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# The MCA Advisory

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*The Newsletter of Medal Collectors of America*

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## What's New On Our Website!

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE EVERY MONTH

[www.medalcollectors.org](http://www.medalcollectors.org)

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## Coming Events

May 23-25, 2006 Betts Medals II of John J.  
Ford, Jr.

October 17-19, 2006 Indian Peace Medals I  
of John J. Ford, Jr.

Stack's auction schedule is published on  
their website [www.stacks.com](http://www.stacks.com) since last  
minute changes to the Ford schedule have  
been known to occur unexpectedly.



## From the Editor

The Medal Collectors of America met on January 14<sup>th</sup> at the New York International Show. A fine turnout of 25 members discussed the Advisory (general approval, several volunteers for articles) followed by a more heated debate on the subject of a club medal. Trustee Scott Miller led the debate, with no hard conclusions (as expected) except 1) don't do a "cheapie" and 2) don't lose money.

The main body of the meeting focused on the material in Ford XIII and how a beginner might approach the broad challenge of collecting Betts medals. Several members suggested the Admiral Vernon medals with the caution that the richness of the Ford offering might serve to drive prices up. Actually, prices in this segment of the sale were below the LaRiviere level so perhaps a few new collectors managed to make a start.

Another segment suggested for beginners was the Louis XIV/Louis XV commemoratives. The actual prices at the sale were modest, as predicted, except for rare varieties where the competition got heated. Alan Stahl and others noted the need for more scholarships in this area. Hopefully, members who were successful bidders will give us letters to the editor or better yet, some articles on the subject.

Ye editor recommended the attraction of the "Davenport medals"—that large swatch of peace treaty medals not included in Betts. Prices in this category were indeed reasonable but, we note, a four-volume set of Davenport offered by Charlie Davis at the show remained unsold.

Our panel members were prescient in recommending that new collectors avoid the proclamations and the early silver's. Prices in both categories soared. The three Florida proclamations brought \$200,000, \$70,000 and \$200,000 respectively. A Betts 3 in silver fetched \$20,000; a Betts 12 in bronze fetched \$13,500 and so forth.

In short, Betts medals offer plenty of room for new collectors. A priced copy of Ford XIII would make an excellent beginning.

## Review of the Catalog

(by John W. Adams)

Overall, the cataloguing of Ford XIII and the catalogue itself comprise a masterful work. Collectors will refer to it often in the years ahead. No library will be complete without one.

There are a few (amazingly few) minor mistakes—e.g. lot 822 is a Betts 107, not Betts 105, the two Breton 516's are also Betts 391's and one of the "silver plated" Vernon's was actually German silver—The more substantial criticism we have is that the grading of lots was uncomfortably liberal. The English cataloguers of medals have set a standard of conservative grading that is at odds with commercial grading in the United States. Given that few medals have been or will be encapsulated, we would have preferred that Stacks' adopt the English standard, a decision with which John Ford would have enthusiastically agreed.

MCA will never resolve the endless controversies surrounding grading. Therefore, suffice to note the difference between the two sides of the Atlantic and move on. We should award kudos to Stacks' for separating the lots

into meaningful groupings. In this issue, members will comment on such groupings and, hopefully there will be enough interest income to have them become regular topics in the Advisory.

Our favorite group, because it was John Ford's favorite in his later years, is the "Davenport" medals. The name derives from a four volume set "European Treaties Bearing on the History of the United States," which is translated from the original Latin, French or whatever into English. This permits the collector to single out peace medals—e.g. the Peace of Breda in 1667 or the Peace of Ryswick in 1697—that have strong relevance to the Western Hemisphere. Inexplicably, Betts omitted these medals from his masterwork. Happily, most are well described in van Loon and/or Pax in Nummis and/or Medallie Illustrations. Ford succeeded only in dipping his toe into these waters such that the offering in Ford XIII should be viewed as representative rather than a reference on the subject in the years to come.

The facilities for lot viewing were ample and the service exemplary. A successful collector like John Ford can only hope that the disposition of his treasures will reflect his efforts in assembling them. A most fastidious judge, he would have been pleased with Ford XIII in all its aspects.

