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# The MCA Advisor

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*The Newsletter of Medal Collectors of America*

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## Our Calendar

1. 8/18-8/22/2004 – ANA Convention in Pittsburgh. Our meeting date is Thursday, August 19, 2004 at 3:00 p.m.

## From the Editor

This issue features outstanding articles by Bob Julian and Don Scarinci. The August issue will contain summaries of COAC 2004 presentations by David Menchell and Dick Johnson. Our cup runneth over.

However, there is more—much more. George Kolbe's sale of important volumes from the library of John Ford unlocks much knowledge that cries out to be shared. Our piece on Malcolm Storer's copy of Betts (see next page) is in this vein; but it is not even the tip of the iceberg. Bid books, manuscripts, correspondence and sundry annotated material contain a cornucopia of knowledge about medals. We will pressure the new owners of these treasures to share them with us. We are indeed in the Golden Age of medal collecting. (John W. Adams)

## Lot 180

Lot 180 in the Ford Library Sale, Part I, was a heavily annotated copy of Betts. The time period involved (the 1920's) and the extensive holdings of Admiral Vernon medals

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make it logical to infer that the book belonged to Malcolm Storer. Whoever the owner, he/she was a collector of considerable accomplishment, as we will attempt to portray in the article that follows.

The annotations in the book include a check mark for items in the collection, date of purchase, price paid in code, metal in which struck and condition. A number of the Admiral Vernon entries also list varieties not in Betts with small differences against the Betts number to which it is most similar. Malcolm Storer authored a monograph on Vernon medals before splitting his ample collection between the Massachusetts Historical Society and the U.S. Naval Academy. It is the focus on Vernon's that most clearly identifies the previous owner of Lot 180.

Storer's collection was assembled between 1921 and 1930. Plotting the purchases, there were 14 dates when three or more pieces were acquired. None of these dates coincide with an auction sale in this country or in Britain. Indeed, the bid book of the 1925 WWC Wilson Sale—one of the best medal sales of all time—contains no reference to Storer whatsoever. Contrariwise, in the 1920's and 1930's, many active collectors bought by private treaty, a mode of commerce favored by Wayte Raymond and B.G. Johnson. There are clues suggesting that Storer patronized both of these numismatic giants. Traces of Raymond can be detected in a number of pieces described as "ex Ellsworth, 1928;" (WR had bought the Ellsworth collection in 1923). In turn, Johnson is probably the "J" referred to as a frequent source and also as the party who offered an example of B-75 (the 1693 Louis XIV family medal) in gold, an offer that was apparently declined. Be it noted that a specimen in gold was given to the Museum of Fine Arts ten or so years later; this example was stolen in 1979 and never recovered.

It must be remembered that, in the 1920's, there was not a regular flow of information on historical medals. The collector was forced to rely on a few knowledgeable dealers, such as Wayte Raymond, and dealers tended to husband their knowledge so as to retain an edge. Under B-400 (the Kittanning medal), Storer lists ownership of examples in pewter and bronze without realizing, apparently, that originals were struck only in silver. Other instances of such naiveté could be cited, with the result that one needs to approach Storer's inventory with some degree of caution.

For example, Storer checks all twelve entries in the Comitia Americana series, including Wayne, Stewart and Henry Lee (the latter not known to exist as an original, the former R7/R8's). If these checks were all for original specimens, Storer would have been the first (and only) collector to have assembled a complete set. We regard this accomplishment as unlikely. Likewise, some caution needs to be exercised before accepting such super rarities as B-34 (Maryland settled), B-170 (Oglethorpe) and B-570 (Virginia Happy While United).

It is not known how Storer distributed the bulk of his collection, but it may be possible to pick up the trail and, from the trail learn more about the man's ability to distinguish good pieces from less-than-good pieces. There is no reason to doubt the authenticity of such rare-but-collectibles as an Albermarle (B66), four John Law's, Charlestown Social Club (B-508), a mint state William and Mary (B-528), a bronze Germantown (B-556) in a case and a Felicitas Britannia (B-614).

Returning to Admiral Vernon's, Storer assembled 131 of the 166 pieces listed in Betts (including several in silver) as well as 20 unlisted varieties. The vast majority of these

were purchased on 11/12/29 and 12/15/29 (of which some number--presumably duplicates—were returned).

