Mint Director Ed Moy was aware of the significance of including York in the Mint's version of the Missouri reverse. In an interview session Moy had with the media commemorating the release of the District of Columbia quarter, Moy pointed out that the D.C. quarter was the first circulating U.S. coin

to have an African-American going “solo”. A CNN article quoting Moy goes on to mention the significance of the Missouri quarter further in the story.

Collectability

The Missouri quarter is a common coin. The Philadelphia and Denver mints combined to produce more than 450,000,000 pieces with untold millions sold to collectors in rolls and bags or pulled out of circulation in mint state bank rolls. Coin dealers will be opening government-packaged Missouri quarters for the next hundred years, so the prospects of the coin becoming a highly sought after numismatic rarity are quite remote. That said, registry set collectors looking for the coin in MS-68 have pushed the Philly release into the thousands of dollars (it’s quite elusive) and the Denver strikes go for a couple hundred when you find them. NGC attributes Prooflike examples and has seen fewer than ten from both mints combined. For those who are interested in buying a superior quality version of the coin without spending real money, a nice MS-67 version in an NGC or PCGS holder can be had for about the cost of the plastic. We wouldn’t recommend spending any more than that. Proofs are abundant raw and in PR-69DCAM with the standard modern-coin marketing premium for coins holdered as PR-70DCAM.

Also of note were some 250,000 State Quarters (\$62,500 worth) stickered with Paul Jackson’s original design. The Mint was so displeased when they heard that the artist had circulated his own design that U.S. Mint spokesperson Dave Hecox was said to have phoned the Associated Press to report that Jackson was under Secret Service investigation for the crime of defacing money. No such charges stemmed from the action, and in fact, when Jackson tried to turn himself in to the Secret Service, officials there were unaware of any such investigation. Exonumists will probably be interested in this piece of U.S. numismatic history.

The Duke – One of two African-Americans considered...



Flying “Solo” At Last

Sixty-three years after Booker T. Washington was posthumously bestowed the honor of being the first African-American to grace a United States commemorative coin, legendary Jazz musician and Washington, D.C. native son Edward Kennedy “Duke” Ellington became the first African-American featured as the sole figure on a circulating United States coin. Two additional African-American figures were considered, Maryland-born freeman Benjamin Banneker (1731-1806) and slave-turned American statesman Frederick Douglass (1818-1895).

Whereas Banneker’s contributions to the construction of the federal city are the stuff of myth and legend (he supposedly recalled L’Enfant’s city plan from memory, while others claim he wrote America’s first almanac), Douglass’s impact on American history is beyond reproach. He wrote a number of autobiographies, gained prominence as one of his era’s great orators, and stood as clear, irrefutable evidence that it was the slave’s subjugation and lack of education (it was illegal at the time to teach slaves how to read) – and not any genetic or natural disposition – that justified their lesser status as men and women. As for Duke Ellington, the “Duke” was a pioneering figure in American music. He began performing professionally at the age of 17 and eventually assembled a band whose music transcended racial and social boundaries. Ellington recorded hundreds of songs with some of the 20th century’s most important musical figures. Ellington was honored with the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1969 for traveling the world carrying the message of freedom through music.

The three figures were put up for a public vote, and the choice was sweet music to Washingtonians’ ears.

“Taxation without Representation”

No story involving the District of Columbia and its long-standing feud with the Federal Government would be complete without some element of intrigue. The District, which has a population comparable to states such as Alaska, North Dakota, Vermont, and over 100,000 people more than Wyoming, has bristled for years over its lack of political representation in Congress. The dispute grew more public when in 2000, the District changed its license plate design to read “No Taxation without Representation” owing to the special status the District holds under Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

Voting rights activists and civic leaders inside the District saw the commemorative quarter design as an opportunity to broaden awareness of the District’s lack of a vote in Congress. The effort to include the “No Taxation” motto was undertaken by Mayor Adrian Fenty, although it was widely supported in the District and was included in nearly one-third of the submitted ideas for the coin’s inscription, according to city officials. The Mint

rejected the proposal almost immediately, saying in a statement that “although the United States Mint expresses no position on the merits of this issue, we have determined that the proposed inscription is clearly controversial and, therefore, inappropriate as an element of design for United States coinage”. Ultimately, the inscription “JUSTICE FOR ALL” was chosen- an odd inscription to accompany the Jazz legend, to be sure, but one that they figured would certainly offend no one.

Collectability

There were two proof versions of the District of Columbia quarter minted to go along with the business strikes. The intended for circulation business strikes were made in significant quantities. The combined 172,400,000 coins minted from Philadelphia and Denver were the most of any design minted in 2009. The typical graded example of the two quarters is MS-67, with no examples grading higher. As for the Satin Finish coins included in that year’s Uncirculated Mint Sets, submitted coins tend to be graded MS-68, with 15-20% grading MS-69. When coins tend to come nice, such as these, we don’t see the efficacy of paying a substantial premium for a coin that’s only marginally nicer. Proofs are abundant, with most raw and graded examples being of PR-69DCAM quality, and better persevered and better struck examples holdered as PR-70DCAM. A market premium exists for PR-70DCAM coins in PCGS holders, but it’s slight.

