

Coin Chronicles

The Newsletter of the Trenton Numismatic Club

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Coin counterfeiters met with Death

Richard Giedroyc

Was counterfeiting coins ever a capital offense in the United States?

Benjamin Franklin used the slogan "to counterfeit is death" on Colonial paper money and he printed it for a reason. George Washington demanded David Farnsworth and John Blair, two British forgers during the Revolutionary War, be tortured to learn what they knew. Farnsworth and Blair were then hanged. On the other side of Atlantic Thomas Rogers was hanged, drawn and quartered in 1690 for clipping silver coins. His wife Anne Rogers was burned alive. Perhaps both the colonists and the British could have learned from Byzantine Emperor Justinian I (ruled A.D. 527-565) who employed rather than executed counterfeiter Alexander "the Bar-



An image of the fake 2005 South Africa gold quarter krugerrand in a fake NGC holder.

Why was counterfeiting considered to be a capital offense?

Counterfeiting currency has always been considered a threat to the state, as well as an affront to the royal prerogative in a kingdom. It was believed a harsh punishment should be given to anyone who had the skill of counterfeiting money for that reason. Who, in your opinion, was the most famous counterfeiter in the United States? In my opinion this dubious distinction would have to go to Emanuel Ninger (1845-1924), better remembered to history as "Jim the Penman." Ninger was a German immigrant who lived in first Hoboken, later in Westfield, and finally in Flagtown, all in New Jersey. Ninger didn't

print his bogus \$10, \$20, \$50 and \$100 bank notes. He drew each one by hand! The paper for each note was purchased from Crane & Company, the same company selling security printing paper to the government. The Secret Service caught up with Ninger in 1896 when the ink began to run on one of the notes he was trying to pass at a bar. The bar was wet.

Is it legal to collect counterfeit U.S. coins?

It is illegal to collect counterfeit coins or bank notes, including those notes attributed to "Jim the Penman." Having said this, the laws on ownership of counterfeit coins or bank notes are sufficiently vague and so seldom enforced that this becomes an open question. There are people who collect counterfeit U.S. or foreign coins and bank notes. Coins of several famous counterfeiters including Carl Wilhelm Becker (1772-1830) have been illustrated and catalogued for collectors who openly seek them. Likely the best non-legal advice is to acknowledge a coin is a counterfeit if you are buying or selling one in a private transaction.

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*A stitch, in time,
saves nine.*

-Benjamin Franklin

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COIN SHOW SCHEDULE

By Bill Liatys

August 2016

PARSIPPANY August 7th at Sunday 9 AM – 4 PM
Pal Bldg 33 Baldwin Road Parsnippany NJ

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

TREVOSE August 21st Sunday 10 AM – 4 PM
Trevose Fire House 4900 Street Road Trevose, PA

TRI-STATE COIN & STAMP SHOW August 28th Sunday 10 AM – 4 PM
Williamson's Restaurant 500 Blair Mill Road Horsham, PA

RED ROSE FALL COIN SHOW September 10 Saturday 9 AM – 3:30 PM
Farm & Home Center 1383 Arcadia Road Lancaster, PA

OCEAN COUNTY COIN CLUB October 15 Saturday 9:30 AM – 3 PM
Ocean Fire House 400 Arnold Avenue Pt. Pleasant Beach, NJ

LEHIGH VALLEY HERITAGE MUSEUM COIN EXPO
October 29, Saturday 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM
Lehigh County Historical Society 432 West Walnut Street Allentown, Pa

TRENTON NUMISMATIC FALL COIN SHOW
October 30 Sunday 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM
Ramada Inn Exit 7 NJ Turnpike 1083 Route 206 North Bordentown, NJ

WHITMAN COIN & COLLECTIBLES November 3 – November 6 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