The last purchases recorded were on 5/26/30. Several of these came from the Fernand Davis Collection, which had been auctioned on 3/11/30. The disparity in dates tends to confirm Storer's modus operandi of relying on key dealers rather than public auctions. One can only speculate on why his purchases ceased but, between the facts that he retired in 1925 and the stock market crashed in 1929, it seems likely that personal economics played a role. (John Adams)

## **Medals in Madrid, Spain**

Spain is the home of bullfights, paella, guitars and the visionary king and queen who commissioned Christopher Columbus to sail across the Atlantic Ocean. Spain is also the birthplace of a rich artistic heritage and boasts such great artists as Velázquez, Murillo, El Greco, Goya and Dali. The Prado is rich with examples of their art.

Spain is home to a rich and varied numismatic tradition and, notwithstanding the lack of recognition that they receive some wonderful contemporary medallic artists. Names like Fernando Jesus, Ferreiro Badia, Paris Matia, Ana Maria Gallinal and others carry on the artistic heritage that produced some of the most widely circulated specie in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century Americas.

As with advancement in other areas, the centuries of catholic conservatism and the decades of Franco's dictatorship in this century have hampered the development of the art of the medal in Spain. Like the United States, there is no grand tradition of medallic art in Spain. So, as one might expect, Madrid is not the place to expect to find a lot of medals for sale.

Through the narrow renaissance streets of the oldest section of Madrid, not far from the Plaza Mayor, there are six or seven coin shops and only one of them had medals for sale. Collector tourists do not often request medals. Like many of the shopkeepers in Spain, not many of the dealers speak English. I was told that medals can sometimes be found in the flea market in Madrid called El Rato, but I didn't make it there.

If you can't buy medals, you can certainly have some opportunities to see them on exhibit. When touring the Royal Palace, the curators have converted the room that was used to view films before Franco's dictatorship into a display room for medals. This room contains six old cabinets featuring a wonderful display of some of the medals from the Royal collection. They are all historical medals and include St. Gaudens' Columbian Exposition medal. The Royal palace is on every tourist's list as a place to visit. The display of medals is a bonus.

More off the tourist route, the Casa de Moneda is a numismatic "must see" stop. Not far from the bullfighting ring in Madrid, the Casa de Moneda dedicates its entire third floor to a numismatic and medallic art display that is unrivaled anywhere in the United States or in France.

Located in what looks from the outside like a modern office building, there is a shop on the first floor off the entry, a numismatic theater on the second floor and a gallery of many rooms occupying the entire third floor exhibiting the history of money with an emphasis on Spain and its colonies.

The exhibit begins with a room dedicated to the early development of money. There is a room of Greek coins and several rooms of Roman coins and the Islamic coins of

Spain. You could spend hours in these rooms studying the local Spanish mints that issued roman provincials circulating in Spain and learn a lot about the development of modern day Spain from these beginnings.

Displays of paper money and old numismatic and art books integrated nicely into the coinage galleries. One room dedicated to paper money had cases of six trays that slide with the press of a button and illuminate when viewed. You press any of the six labeled buttons to see the display of your choice.

Three rooms of the permanent exhibit feature medals. One room is filled with renaissance medals, including three by Pisanello and beautiful examples by Mateo de Pasti, Sperandi, Iacopo da Trezzo, Leone and Pompeo Leoni. One room contains historical medals by Spanish artists, and one room is dedicated to international artists and contemporary Spanish artists.

The international medals include French art nouveau with pieces by Boudichon, Courdray, Roty, Chaplain and Duvivier. There are some Dassier pieces and a plaster of Pistrucci's Waterloo medal. There are no medals of the United States represented.

The Contemporary medals feature the work of Spanish artists with a giant galvano of Badia's, "Miro" hung prominently. Fernandez Jesus, Antonio Lopez, Antoni Tapies and other mint artists are well represented but, for some reason, there is no work by contemporary artists who exhibit at FIDEM. Of course, the same could be said about the exhibits at the ANA in Colorado Springs, the Smithsonian exhibit in Washington and the ANS exhibit in New York.