### **The medals of Admiral Vernon and John Law: The John J Ford Collection, Part XIII**

(Christopher Eimer)

Part XIII of the John Ford collection, sold by Stack's in New York on 16 January 2006, was eagerly awaited by

collectors of Betts material, this being the first sale from this eminent collection to contain medals relating to the Americas. The catalogue maintained the standard format of previous sales from the Ford collection and the material itself was catalogued by Michael Hodder. The catalogue began with 456 Lots of French colonial coins and tokens, with the balance of 414 Lots making up the Betts or Betts-related material, to include European peace and treaty medals and Spanish proclamations, as well as the medals of Admiral Vernon and John Law, on which this report will focus.

There can be few more familiar medallie images in the Betts series than those of Admiral Vernon, which largely embrace a basic obverse design of Admiral Vernon – full length or three-quarter length, with sword or with sword and staff, alone or a-deux, with Commodore Brown, and so on and so forth – coupled with a reverse showing a fleet of ships in a harbour. The medals of Admiral Vernon were largely the product of those working in allied metal trades in England and in Ireland, such as button makers or coffin makers, and were produced in very large numbers, such was the public acclamation of his conquests at Portobello and Carthegena between 1739 and 1741.

Common though the Vernon medals might be, what distinguished the fifty-seven medals in the Ford collection (Lots 523-580) was the range of types and the condition, the material having been amassed over a fifty-year period. John Ford had clearly kept meticulous notes of provenance, which Michael Hodder made full use of, in what is throughout excellent cataloguing. We

thus learn of provenances which include Baldwin's, F.C.C. Boyd, Messrs Florange, Leonard Forrer, Richard Margolis, New Netherlands and Jacques Schulman, in places as diverse as London, New York and Paris. The earliest of these recorded provenances is that of Eisenberg in 1956 and the most recent from Lucien LaRiviere, whose collection was auctioned in Baltimore by Bowers and Merena Galleries in March 2001.

With prices at previous Ford sales breaking many records, even the most die-hard optimist will have realized that Ford XIII was not going to be bargain-basement time, and so it largely proved. The vast majority of Vernon medals in the Ford collection were struck in a brass or pinchbeck metal and prices for these in very fine or so in the main ranged between \$200-500. However, the moment that there was a glimmer of anything particularly attractive or choice, then the thousand-dollar level was approached and, occasionally, breached. And with anything particularly special, on from there. Thus it was that the first of the three full silver Vernons (Lot 530) fetched \$3750; the two others, both of similar type, went for \$4500 (Lot 538) and \$2200 (Lot 539), the most expensive of these being particularly attractive. Immediately following on from this was the only oval example in the group (Lot 540). Amongst the most enigmatic of the Vernon medals, this represents an extremely rare type, which will have once had a corkscrew attached. The writer knows of the existence in a private collection of only once such complete example, which survives with its original iron capsule, in which the corkscrew snugly fits. But even as it stands, the oval medal in Ford was sufficiently

attractive to take the sum of \$1900, which is certainly not on the expensive side.

Aside from the silver Vernons are those that were silver-plated and here Ford offered two attractive examples: Lot 547 was the standard size, and with its superb surfaces fetched \$3250; while a charming small-size medal, a shade under 28 mm., reached \$2200 (Lot 555). But for sheer condition and visual impact, there was nothing to touch the gilt brass or pinchbeck medal commemorating Portobello and Fort Chagre, a view of which could be seen behind the standing figure of Vernon, a plan of the harbour of Porto Bello on the other side (Lot 560). Much competition saw this medal climb from its opening bid of \$1000 to finish at \$5500, for what may represent a record price for a Vernon medal – at least for the moment.

John Ford will have begun his quest for Vernons - as with other Betts material - in the early fifties, and will have been buying from sources for some of whom, no doubt, the sale in New York of the Charles P Senter collection of coins and medals barely twenty years earlier will still have been a vivid memory. Sold on 27 October 1933 by Anderson Galleries on Fifty-Seventh Street, but four blocks east from where the Ford sale took place, Senter's collection included a total of 285 Vernons, described as being 'nearly all in very fine condition', and with 'four or five medals in silver'. The mind boggles at what was in this collection, as does the fact that it was sold as one group, reaching the price of \$140 (Lot 9). How times have changed.

It was Churchill who in the late forties referred to Russia and its people as an enigma wrapped up in a mystery.

Those searching for a medallion equivalent should look no further than the medals of John Law, for to do so is to look in vain. Michael Hodder's admirable introduction to the series and the thirty-seven medals in the Ford collection defines the background to this curious and fascinating group, and praise is in order for the way the material had been described and grouped (Lots 581-681).