Emblematic of Liberty – Hettie Anderson and America’s most beautiful coin



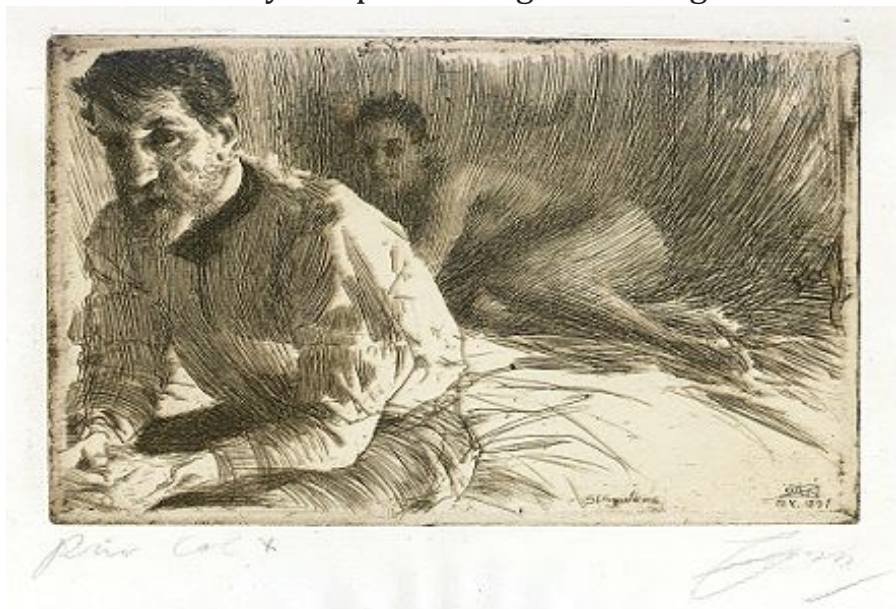
Unknown to most for many years, the famous female figure depicted as Liberty on Saint-Gaudens double eagle (1907-1932) was African-American model Hettie Anderson.

Striking Change

Were it not for trace evidence left behind in the form of sketches and personal correspondence, the true story of Augustus Saint-Gaudens and the creation of his famous double eagle might not have been told. Saint-Gaudens, as it's been well documented, was brought in to reshape the face of American coinage at the behest of President Theodore Roosevelt. His influence was far reaching and elevated the character of American coinage, through his own work and through the work of his contemporaries and acolytes. The Saint-Gaudens double eagle stands as his signature coin. A bold design, it features a triumphant Liberty carrying the torch of freedom in one hand and an olive branch in another as she ascends to the top of a craggy hill. Resplendent rays of sunlight radiate from behind and in the distance the most famous landmarks of America's capital city can be made out. Surrounding her are 47 stars, each one representing a state. The design was so elegant and grand that Augustus wanted the date to be depicted in Roman numerals and the relief to be so high that the coining presses of his day could barely produce it. Whatever initial resistance Saint-Gaudens got from the Mint, most notably from Chief Engraver Charles Barber and Treasury Secretary Leslie Mortier Shaw, President Roosevelt overruled it. The reverse was equally captivating. Saint-Gaudens used an Art Deco-style font reminiscent of the font John F. Flanagan would use later for the reverse of his Washington quarter. A bold eagle dominates this side, captured midflight as the sun crests on the horizon, its rays again majestic and omnipresent.

Written out of History

William E. Hagans, who spent a number of years researching the life and work of Swedish artist **Anders Zorn** (1860-1920), held a key piece of information that helped numismatic scholars determine just who it was that Saint-Gaudens used as a model on his famed \$20 gold piece. The clue came in the form of a sketch, made extemporaneously in 1897, that shows the world-weary sculptor sitting on the edge of the model's stand.



A moment in time captured by Anders Zorn: Saint-Gaudens takes a break; double eagle model Hettie Anderson, nude in the background, in repose.

In the background lies **Harriette Eugenia “Hettie” Anderson**, an African-American model who Saint-Gaudens referred to as a woman with the figure of a goddess. It was already known that Saint-Gaudens used her as the model for the figure of Victory in his monument to Sherman. By this time, Hettie had posed for a number of artists in New York, including Saint-Gaudens’ protégé Adolph Weinman. But her connection to the double eagle was scarcely known outside of Saint-Gaudens’ closest family, friends and colleagues – and his family, at least, tried to keep it this way. Homer Saint-Gaudens, the artist’s son, edited her out of his father’s unfinished autobiography. In drawing connections to Hettie and the double eagle, Hagan solved a nearly century old mystery that was hiding in plain sight. Ten years after the Supreme Court established a Constitutional basis for separate but equal in *Plessy v. Ferguson* and two years before the National Negro Committee convenes (leading to the founding of the NAACP), Hettie Anderson, an African-American model from South Carolina, became the iconic symbol of Liberty on America’s most enduring coin. A design that prompted President Theodore Roosevelt to write that Saint-Gaudens’ double eagle “is the best coin that has been struck for two thousand years... [a coin that] will serve as a model for future coin makers...”