The Casa de Moneda collection was formed after King Carlos III purchased its core from a Spanish artist and engraver in 1783. It

was shown to the public for the first time by Queen Isabel II in 1867 and it moved to its present home in 1964.

The Casa de Moneda shop displayed more medals than the shop at the US Mint in Philadelphia. Like the US mint, there are proof and mint sets, watches, key chains and pens but very few medals.

The catalog of sale items does not offer medals for sale beyond the few small struck commemoratives of the Royal wedding, the mint anniversary or the millennium. The only art medals that are offered for sale are not in the catalog. They are on display at the Casa de Moneda shop.

In the shop, there are three display cases of medals organized by theme—religious, cities and bullfighting. No medals have been produced by the Casa de Moneda since the 1980's, so what is offered is the end of the run. In fact, all of the medals offered by the mint are in a single waist high cabinet that serves as a display counter for the watches and key chains.

The Casa de Moneda Shop offers books as they do in the museum shop of the Monnaie de Paris. But other than one book, "Apocalypse" (1999) of Fernando Jesus, the books feature graphic arts, fine arts and ancient coins.

The Casa de Moneda and the Royal Palace are must see places for the touring numismatist. While the medal in Spain is in the same doldrums as the medal in the United States and other countries, there are many wonderful artists to look for and some terrific buying opportunities before the situation changes. The richness and depth of contemporary Spanish artists and the obvious commercial success of the Casa de Moneda are indications that it is just a matter of time before these sparks ignite

the flames of collector interest in Spanish medals. (Donald Scarinci)

## **The Croghan Medal Of 1835**

During the War of 1812 military victories by American forces were few and far between. This situation was due to several factors, the most important being a virtual state of rebellion in New England, notably Massachusetts. In the West, however, there were some rather amazing victories, usually against great odds.

Following the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1783, which ended the American Revolution, Britain cultivated friendships among the Indian tribes of the Old Northwest. Before 1796 U.S. military power was so weak in the area now known as Michigan that the British were able to maintain military posts on American territory. The Jay Treaty of 1794 rectified this situation, however, and British troops were evacuated by 1796, but the British continued to stir up trouble by manipulating their Indian allies.

After a long series of disputes involving freedom of the seas, war broke out between the United States and Great Britain in June 1812. Prefacing the outbreak was a “dress rehearsal” in 1811, during which groups of Indians, led by The Prophet (brother of Shawnee Chief Tecumseh), staged a series of murderous raids on isolated settlements. British agents supplied them with arms but cautioned patience until war was formally declared.

Forced into action by hot-headed members of his renegade band, The Prophet stepped up his attacks. Indiana Territorial Governor William Henry Harrison quickly raised a force of Indiana militiamen and mounted Kentucky riflemen; the resulting clash of arms in November 1811 at Tippecanoe (near

present-day Lafayette, Indiana) was a decisive defeat for the Indians.

Serving alongside Harrison at Tippecanoe was George Croghan, a young man born near Louisville, Kentucky, in 1791. At an early age he enrolled at William and Mary College in Virginia, graduating in 1810. In 1811 he served as an aide to Harrison at the Battle of Tippecanoe, and in 1812 entered the army with a captain’s commission. Croghan was of an illustrious family that included George Rogers Clark, the Revolutionary War hero.

In the spring of 1813 the British, under Brigadier General Henry Proctor, mounted an invasion from Detroit, which had been captured in 1812. With 5,000 British and Indian troops and the aid of Tecumseh, Proctor planned to sweep around Lake Erie. The first objective was the takeover of the American stronghold at Fort Meigs (near present-day Toledo, Ohio). By the middle of July the siege of the fort was well underway. However, despite overwhelming superiority, Proctor was unable to capture the fort.

In the meantime Brigadier General William Henry Harrison fortified the area around Upper Sandusky, Ohio, to the east of Fort Meigs and near Lake Erie. A small, outlying stockade called Fort Stephenson – located in what is now Fremont, Ohio – was hurriedly built by a detachment of militia under Harrison’s command. The rude fort was not equipped with artillery and was intended solely as a defense against Indians; only about 200 troops could occupy the works at one time.