United Confederate Veterans

-Joe Pargola

In January, I wrote about the Grand Army of the Republic. After Lincoln's death, the United States was in a turmoil of reuniting the Union and Confederacy into one country. Coins and currency were in short supply and the financial headwinds of unification put the promises of Lincoln, to care for the widows, families of the dead and the wounded and disabled soldiers in a lower priority. This was the birth of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR). In the South, there seemed to be even less commitment to the care of the confederate soldiers. So, The United Confederate Veterans, was formed in New Orleans, Louisiana on June 10, 1889 by veterans of the Confederate States Army and Navy. There had been numerous local veterans associations in the South, and many of these became part of the U.C.V. The organization grew rapidly throughout the 1890s culminating with 1,555 camps represented at the 1898 reunion. The next few years marked the zenith of U.C.V. membership, lasting until 1903 or 1904, when veterans were starting to die off and the organization went into a gradual decline. The U.C.V. felt it had to outline its purposes and structure in a written constitution, based on military lines. Members holding appropriate U.C.V. "ranks" officered and staffed echelons of command from General Headquarters at the top to local camps (companies) at the bottom. Their declared purpose was emphatically nonmilitary - to foster "social, literary, historical, and benevolent" ends. The

Articles

Please think about your interest and contribute an article or idea that may interest our club members.

national organization assembled annually in a general convention and social reunion, presided over by the Commander-in-Chief. These annual reunions served the U.C.V. as an aid in achieving its goals. Convention cities made elaborate preparations and tried to put on bigger events than the previous hosts. The gatherings continued to be held long after the membership peak had passed and despite fewer veterans surviving, they gradually grew in attendance, length and splendor. Elaborate medals and exonomia celebrating the date, place and nature of the Camps were struck and survive today as collectable history of these events. Numerous veterans brought family and friends along too, further swelling the crowds. Many Southerners considered the gatherings major social occasions. Perhaps thirty thousand veterans and another fifty thousand visitors attended each of the mid and late 1890 reunions, and the numbers increased. In 1911 an estimated crowd of 106,000 members and guests crammed into Little Rock, Arkansas—a city of less than one-half that size. Then the passing years began taking a telling toll and the reunions grew smaller. But still the meetings continued until finally in 1950 at the sixtieth reunion only one member could attend, 98-year-old Com-



mander-in-Chief James Moore of Selma, Alabama. In addition to national meetings, another prominent factor contributed to the growth and popularity of the U.C.V. This was a monthly magazine which became the official U.C.V. organ, The Confederate Veteran. Founded as an independent publishing venture in January 1893, by Sumner Archibald Cunningham, the U.C.V. adopted it the following year. Cunningham personally edited the magazine for twenty-one years and bequeathed almost his entire estate to insure its continuance. The magazine was of a very high quality and circulation was wide. Many veterans penned recollections or articles for publication in its pages. Readership always greatly exceeded circulation because numerous camps and soldiers' homes received one or two copies for their numerous occupants. An average of 6500 copies were printed per issue during the first year of publication, but Cunningham estimated that fifty thousand people read the twelfth issue.

Annual Decoration Days for particular cemeteries are held on a Sunday in late spring or early summer in some rural areas of the American South, notably in the mountain areas. In cases involving a family graveyard where remote ancestors as well as those who were deceased





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more recently are buried, this may take on the character of an extended family reunion to which some people travel hundreds of miles. People gather on the designated day and put flowers on graves and renew contacts with relatives and others. There often is a religious service and a picnic-like "dinner on the grounds," the traditional term for a potluck meal at a church. It is believed that this practice began before the American Civil War and thus may reflect the real origin of the "memorial day" idea. All emanate from the Celebrations of the remembrance of the Solders that



fought in the Revolutionary war in the beginnings of our country. The North and South competed for the establishment of this celebration, but all distilled into what we know as Memorial Day today.



I believe that it is a great tribute to the character and resilience of the United States that in the absence of Federal help, everyone took care of their own. Need was answered with reliance and did not fall to dependence. Perhaps a lesson learned that applies to the country today.

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.

Meeting Schedule

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

HAMILTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
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