

Coin Chronicles

The Newsletter of the Trenton Numismatic Club

April 2017

Volume 35 Issue 4

Audrey Munson

-Don Dileo

For those of you who attended the March Trenton Club meeting, you may remember that our club President read a short article about a women named Audrey Munson, who was the model for the Walking Liberty Half Dollar and possibly the Mercury Dime as well.

This was quite an interesting and famous women during her day. She was the first "super-model" and especially known as "Miss Manhattan" and the "Pan-Pacific Girl" and the new American venus. In New York City alone, there are 12 statues of her.

She also appeared in 4 movies, the first in 1915 titled "Inspiration" in 1916 in "Purity" and again in 1916

in the "The Girl o' Dreams" and in 1921 in "Heedless Moths." She was the first women to appear fully nude in a motion picture in the 1915 "Inspiration."

Munson posed for over three-fifths of the statuary of the Panama-Pacific exposition alone.

Adolph Weinman who sculpted the Walking Liberty Half Dollar, also used her for the top of the Manhattan Municipal Building, and the Day and Night figures from Pennsylvania Station in NYC. She was Frederick MacMonnies model for "Beauty" at the New York Public Library.

Munson was a model for hundreds of other sculptures around the United States, , many in fountains from Jacksonville, Florida to both coasts.

Born in Rochester, New York on June 8 1891, she lived to be 104 years, spending over 65 years in the St. Lawrence State Hospital for the Insane after trying to commit suicide. Munson died in 1996 and was buried in an unmarked grave in a family plot in New Haven, New York.

It should be noted that she also appeared in 6 Broadway plays in the early 1900's.

She lived a fascinating life in the early 1900's through the early '20's, yet is a forgotten figure in the American fabric of the early days of silent film and sculpture.

For a more complete look at her life, visit Wikipedia on line.



Articles Wanted

If you have a topic you'd like to be covered in the Newsletter... write an article or submit your idea. Don't be shy....do it. All entries are welcome. Articles will appear in the Newsletter as soon as possible and might be edited for space consideration, not editorial content.

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COIN SHOW SCHEDULE

By Bill Liatys

May 2017

LOCAL SHOW SCHEDULE

PARSIPPANY *May 7th at Sunday 9 AM – 3 PM*
Pal Bldg 33 Baldwin Road Parsnippany NJ

BURLINGTON *May 14th Sunday 10 AM – 4 PM*
Burlington Mason Lodge Route 541 Burlington, NJ

TREVOSE *May 21st Sunday 10 AM – 4 PM*
Trevost Fire house 4900 Street Road Trevose PA

TRI-STATE COIN & STAMP SHOW *May 28th Sunday 9:30 AM – 3:30 PM*
Sheraton Bucks County 400 Oxford Valley Road Langhorne, PA

WHITMAN COIN & COLLECTIBLES *June 22nd -25th Thursday – Sunday*
Thursday – Noon – 6 PM Friday – Saturday - 10 AM – 6 PM Sunday – 10 AM – 3 PM
Baltimore Convention Center One W. Pratt Street Baltimore, MD

2017 EARLY AMERICAN COPPERS (EAC) *April 20 – April 23*
Thursday – Sunday Thursday – Dealers Only Friday – Saturday – 9 AM – 5 PM
Sunday – 10 AM – 3 PM
Doubletree by Hilton Phila. Center City 237 Broad Street
Philadelphia, PA

GSNA 42nd Annual Convention 2017 *Thursday May 18 - 12PM to 6PM*
Friday May 19 - 10AM to 6PM Saturday May 20 - 9AM to 4PM *Ukrainian Cultural*
Center - Somerset, NJ

James Barton Longacre



One of the most well known engravers of the US mint during the 19th century was James Barton Longacre. After Christian Gobrecht passed away, Longacre would become the fourth Chief Engraver of the US Mint and coin production. He was born on August 11, 1794 on a farm in Delaware County, Pennsylvania. His parents were Sarah and Peter Longacre and his mother died when James was at a young age. After his father got remarried, James could not tolerate his life at home any longer and left home at the age of 12 to find work in nearby Philadelphia.