While the siege of Fort Meigs continued, Harrison held a council of war. The officers traveled to the newly-constructed Fort Stephenson, where they agreed that a fort without artillery was indefensible against all but Indians. They decided to build a new fort a

few hundred yards away in a better defensive position. Colonel Croghan was placed in charge.

By late July Croghan had assumed command at Fort Stephenson and began preparations for the new fort. Before much was done, however, General Proctor broke off the siege of Fort Meigs and most of his troops began to move east.

Once it became clear that Proctor was heading toward the Upper Sandusky, Harrison called another council of war. Through his spies the general knew the Indians were marching overland while the British had embarked along Lake Erie. In view of the large force heading their way, the war council decided that Fort Stephenson should be abandoned at once. Orders were sent to Colonel Croghan on July 29 but the couriers lost their way and the orders did not reach their destination until nearly noon the following day.

When Croghan received the message, he was faced with a dilemma. Small, fast-moving parties of mounted troops would have been able to escape, but foot soldiers would be easy prey for the Indians. Croghan decided to disobey orders and remain. His answer to Harrison read: "Sir, I have just received yours of yesterday, 10 o'clock P.M. ordering me to destroy this place and make good my retreat, which was received too late to be carried into execution. We have determined to maintain this place, and by heavens we can"

When composing his reply, Croghan considered that the letter might fall into enemy hands, hence the forceful concluding sentence. But the message arrived safely, and Harrison was not amused by the way his orders were countermanded. Croghan was promptly relieved of command, and Colonel Wells was appointed in his stead. The new commander, escorted by mounted dragoons, set out at once for the fort. En route, the group was ambushed

by Indians, but the dragoons proved equal to the task, and nearly all the ambushers were killed or wounded.

Croghan returned, with Ball's squadron, to justify his actions. Once the situation had been explained, Harrison reinstated Croghan as commander of Fort Stephenson. Colonel Croghan left at once with the dragoons, but in the meantime Colonel Wells sent out a scouting party toward Lake Erie, some twenty miles down the Sandusky River. The scouts confirmed that the British were landing in force and heading inland.

Shortly after his return to Fort Stephenson, the reinstated commander learned that the fortress was in the line of attack and hastily strengthened defenses. Within hours Proctor's forces had arrived in such strength that retreat was no longer possible, even for mounted troops. Because the fort was close to Lake Erie, Proctor was able to bring his small gunboats up the river to be within firing range.

On August 1 both sides were ready for battle. The first step was the usual flag of truce, with Major Chambers of the British forces demanding the immediate surrender of the fort. Croghan vowed that the Americans would fight to the last man. Proctor had previously allowed his Indian allies to massacre captured American soldiers and Croghan was well aware of this.

Formalities completed, the battle commenced. General Proctor commanded 1,300 men, including 800 Indians, while another 2,000 Indians were stationed some miles to the west to prevent aid from Fort Meigs from reaching the battle site. Proctor spent most of August 1 bombarding the fort with shot from six pound cannons on the gun boats and one howitzer ashore.

Meanwhile, Croghan had barely 200 men and but one six-pound cannon opposing the heavier British armament. The cannon was

continually moved around the fort's perimeter to give the impression of several guns. In late afternoon Proctor concentrated his fire at the northwest angle of the perimeter, leading the officers to believe the main attack would be directed at that point. During the night Croghan ordered the six-pounder moved so that it commanded that sector. A hidden gun port was quickly constructed, and plenty of grape shot and nails were readied for the next day.

On August 2 the British commenced firing with their six-pounders and the howitzer but the guns proved ineffective. Late in the afternoon the assaults began with two feints against the south side, but, as predicted, the main attempt was aimed at the northwest corner. As the infantry charged, Croghan opened the masked gun port and began a deadly fire at close range. The British losses soon numbered about 150 dead and wounded; the Americans had only one fatality and seven injuries.

In addition to his losses, Proctor now received information that General Harrison was planning to march against him within hours. The British commander raised the siege at once and retreated hurriedly, even leaving stores behind. The invasion was over.

George Croghan served with honor during the rest of the war and remained in the army until 1817. In 1824 he rejoined and served with distinction until his death in January 1849.