While the medals of John Law immediately followed those of Vernon in the Ford catalogue, the two series could hardly be more different: where the medals of Vernon offer simplicity of style and iconography, those of Law are elaborate, convoluted and riddled with various meanings; and while huge numbers of Vernon medals were struck, those of Law are all scarce, and in many cases rare. It is therefore remarkable that Ford was able to put together a total of thirty-seven of these medals. The collection of Charles Senter, referred to earlier, contained just four John Law pieces, two in tin and two in silver, grouped together (Lot 7). Starting in the late 1960s, Lucien LaRiviere was able to gather just ten of these medals when his afore-mentioned collection was sold (Lots 2036-2045).

Provenances recorded for the John Law medals in the Ford collection included those of Emil Bourgey, Henry Christensen, Glendining's, Busso Peus, Spink and Wayte Raymond in a net that, like those for Vernon, he had cast far and wide. Prices for this material were always going to be difficult to predict. As an example, the first to open this section, a silver 'Louisiana is both a Bank and Mint' medal started at \$1000 and ended up at \$7000 (Lot 581), while the same medal but in tin fetching \$5500 (Lot

582). A very nice example of the silver 'Money is the Watchword / Easy Come Easy Go' made \$2800, having opened at \$600 (Lot 594).

The half-length facing portrait of Law featured on both the rare 'Kwia Muntus' and the 'Year of Want' medals, which fetched \$4500 and \$5000 respectively (Lots 597 and 598). Another pair of very rare medals, these featuring a squatting figure simultaneously smoking and defecating money were in similar territory at \$5500 and \$4500 (Lots 603 and 604). Ranging from purely documentary narrative to the most dramatic iconography, the Law series is full of twists and turns. And here, a most interesting piece - with a ploughman at his task - commemorates John Law's flight from Paris in 1720, for which the sum of \$5000 was achieved.

Benjamin Betts's catalogue of the Law material, published in the early 1900s, lists some thirty-eight medals and succeeds in making some sense out of iconographic chaos, but there is much that remains to be done. We must therefore be thankful for and look forward to the efforts of John Adams, who is presently working on a monograph of this tortuous series. As and when the work is published, some greater sense of order will prevail in this fascinating but convoluted series, and no doubt serve to open up the market further, beyond the Betts collector, to include those interested in the history of banking, finance and 'monetary sleight-of-hand'.

## Medals Should Have Their Own Terms of Condition COPYRIGHT ©

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(by D. Wayne Johnson)

### Coin terms of condition

frequently do not exactly apply to medals. Since medals do not circulate like coins, is it proper to say a medal is “uncirculated”? This term is so ingrained in our psyche from coins that it was only natural it was carried over into the medallic world.

How about “bag marks”? The only bags containing medals I have seen are felt or velvet whose purpose was to protect the medal from any such marking.

Coins have so many terms of condition. A century ago numismatists used only four terms – uncirculated, fine, good, fair. These evolved into eight of most frequent used – Unc, AU, EF, VF, F, VG, G, fair. Then numismatists began adding modifiers and adjectives. And the squabbles began.

Then came Sheldon and his 1 to 70 scale, and numismatists have been arguing about coin condition terms even more. Sheldon tried to make a scientific scale for coin condition, but accomplished the exact opposite (law of unintended consequences!).

Can we really solve the problem of accurately describing a condition? I don't think so for a number of reasons, particularly not for medals.

I think the height of foolishness is to apply Sheldon numbers to medals. We do not need 70 degrees of wear for medals!

Numismatists have been forcing the terms of coin conditions on to medals for over a century. But shouldn't medals

have their own terminology? Their time has come!

I am going out on a limb and propose all new terms for medal conditions. Like the numismatists of a century ago I am going to start with only four conditions and four new terms.

So here are my proposed new medal condition terms:

What was formerly uncirculated (Unc) would now be called: **Pristine.**

For almost or about uncirculated (AU) or extremely or extra fine (EF or XF) would be combined to be termed: **Mellow.**

The next lower condition would be the equivalent of very fine (VF), fine (F) and very good (VG); I propose this be called: **Haggard.**

For medals good (G) or fair, let's just call them: **Eroded.**

I anticipate your immediate reaction. Silence. These terms will take some getting used to. Perhaps a long time to become accepted.

Each of these terms, however, were chosen with extreme care. Their meaning is exactly what is meant for the condition being described. Their connotation and denotation are perfect.

Perhaps if we discussed each of these terms their meaning would become more satisfying for you.

**Pristine.** Unblemished, perfect, fresh, new, could not be better; no holes, no dents, no scratches. As the piece came from the die or mold.