What could have been? **Martin Luther King, Jr., Harriet Tubman and Bessie Coleman considered for golden dollar coin.**



(L to R) Bessie Coleman, Harriet Tubman, and Martin Luther King, Jr.

The rebirth of the dollar coin was a long time coming. Even though the Susan B. Anthony dollar program was stillborn, some members of Congress were convinced that a publicly-accepted dollar coin was possible, if certain changes were made to its design and composition. The idea for a golden dollar coin dates back to before the release of the Susan

B. Anthony dollar in 1979, but it took nearly eighteen years before the program became a reality.

During the design process, a Colorado-based graphic artist named Daniel Carr submitted a few of his design proposals, including one which featured a portrait of early 20th century African-American aviatrix Bessie Coleman. Coleman was a high-flying stunt pilot who barnstormed across the United States performing daring tricks in front of paying audiences – that is, until a maintenance oversight on the part of her mechanic and agent, William Wills, caused her Curtiss JN-4 biplane to lose control, hurtling Coleman 2,000 feet to the ground without a parachute and sending Wills and the plane plummeting to the ground. Carr’s Coleman design received national attention when a large mock-up was featured in a June 9, 1998 Washington Post article by Bill McAllister covering the Treasury Department advisory committee meetings on which design would grace the 2000 golden dollar.

It was during these hearings that abolitionist Harriet Tubman was considered as a potential sidekick for a revised Susan B. Anthony dollar (which presumably would feature portraits of the two suffragettes in jugate). The colossal failure of the Susan B. Anthony dollar program still fresh in the minds of the design board made the idea of retaining any connection to that coin untenable. Furthermore, some, including Delaware Senator Mike Castle (R) blamed the failure of the dollar program on the fact that Susan B. Anthony “remains an obscure historical figure to most citizens in spite of being the most politically correct choice at the time”

After a few rounds of voting, Lewis and Clark Shoshone Indian guide Sacagawea was chosen to grace the first new coin of the 21st century. Daniel Carr’s Bessie Coleman proposal and the proposal to add Harriet Tubman were relegated to historical footnotes. Interestingly, it was three years after the release of the Sacagawea dollar that New York Representative Charlie Rangel (D) proposed to change the design to feature slain Civil Rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr. Rangel, seizing upon the perceived failure of the Sacagawea dollar program, saw an opening to promote an important African-American national figure.

The Act, known as the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., 1 Dollar Coin Act, cited King’s numerous accomplishments as a proponent for peace, social reform, and non-violent activism, and called for a new dollar coin that featured a likeness of King on the obverse and a reverse emblematic of King’s philosophy. The bill was tabled in committee (along with another Rangel proposal that called for a commemorative dollar honoring Thurgood Marshall). Rangel had a point in nominating King for the coin. Martin Luther King, Jr. is certainly one of the most crucial figures in modern American history and is better known to contemporary Americans than a member of Lewis & Clark’s expedition. It’s also simply

amazing that King has never been honored on a United States commemorative coin – and only time will tell if this criminal omission isn't rectified with the forthcoming Civil Rights Act Commemorative dollar slated for a 2014 release.

The Future

What lies ahead for United States coinage is anybody's guess. It seems likely that we'll see the elimination of familiar denominations before we see wholesale changes of the people on our circulating coins. The Lincoln cent is one of the hobby's most collected designs and has been in production for more than a hundred years. The Mint did toy with a total redesign of the coin in the mid-1950s, but nothing came of it. Jefferson has owned the nickel since 1938 and only recently underwent a design overhaul. Roosevelt and Kennedy were memorialized on the dime and half dollar shortly after their deaths, and it's hard to imagine any of these important historical figures being evicted from their spots on U.S. coinage in favor of someone new. A much more likely scenario is that lesser denominations will be discontinued due to their increasingly low purchasing power. With the negative seigniorage that the nickel and cent are experiencing, it's only a matter of time before either 1) a new composition is introduced, or 2) the coins are phased out. In the event that this does happen, a call will be made to introduce new, usable coinage. When that time comes a choice will have to be made as to who is represented on these new coins. We hope that Americans will rightly consider the contributions of those important figures not yet memorialized on our money. In England, the obverse of their national coinage bears the image of kings and queens. In America, it's high time that a certain King gets his due.