Between 1814 and 1818 several gold medals were authorized by Congress to honor military actions during the War of 1812. However, Croghan's gold medal was not approved until February 1835, long after the others. Once the medal was ordered by Congress, the War Department asked Lieutenant Washington Hood to prepare a proper design.

Hood's design varied somewhat in comparison to other army medals issued for the War of 1812; in particular, he added the Latin motto PARS MAGNA FUIT ("his share was great") to the reverse. The addition of the Latin motto was curious considering that none had appeared on earlier army medals. Navy medals had used Latin inscriptions, so perhaps it was an effort to demonstrate that the army was just as literate.

After receiving the President's approval, the design was forwarded to Mint Director Samuel Moore in Philadelphia in May 1835. However, Secretary of War Lewis Cass grew impatient and wrote on August 24, inquiring as to the status of the medal. Cass asked if the director had been able to find Moritz Furst, who had executed all but one of the earlier War of 1812 medals. Mint Director Robert M. Patterson, who had replaced Moore in early July, answered that he did not yet know Furst's whereabouts.

On September 4 Patterson again wrote Cass, admitting that he had been unable to locate Furst. The following day he wrote Colonel Croghan stating that, although he had yet to find the artist, Furst would want to model the portrait from life, as was customary.

Cass notified Patterson on September 8 that Furst was thought to be in New York, after having been in Baltimore a few months earlier. The information, though vague, prompted Patterson to write to an acquaintance in New York, asking him to forward a letter to Furst. The attempt was successful, and the artist came to Philadelphia on September 24 for an interview with the mint director.

Furst asked \$1,800 for the dies, the same amount charged for the War of 1812 medals with a reverse battle scene. The artist examined the drawing by Lieutenant Hood and

indicated that it could be followed with the exception of the ornamental border, which did not appear on earlier medals and would be difficult to engrave. Patterson agreed with Furst on all points and wrote the War Department the same day, recommending the terms.

Secretary Cass approved the proposal and on October 9 Patterson notified Furst that he was to proceed with the work. The artist agreed to finish the dies by the end of February 1836. The agreement contained some interesting points: Furst was not to be responsible for hardening the dies; this was to be done by the government at its own risk. If the reverse die broke during hardening, Furst would replace it for \$600; the obverse die would be replaced under the same circumstances at no cost. In light of this information, it seems probable that Furst made a portrait punch for the obverse die, thus ensuring easy duplication of the die if the need arose. The reverse, on the other hand, almost certainly was engraved without any kind of hub and would need to be recut completely.

Because he had yet to sketch Colonel Croghan's portrait, Furst began with the reverse. However, this too was delayed, as he did not receive the necessary die steel from Chief Coiner Adam Eckfeldt until late October.

On January 20, 1836, Croghan wrote to Director Patterson, indicating that he would instruct his brother in Pittsburgh to send Furst a miniature to use for the portrait. Patterson relayed this information to Furst, but the artist wrote back to ask if the miniature would be acceptable in lieu of a personal sitting. He was informed that it would have to suffice, and it appears that he received the miniature around the middle of February. The obverse die was finished by early March, and on March 21 Patterson notified the War Department that the Mint had received both dies. It was further

noted that the diework was acceptable, and, therefore, Furst was to be paid.

In September 1836 Adam Eckfeldt estimated that the medal would cost \$250 to strike, including the gold, case and labor. The actual bill for the Croghan medal has not been found, but it is likely that Eckfeldt's estimate was a bit high. A similar medal struck in 1838 cost \$200.

The War Department wrote Patterson in January 1837 to ask when the gold medal would be ready. In turn, the director asked Eckfeldt, who had charge of such matters, and was told that, barring an accident, it would be finished within two weeks. The Secretary of War thought this was reasonable and so informed President Andrew Jackson and other key officials.

On March 13 an irritated Secretary of War wrote to Patterson to find out why he had not received the medal before Congress had adjourned earlier in the month. An embarrassed Patterson replied on the sixteenth that he was "mortified" and that the delay was due to an "excess of caution" on the part of the chief coiner. He was able to report, however, that the Croghan medal had just been struck and was being prepared for shipment to Washington.