**Mellow.** Pleasant appearance and pleasing quality. May have a few imperfections, perhaps an edge dent or two, but these are not severe. A satisfactory, collectible condition.

**Haggard.** Some attrition of surface conditions. A little longer in the tooth. Shows its age and a little more damage. A dent or two or a scratch or two. You would want to replace this if a better specimen came along, but for now it can stay in your collection.

**Eroded.** Worn away by environmental conditions. Here the damage is quite perceptible. Not a desirable specimen. Perhaps it is in the collection only because of its rarity.

The terms mean exactly what is meant for each of the conditions. That's the criteria for an excellent choice of the word. It is my hope these terms are destined to become in every medal collector's vocabulary.

And medal catalogers can't wait to describe a medal in modern light bronze patina – like what the U.S. Mint created in the 20th century. A condition that's mellow, with a patina that is yellow bronze. That catalog entry would read “**mellow yellow!**”

## HALL OF FAME II

(by David T. Alexander, p\_a\_alexander@hotmail.com)



### Medals of Agop Agopoff

Born in Bulgaria, Agopoff began his art education in Europe, continuing at Columbia University and the National Academy of Fine Arts after coming to the U.S. in 1929. His portrait sculptures portray statesmen, musicians, scientists, writers and royalty in America and the Old World.

His subjects ranged from Romanian Prime Minister Alexandru Averescu and Czech composer Antonin

Dvorak to Texas Governor Bell, Persian poet Firdausi and Princess Grace of Monaco. Receiving wide acclaim were his John F. Kennedy Memorials at Hyannis Port and Barnstable, Massachusetts. His portraits of FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover and Kennedy brought him two Lindsey Morris Awards from the National Sculpture Society.

He also received the Gold Medal of Honor and Huntington Awards of the Hudson Valley Art Association and the Gold Medal of Allied Artists of America. He subsequently became the first artist born abroad to be honored with the American Numismatic Society's Sanford J. Saltus Award.

Agopoff contributed two medals for the Hall of Fame series in 1967 and 1970. In the development of their portraiture and creation of reverse designs, these medals dramatize the wider imaginative and artistic opportunities the medals offered, compared to the severely limited parameters of the busts in the Hall of Fame itself.

**William Cullen Bryant Medal, 1967.** Elected 1910. After bust by Herbert Adams, donated by the *New York Evening Post*, unveiled in 1929 by Bryant's grandson Harold Godwin.

**Obv** Luxuriantly bearded, aged bust r. of the New England-born poet and journalist, displaying what Agopoff called “patriarchal personality, grave and yet not stern.”

**Rev** Young woman seated with open book, gazing at radiant sun over highlands and river, very probably the

Hudson River and Palisades, *How glorious/ through his depths of light/ rolls the majestic sun*, from Bryant's poem "The Arctic Lover." HOF legend.

William Cullen Bryant was born in Massachusetts in 1794, and died in New York City in 1878. His parents' straitened circumstances prevented his attendance at Yale, but he studied and practiced law in his native state before setting out on a 50-year stint in magazine and newspaper journalism in New York City where he became co-owner of the influential *New York Evening Post*.

A prodigy of poetry, he wrote the profound "Thanatopsis" at age 17. Discovered and published years later, the poem moved one reviewer to express doubt that "anyone this side of the Atlantic is capable of writing such verse." The following years saw publication of such acclaimed classics as "To a Waterfowl, Green River, The Ages, The Yellow Violet." Near the end of his life Bryant penned "The Flood of Years," and the fittingly titled poem, "A Lifetime."

Agopoff's thoughtful, aged bust is in its way more moving than Adams' facing portrait, and the presence of a reverse provides an ideal canvas upon which to sculpt a concise bas-relief vignette of a long and productive life.

**PATINA AND EDGE  
MARKING OBSERVED:**

Large Bronze, Tan-gold, Edge **B**,  
Silver, Edge **I**.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

**Edwin Thomas Booth Medal, 1970.** Elected 1925. After bust by Edmond T. Quinn, gift of The Players, unveiled 1926 by Booth's grandson Edwin Booth Grossman.

**Obv** Facing bust of famed Shakespearean actor, born in Maryland in 1833, world-class tragedian.

**Rev** Half-length figure of Booth in his signature performance of the role of Hamlet, **TO BE OR NOT TO BE** in field. HOF legend.