Early in his career, he became an apprentice for James F. Watson, a bookseller in Philadelphia. Watson took the young boy in as part of his family, and found that Longacre's skill was in the design of portraits. In 1813, Watson allowed James to leave his apprenticeship in order to work on more artistic things, but the two were still close. Longacre then became an apprentice for George

Murray, a skilled banknote engraver, at an engraving firm Murray, Draper, Fairman & Co. in Philadelphia. Interestingly enough, this company actually evolved from a firm that was established by Robert Scot, who was the first Chief Engraver of the Philadelphia Mint.

It turns out that Christian Gobrecht, the third Chief Engraver also worked at Murray's firm in the past as well. James B. Longacre worked with Murray up until 1819, building a great reputation and then later set out on his own for some time and started his own business. He began engraving plates for bank notes and also for some book illustrations. He produced portraits of some of the founding fathers, including George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and John Hancock, which were placed in a book "Declaration of Independence" by John Binns. The work itself costed John \$9000, or around \$135,000 in today's money.



Longacre completed some other major works of his own, including plates that was used in S.F. Bradford's Encyclopedia, 1820. He also made an engraving of Andrew Jackson as a General, based on a portrait originally made by Thomas Sully. Another work was engravings used for biography illustrations of the founding fathers and signers of the Declaration of Independence, by Joseph and John Sanderson. These were published between 1820 and 1827 in nine volumes. The writing itself was criticized, but because of the talented illustrations, the books did sell strongly. James Herring and Longacre also published National Portrait Gallery of Distinguished Americans in 1834, a series of biographies about great American figures in military, politics and others. He had sketched US presidents Andrew Jackson and James Madison, and he actually met with many leaders who were impressed with his engraving work.

One of the men he portrayed was John C. Calhoun, a Senator from South Carolina. It was because of his influence that James Longacre would eventually be commissioned by President Tyler to be the fourth Chief Engraver for the US Mint in on September 16, 1844. This was after Christian Gobrecht, the current Chief Engraver of his time, passed away. During his first years, the Mint was largely controlled by Director Robert Patterson and Chief Coiner Franklin Peale. They did not get along well with Longacre.



Trenton Numismatic Club

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Even during the competition for the job appointment, Longacre did not write Patterson at all and Patterson strongly disliked Senator Calhoun, who sponsored Longacre to begin with. A major fight sparked when the US Congress wanted two new denominations: a gold dollar coin and double eagle coin to be minted - where both coins would be designed by Longacre. Patterson and Peale tried to get Longacre fired and it almost happened until Longacre pleaded his case with William M. Meredith, the US Treasury Secretary, which saved his job.

According to Q. David Bowers, a US coin collector and dealer, there was much intrigue, infighting and politics going on within the Mint and it was dominated by Franklin Peale. Peale would sometimes send employees of the mint to work at his private residence and he would also have strict control of dies and materials. It turns out that Director Patterson and Peale were very close and were caught skimming precious metal from the bullion deposits at the Mint. Longacre felt like the loner at the Mint. Eventually, Patterson and Peale left the US mint during the early 1850s.

The first major works that Longacre designed and engraved were the Liberty Head Gold Dollar and \$20 Gold Coronet Head Double Eagle coins. The first coins of these denominations were minted in 1849. There was some criticism of these designs

due to the high relief of the portrait on these coins. Minor changes were made and the double eagle lasted until 1907. The single gold dollar design only lasted until 1854 when it would be replaced by the Small Indian Princess Gold Dollar, which was also designed by Longacre. This coin would also have a short lifetime and would last from 1854 until 1856 when it would again be replaced by the Large Indian Princess Gold Dollar, also designed by Longacre and would be produced until 1889. It turns out that Longacre would be the only designer and engraver of the single dollar gold coins.

The only other US gold coin that would be designed by Longacre is the \$3 Gold Indian Princess Coin. This used the same Indian princess design as the smaller \$1 gold coins



In this world, nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes.

Meeting Schedule

The Trenton Numismatic Club meets on the fourth Monday of each month at the

HAMILTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
ONE JUSTICE SAMUEL A. ALITO JR. WAY
HAMILTON, NJ 08619-3809

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and would be shown on the 3 dollar coin. This was actually the only \$3 gold piece that would ever be minted, from 1854 up until 1889. Also in 1854, James oversaw the establishment and commissioning of the San Francisco Coin Mint, a major new US Branch Mint on the west coast.