Colonel Croghan at last would receive his medal. In addition, those who gallantly defended Fort Stephenson under his command were to be presented with swords. The present location of the gold medal is unknown, but the Mint offered copper-bronzed copies for sale beginning in 1861. (R.W. Julian – We are indebted to Rollie Fingers, editor of *The Centinel*, for permitting us to borrow this article from his Summer 2004 issue.)

## **Question s and Answers**

Jan Valentine, a longtime large cent collector, has begun to collect medals. We are



indebted to him for some excellent questions on the Comitia Americana Series, as follows:

**Question:** When people refer to the Comitia Americana medals, what do they include?

**Answer:** George Washington's set, procured by Thomas Jefferson in 1789, contains 1) Washington before Boston, 2) Horatio Gates for Saratoga, 3) Anthony Wayne for Stony Point, 4) Francois DeFleury for Stony Point, 5) John Stewart for Stony Point, 6) Daniel Morgan for Cowpens, 7) William Washington for Cowpens, 8) John Egar Howard for Cowpens, 9) Nathaniel Greene for Eutaw Springs, 10) Libertas Americana and 11) the 1784 Franklin Natus Boston. The last named piece, executed by some of Franklin's many friends in Paris, does not belong to the series in that it carries no official sanction nor does it refer to events of the Revolutionary War. The Libertas Americana was not sanctioned by Congress either but it does commemorate Yorktown added to which the beauty of its design mandates its inclusion.

Thus, our list shrinks to 10 but now must be added the medal for John Paul Jones—executed after Jefferson left Paris—and the medal for Major Henry Lee that was made a few years later in Philadelphia. The final total is 12 but, just to complicate matters, there are no known examples of the original Lee reverse.

**Question:** Does the medal for the Commodore Preble medal belong to the series? The words "Comitia Americana" are contained in its inscription.

**Answer:** No. The Preble medal refers to events in Tripoli in 1801.

**Question:** Which of the Comitia American medals are collectable at a reasonable price.

**Answer:** The medals for Gates, Jones, William Washington and John Paul Jones are R-5's or thereabouts. Originals are available for \$300-600. The medals for Washington Before Boston and the Libertas are at least as common but they sell for a substantial premium over the four we have cited. The medals for Wayne, DeFleury, Stewart, Morgan and Greene are extremely rare (i.e., R-6 or R-7). Two sided examples from the original Lee dies are not known to exist.

**Question:** Granted the virtual non-collectibility of many of the medals, is it ok to complete a set by purchasing electros, casts or struck pieces from U.S. Mint copy dies? Which of these is more desirable?

**Answer:** Nineteenth century collectors avidly sought not only the Paris originals but all of the above. Indeed, most examples to be found in institutions today are casts or lower quality electros. In filling out a set our preference would be to go for the aesthetics which means either a piece from U.S. mint copy dies or, even more desirable in our opinion, one of the high quality electros made by Benjamin Franklin Peale (operating out of the U.S. Mint).

**Question:** Are there U.S. Mint copies of all twelve?

**Answer:** All but John Stewart and the Libertas Americana.

**Question:** Are there electros of all twelve?

**Answer:** Yes, but I have seen Peale—quality electros of only a few. That does not mean they don't exist; rather, we veterans have not paid the attention to casts and electros that they deserve.

**Question:** Can you assign a Betts number to a U.S. Mint copy?

**Answer:** On my envelopes, I use Betts numbers for originals and both Betts and Julian numbers for U.S. Mint copies.

## **Announcement**

The Statue of Liberty Club is a non-profit organization of collectors of Liberty memorabilia, including medals, tokens, badges, etc. The club has members throughout the U.S. and in several foreign countries. The club makes donations to Liberty Island projects that benefit the Statue and the dissemination of information about her history.

To commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Auguste Bartholdi, the designer and builder of the Statue, the club worked with Missouri sculptor Don F. Wiegand to strike a 2 ½" bronze medal with Bartholdi and the Statue of Liberty on the obverse; the medal is being struck by The Medallic Art Co. of Dayton, NV.

The medal can be viewed at the club's web site, <http://statueoflibertyclub.com>.

Two reverse designs are available with 125 individually edge-numbered medals being struck for each design. The medal can be ordered from the club's web site; a discount is offered for medals ordered before October 31. (Vince Swift)