Edwin Booth was born in Maryland in 1833, son of actor Junius Booth, brother of Lincoln's assassin John Wilkes Booth. He made his stage debut in Boston in 1849 in Richard III and two years later toured the world with his father's Shakespearean company. His success with more than 100 performances as Hamlet in Philadelphia in 1864-65 was phenomenal, but his career was derailed by his brother's assassination of President Abraham Lincoln.

His career resurged again and again, interrupted as often by such tragedies as burning of the Winter Garden and the closing of the Booth Theater in the Panic of 1873. After a great final success with famed Polish actress Helena Modjeska, in 1889-90, Booth retired to live in the Players Club, the residence he had donated to the group. He died in 1893.

Medium relief joins dramatic portraiture and imaginative reverses on both of Agopoff's contributions to this series.

**PATINA AND EDGE MARKINGS  
OBSERVED:**

Large Bronze, Tan-gold, Edge **B.**



**Medal of Albert d'Andrea**

Albert d'Andrea was educated in New York City schools, receiving art instruction at the National Academy of Design, Pratt Institute, the University of Rome and the College of the City of New York. He designed his first medal in 1918 and his bas relief work is to be seen in the National Portrait Gallery, Washington, D.C.; Franklin D. Roosevelt Library at Hyde Park, N.Y.; Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris, Jewish Museum, N.Y.; Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Rome.

His portrait medals subjects include Dr. Jonas Salk, Bernard M. Baruch and Thomas A. Edison. After 1948, he served CCNY as Chairman of its Art Department and was Director of Planning and Design. This was his only medal for HOF, characterized by very low relief and a smoothly distinctive style.

**Grover Cleveland Medal, 1966.**

Elected 1935. After bust by Rudolph Evans, unveiled 1937 by the President's youthful grandson, Master Thomas Grover Cleveland.

**Obv** Large civil bust r. the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 24 President, remembered as a vigorous political reformer and first Democrat elected President since the Civil War.

**Rev** Presidential Seal at center of a view of the Statue of Liberty, New York harbor and Manhattan in the distance. HOF legend curves below.

*Notably low relief moderates defeats any possible drama that this design may have offered.*

Present-day Americans may have forgotten the high esteem in which Grover Cleveland was held in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, reflected in the fact that he was one of a mere handful of Presidents elected to the Hall of Fame. Born in Caldwell, N.J. in March 1837, young Cleveland found that his family's limited means made formal law education impossible. He obtained a clerkship and was recognized by membership in the Bar by his own efforts.

He entered politics in New York State during an era of widespread corruption, becoming Assistant District Attorney of Erie County, N.Y. in 1863, Mayor of Buffalo in 1881 and Governor of New York in 1882. He was elected President as a reformer, helped by the heedlessness of Republican contender James G. Blaine, who let pass a prominent New York City clergyman's assault on the Democrats as the party of "Rum, Romanism and Rebellion."

As President, Cleveland promoted a non-partisan Civil Service under the motto often seen on contemporary political medalets, "a public office is as public trust." He never hesitated to take an unpopular stance, opposing annexation of Hawaii, advocating a lower tariff and ending the Federal Silver subsidy of the Sherman Silver Purchase Act

His marriage in the White House to Frances Folsom and the birth of "Baby Ruth" were attention-getters as was his re-election in 1892 after defeat by Benjamin Harrison in the 1888 campaign. His Administration was complicated by the Panic of 1893, by labor troubles and the march of Jacob Coxey's "army" of unemployed. A ANS Cleveland Plaque was struck in later years by the American Numismatic Society, but a proposed Cleveland Birth Centennial Half Dollar was defeated in 1937.

**PATINA AND EDGE MARKINGS OBSERVED:**

Large Bronze yellow-gold patina, Edge **B**; Silver, Edge **I**.



**Medals of Abram Belskie**

Abram Belskie was born in England in 1907, came to the U.S. in 1929 and achieved citizenship in 1939. He studied art in the Glasgow (Scotland) School of Art in 1923-1927; additional study followed in London, Paris and Rome, 1927-1929. He studied in the U.S. under John Gregory and Malvina Hoffman. He received the Lindsey Morris Prize of the National Sculpture Society in 1951 and the ANS J. Sanford Saltus Award in 1959

Belskie was the pre-eminent sculptor of medical subjects for many years, beginning with his contributions to the Hall of Man at the 1939 New York World's Fair, the American Museum of

Natural History, New York Medical College, Academy of Medicine, New York Medical College and American Heart Association.