One popular coin that James Longacre engraved was the Flying Eagle Cent, which would be the very first small cent ever minted after the large copper pennies were ended from production. The flying eagle penny was largely inspired by Gobrecht's flying eagle designs used earlier on the reverse of the Gobrecht Dollar coins. The Flying eagle cent only lasted from 1856-1858. He drew most of the new pattern designs himself.

It turns out that this eagle penny was pretty difficult for minting and striking and so Longacre made a new design that would be easier for striking. The new design would be known as the famous Indian Head Penny in 1859. It first started out with a copper-nickel composition of 88% copper and 12% nickel and then changed to a bronze composite of 95% copper, and 5% tin and zinc starting in 1864. Since the early Indian head penny had the same composition, thickness and mass as the eagle cent, it's possible that this may have been a reason for the metal composition changes

to make striking more easy to do. The later Indian head cents were noticeably thinner than the earlier ones. After all, these were the very first small cents minted. In addition, the inspiration for the Indian head penny probably came from the Indian princess design of James Longacre's gold dollar coins a few years earlier.

Another strange and not-so-common coin that was designed by Longacre, was the 2 Cent Piece. They weren't minted very long, only from 1864 up until 1873. It was the only American coin design like this and it held the same composition and exactly twice the mass of the Indian head penny. It was the only coin of its denomination.

That isn't the only strange and odd US coin that was designed. In fact, there are even US 3 cent pieces, and yes, the entire denomination started and ended with Longacre's designs. Although, there were two very different designs and compositions of three cent pieces. These include the Silver 3 Cent Piece, which were produced starting in 1851 and lasted until 1873 when it would be replaced by the Nickel 3 Cent Piece.

The silver three cent piece consisted of a 6 pointed star on the obverse and a Roman numeral

3 or III on the reverse enclosed in an elaborately designed C-shaped crescent. Three versions of these were created, the first one with no outlines to the six pointed star, followed by 3 outlines and then lastly 2 outlines. It would be one of the most interesting, original and "different" designs ever made by the US mint. When the coin was changed into a 75% copper and 25% nickel composite, it featured a lady liberty design on the obverse and the numeral III on the back surrounded by a wreath. The nickel three cent piece then lasted until 1889 when the denomination itself would no longer be continued.

Finally, Longacre would introduce the first five cent nickel coin in US history after the half dime became obsolete. The first US nickel design was known as the Shield Nickel. Again, this would be a very different and original design. Rather than having a liberty bust on the obverse or front of the coin, there was a large shield representing the US union. On the reverse or back of the coin would be the number 5 surrounded by rays and 13 stars. This coin was first produced in 1866 and lasted until 1883 and included some variations without the rays on the reverse. Again, this would be the first coin of its denomination, consisting of 75% copper and 25% nickel.

James Longacre had many critics

throughout his career, but he did produce some of the most excellent, well-known and likable coins in the numismatic and coin collecting world. One critic was Walter Breen, who blamed Longacre for many date-punching mistakes, errors and blundered dies. Although it turns out that Franklin Peale, the Chief Coiner, was likely responsible for this and who did not have a friendly relationship with Longacre to begin with.

Other notable people who worked with James included William Barber, Anthony C. Paquet, P.F. Cross and William H. Key, who were all local engravers that helped assist Longacre. Cross and Key owned a business for producing tokens, medals and store cards in Philadelphia during the late 1850s and 1860s. Longacre didn't just do coin designing for the US government, but he also helped design coins for the country of Chile with the assistance of Anthony Paquet in 1867. They helped redesign and modify Chilean coins, but they did not resemble any of the US coins though. Longacre also did side jobs and commission work outside of the mint as well, which included the design for some dies of California coiners in the private sector. Dubosq and Company is noted as one of these companies who minted pioneer gold coins during the California gold rush.

Longacre eventually passed away on January 1, 1869 on New Years Day while he was still in office for the US mint. His friend William Barber would then succeed him as the Chief Engraver. On January 4th, all of the officers, workers and clerks gathered to pay their respects to the late Longacre. Dr. Henry R. Linderman would deliver an address while William Barber would eulogize and William E. Dubois would present the resolutions. The next year on January 21st, 1870, many coins from the Longacre estate would be auctioned off by Thomas & Sons auctioneers.

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<http://www.usacoinbook.com/encyclopedia/coin-designers/james-b-longacre/>