In later life he contributed five medals to the series of the Hall of Fame for Great Americans and sculpted an entire series on Great Men in Medicine for the Presidential Art Medal Co. He researched application of sculpture to medicine through three-dimensional presentation and received recognition of the New York Medical College for his efforts in that area.

**Walter Reed Medal, 1963.**

Elected 1945. After bust by Cecil Howard, unveiled May 1948.

**Obv** Uniformed bust ¾ l. of famed U.S. Army surgeon and yellow fever researcher.

**Rev** Mosquito *Aedes aegypti* or *Stegomyia fasciata*, insect vector of yellow fever on micro-organism. HOF legend.

Walter Reed was born in Gloucester County, Va. In 1851, dying in Washington, D.C. in 1902. He received Medical degrees from the University of Virginia Medical School in 1868, Bellevue Medical College in New York City in 1869. He researched tropical diseases under Dr. William Welch at The Johns Hopkins University and chaired a committee in 1898 studying the transmission of typhoid fever in army camps in the Spanish-American War.

Work with a committee in Cuba including James Carroll, Jesse Lazear and Aristides Agramonte, Reed demonstrated by controlled experiments

on human beings that yellow fever was transmitted by mosquitoes. Dr. Lazear died in the course of this experiment, which was built in part on the earlier work of Cuban Dr. Carlos Finlay. He continued research at the Army Medical School and later at New York's Columbia University.

**PATINA AND EDGE MARKINGS OBSERVED:**

Large Bronze, Tan-gold, Edge **B**, Silver. Edge **I**.

**Phillips Brooks Medal, 1965.**

Elected 1910. After bust Daniel Chester French, unveiled in 1924 by Miss Josephine Brooks, the Bishop's niece.

**Obv** Episcopal preacher and theologian's robed bust l., vital dates r., HOF legend

**Rev** Creation of the universe from Genesis, Hebrew inscription  
BEREISHAH at r.

Brooks was born in Boston in 1835 and died there in 1893. Attending Philips Andover Academy, Harvard University and the Theological seminary of Alexandria, Va. He was serving as rector of Holy Trinity in Philadelphia when he preached the sermon. "Character, Life and Death of Mr. Lincoln" while the assassinated President lay in state at Independence Hall. His later career saw him Rector of Trinity Church in Boston. During his English travels of 1880 he became the first American invited to preach before the Queen in the Chapel

Royal at Windsor. He died 15 months after his election as Bishop.

A man of music as well as word, he composed the Christmas hymn "O Little Town of Bethlehem" and is memorialized by a Bronze statue in Boston and a stained glass window at Saint Margaret's, London, the parish church of Westminster Abbey.

**PATINA AND EDGE MARKINGS OBSERVED:**

Tan-gold, Edge **B**, Silver, Edge **I**.

**William C. Gorgas Medal, 1969.**

Elected 1950. After bust by Bryant Baker, unveiled 1951 by Mrs. William D. Wrightson, daughter of Dr. Gorgas.

**Obv** Uniformed bust  $\frac{3}{4}$  l., vital dates l., mosquito poised at r.

**Rev** PANAMA, canal workers with pick, shovel, HOF identification legend.

Born in Alabama in 1854, William Crawford Gorgas was the son of Gen. Joseph Gorgas, a U.S. Army ordnance officer who joined the Confederate Army in the Civil War and was later President of the new University of the South in Suwanee, Tenn.

His son received medical degrees in Tennessee and at Bellevue College of Medicine in New York City in 1869 before joining the Army Medical Service. Both he and his bride were stricken with yellow fever at Fort Brown, Texas. Recovered and now immune to this tropical scourge, they were sent to Pensacola, Fla. and on to Havana, Cuba,

where Gorgas launched serious study of tropical diseases. He was skeptical at first over the assertion of Cuba's Dr. Carlos Finlay that mosquitoes carried yellow fever, but was convinced by his fellow Army researcher Dr. Walter Reed.

After much costly delay caused by administrative wrangling, Gorgas was given plenary powers by President Theodore Roosevelt to eradicate mosquitoes in the Panama Canal area and did so vigorously, assuring the canal's completion. He went on to advise and direct the elimination of mosquitoes and insect-borne diseases throughout the world, later as head of the Rockefeller Foundation's International Health Commission. He served as President of the American Medical Association and Surgeon General of the U.S. before his death in London in 1920.

#### **PATINA AND EDGE MARKINGS OBSERVED:**

Large Bronze tan-gold, Edge **B**.

#### **William Thomas Green Morton Medal, 1974.**

Elected 1920. After bust by Helen Farnsworth Mears, unveiled in 1924 by Bowditch Morton, nephew of honoree.

**Obv** Bust  $\frac{3}{4}$  l. in costume of the 1840's HOF legend above, caduceus, alembic, rays at l. **WILLIAM/ THOMAS/ GREEN/ MORTON, 1819-1868** below,

**Rev** Nude male with streaming stylized gas simulating anesthetic, **R. O. R'** at upper l.

Born in Charlton, Mass, Morton studied at the College of Dental Surgery in Baltimore and practiced at Farmington, Conn. before entering Harvard to complete his education. He first used ether drops in 1844 as a local anesthetic in dental surgery, removing an ulcerated tooth after applying sulfuric ether in September 1846. He later used this technique to expedite another surgeon's removal of a neck tumor from an anesthetized patient at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston.

Morton called his anesthetic Letheon and tried without success to secure a patent after stipulating that his discovery be always available without charge in charity hospitals. Like many inventors who failed to guard their interests, he became embittered and engaged in endless controversy over his discovery. He and Professor Charles T. Jackson were awarded 5,000 Francs by the French government, but Morton rejected the prize, insisting that the discovery was his alone. Bills in Congress to award him \$100,000 for his pioneering work failed thanks to the ongoing issue of exclusivity.

HOF collectors will find the Morton Medal one of the most difficult to locate. Before the J & J remainder purchase, a society of dental anesthetics apparently bought up virtually all unsold medals that were on hand.

#### **PATINA AND EDGE MARKINGS OBSERVED:**

Silver, Edge **I**.  
**George Peabody Medal, 1974.**  
Elected 1900. After bust by Hans Schuler, unveiled 1912 by Dr. Murray

Peabody Bush, grandnephew of George Peabody.

Born in South Danvers, Mass. In 1795, George Peabody was apprenticed to a grocer at age 11; by 19 he was a partner in a wholesale dry goods warehouse in Baltimore. While traveling in Europe in 1835, he negotiated an \$8 million loan to relieve the financially distressed State of Maryland. His personal success and generosity buttressed the shaken credit of the U.S. abroad during the Hard Times era.

When the great Crystal Palace exhibition was being planned in London, Peabody provided \$15,000 to assure a display of American goods and inventions after a parsimonious Congress refused to fund a U.S. exhibit. He contributed \$10,000 to the search for lost Arctic explorer Sir John Franklin. He endowed the Peabody Institute in Baltimore; the Peabody Institute at Peabody, Mass.; the Peabody Museum of Natural History at Yale; the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology at Harvard; the Peabody Academy of Science at Salem, Mass.; and the Peabody Education Fund to promote education in the South. Upon his death in November 1869, he was accorded a public funeral at Westminster Abbey.

**Obv** Facing bust flanked by HOF inscription, **GEORGE • PEABODY, FINANCIER • PHILANTHROPIST.**

**Rev** Wing-footed and helmeted Hermes (Mercury) on Pegasus, 13 stars represent the U.S., large star of Hope, **ENLIGHTENMENT • SCIENCE/ HUMANITIES** at upper l.

## **PATINA AND EDGE MARKINGS OBSERVED:**

Large Bronze, bright golden patina, Edge **B.**

*Lifelike portraiture in medium relief, bold detail and a vigorous sense of life and feeling of motion highlight all of Belskie's medals for the HOF series.*



## **Medals of Adolph Block**

Adolph Block was born in New York City in 1906 and studied at the Beaux Arts Institute, Fontainebleau School and worked closely with sculptor Hermon MacNeil. While yet a student he received a Tiffany Foundation Fellowship, Beaux Arts Architects Silver Medal, Fontainebleau Fellowship and Beaux Arts Paris Prize. As a working sculptor he created 8-foot high statues for the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., for which he received the Hering Prize; as well as an array of award medals for leading scientific societies and universities.

His sculptures, particularly those on historic themes, were placed at public buildings as well as in business and private collections in the U.S. and Europe. He created the 63<sup>rd</sup> issue of the Society of Medalists.

Among the leading art organizations honoring him and which he served as an officer were the National Sculpture Society, Allied Artists of America, Hudson Valley Art Association, Fine Arts Federation of New York, the New York Architectural League and National Academy of Design. He served

as Editor of the *National Sculpture Review*.

### **Washington Irving Medal, 1968.**

Elected 1900. After bust by Edward McCartan, Unveiled 1927 by Alexander Duer Irving, great-great nephew of the honoree.

Washington Irving was one of the first American writers to achieve an international reputation. Born in New York City in 1783, he became closely identified with the Hudson River community of Tarrytown and its environs. Falling ill during study of Law, he recovered during a two-year European tour. After a brief of practice of Law and devotion to politics, he was devastated by the death of his fiancée and immersed himself in writing.

He enjoyed instant success and fame from his *Diedrich Knickerbocker's History of New York*, a lively burlesque of the State's Dutch and English colonists. He introduced Rip Van Winkle and the Legend of Sleepy Hollow in his next European sojourn in his Sketchbook of Geoffrey Crayon. After a long visit to Spain he wrote his highly successful, if somewhat fictionalized biography of Christopher Columbus.

His life in Tarrytown was interrupted by service as American Ambassador to Spain, and on his return to the U.S. he began a biography of George Washington that was never completed. He died at his desk in Tarrytown on Nov. 28, 1859.

**Obv** Bust  $\frac{3}{4}$  l. in 1840's costume after a Daguerreotype of Irving's later life.

**Rev** Busts of Rip Van Winkle, the Headless Horseman, English and Dutch settler surround quill pen and laurel.

### **PATINA AND EDGE MARKINGS OBSERVED:**

Large Bronze tan-gold, Edge **B**, Silver. Edge **I**.

### **Simon Newcomb Medal, 1970.**

Elected 1935. After bust by Frederick MacMonnies, unveiled 1936 by Mrs. Emily Newcomb Wilson, daughter...

Simon Newcomb, America's greatest 19<sup>th</sup> century astronomer, was born in Wallace, Nova Scotia, in 1835, son of an itinerant teacher. Without funds for formal education, the boy was almost entirely self taught, first reading and mastering all the books available to him by the age of seven. After his father relocated in Washington, D.C., young Newcomb camped out in the capital's libraries, systematically reading all technical material at hand, especially in mathematics and astronomy.

He was hired by the *American Nautical Almanac* in Cambridge, Mass., enrolled in the Lawrence Scientific School at Harvard and received a degree. He then joined the U.S. Navy and was stationed at the Naval Observatory in the capital. He devoted 10 years to study to the determination of the positions of celestial objects, publishing what became known as "Newcomb's Constants" which are still in use. His worldwide Standard of Astronomical Constants was adopted by the scientific community in 1901.

Newcomb retired from the Navy as Rear Admiral in 1887. He remained amazingly active, teaching at The Johns

Hopkins University, founding the American Astronomical Society, editing the American Journal of Mathematics. He was made a member of innumerable learned societies abroad. A fitting statistic is his bibliography of published works, numbering 541 titles.

**Obv** Bearded bust facing flanked by vital dates, constellation dipping in background, **SIMON • NEWCOMB, • ASTRONOMER •**.

**Rev** Putto holding, riding an eagle speeding toward Earth, symbolizing the astronomer's role in bringing knowledge of the stars to humanity, background spangled with stars and planets. **HOF** inscription in exergue.

#### **PATINA AND EDGE MARKINGS OBSERVED:**

Large Bronze tan-gold, Edge **B**.

### **Letters to the Editor**

Hello John,

We haven't personally met but I have been an MCA member for over a year. I just have a quick question for you.

I recently discovered a new Goetz medal that was made for a 1907 German Shooting Festival in Frankenthal. Without going into much detail now, I have secured other positive opinions regarding authenticity from people knowledgeable of Goetz material.

I would like to write a paragraph or two and place it, along with the images, in an MCA publication in order to secure the discovery in my name. My

question to you is, What must I do to get something published with MCA? Are there guidelines for submission? If you could enlighten me into the needed process I would appreciate it greatly.

I'm not sure if you would recall that I am the new owner of the Kienast Copyrights for KG Vol I & II. I eventually intend to write another book with new information regarding unrecorded material, rarity of all medals and patterns, and pattern varieties, to name a few topics. I am currently on a long vacation and I am now working towards converting my Goetz collection web gallery to a full-fledged web site. I want to include this newly discovered medal on the site but want some security about the information by 'publishing' it first. Is MCA a viable option to do this in?

Please let me know at your earliest convenience and thank you in advance for any assistance you may be able to provide.

Henry "Scott" Goodman



Needless to say, we encouraged any and all contributions from Mr. Goodman on the subject of Goetz.—ed.