

# Las Vegas COIN JOURNAL

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*The Vegas*

*Show* **Dec 9-11**

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## The Eagle on U.S. Coins PART II

*By Cindy Mohon*

In Part I the eagle designs on standard U.S. coinage were discussed. In this sequence, some of the commemoratives, gold coins and bullion coins will be used as illustrations.

Classification of the designs in Part I were divided into two broad categories: Emblematic or Naturalistic in style. This classification holds true; however, when the descriptions which originated with Heraldry are added as a sub-category, the subject becomes even more intriguing.

To understand the portrayal of the Bald Eagle on United States coins, it is important to understand the impact of **heraldry** on the iconographic aspects of the eagle designs. Technically defined heraldry Unfortunately the definitions are



a little dry and dusty; and fail to reflect the dynamic energy and broad effect that the heraldic symbology has had on modern communication world-wide

**Heraldry is “the system by which coats of arms and other armorial bearings are devised, described, and regulated Heraldry is also defined as armorial bearings or other heraldic symbols.”**

throughout history. Essentially, heraldry is about identification. It was (and is) of vital importance that heralds (messengers), significant persons and all forms of authority or military representation wear clear designations of their authority base.

So heraldry was a form of communication. In Los Angeles, gangs use colors (red and blue) as well as haircuts, tattoos, hand signals and items of clothing to “mark” themselves as “belonging” to a certain group. That identifies the members and often marks territory. Although much more sophisticated in some ways and codified through history in a rigid discipline, heraldry is basically a similar process.

Heraldry is an important part of coin and currency design in that certain symbols, attitudes (poses) and items have traditional meanings. Eagles have a long history of “attitude” symbolism

as far back as early human history including Roman and Charlemagne. Heraldry is a complicated study and many scholars disagree on some definitions and descriptions.

The following is a sample of the elements of heraldic descriptions and how this might explain some of our more unusual eagle motifs on U.S. coins.



## DISPLAYED, ELEVATED AND EXPANDED



Centered with forward orientation toward viewer with its head upturned dexter which is to the viewer's left), wings outstretched to its sides with wingtips pointing upward.

This style of eagle is typically combined with a superimposed shield upon its body with arrows clutched in one set of talons and olive branches in the other. Other symbols designs also adorn the field in its area: 1) A series of clouds in semi-circle between wingtips and stars in the field above its head.

Fig. 1 Heraldic eagle with clouds, stars and arrow to the viewer's left (warlike)



Fig 2 Heraldic eagle with plain fields and olive branch in talons to viewers left (peaceful) Traditionally in heraldry the right and left orientation holds concepts such as Peaceful (Eagle's right and viewer's left) or Warlike. (Eagle's left and viewer's right). These concepts were taken very seriously in world diplomacy and, when designer's mistakenly reversed them in early U.S. coinage—it caused international reaction.



This style of eagle is typically combined with a superimposed shield upon its body with arrows clutched in one set of talons and olive branches in the other. Other symbols designs also adorn the field in its area: 1) A series of clouds in semi-circle between wingtips and stars in the field above its head.

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## DISPLAYED AND LOWERED

Eagle's body centered forward toward view with head upturned to the viewer's left, wings spread upward but with tips pointing downward.

This is the style of eagle design used on our very familiar Washington quarter reverse. This style is more natural and less rigid than the heraldic eagle design. The foot position can be in the abnormal splayed look of the emblematic heraldic design or the natural appearance of clutching a branch or the ground.

Fig. 3 Washington quarter rev

Fig. 4 1795 Capped Bust Half Eagle

Fig. 5 Congressional Bicentennial \$5

## CLOSE OR CLOSED

Eagle's body is in profile looking toward the viewer's left, wings are folded and closed upon its back and feet are on the ground.

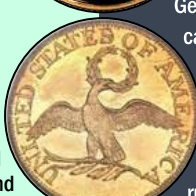
Fig. 6 Indian Head half eagle (incused)

Fig. 7 Indian Head Eagle

Fig. 6 Indian Head half eagle (incused)

## RISING OR ROUSANT

Eagle's body in tense forward leaning



Requiring the artists, designers and engravers to utilize an eagle design on United States coins was probably both a joy and a curse to them. The detailing of the feathers, head and talons along with the unique posturing and mannerisms would be tough enough for the artist. Add the weight of the national pride vested in the bird's appearance and the job is even tougher.

In colonial days, any pictures of an eagle had to be obtained through sketching them. Ornithologists and artists would observe them in the wild, in captivity and, finally, deceased and possibly stuffed. From those contacts, sketches and paintings would be developed. Titian Peale, a renowned naturalistic artist, did the artwork for the eagle design on the Gobrecht dollar using a dead eagle.

For a while, the designers and engravers at the mint had an in-house model they could use. Peter, the Philadelphia mint mascot, had the run of the facility; which eventually caused his demise through misadventure with some of the mint machinery.

George Morgan's problem with eagles came due to his having designed the magnificent eagle on the reverse of the silver dollar with 8 tail feathers. After completing master die, working hubs and dies, as well as a first run of minting, he was advised that it should have been 8 tail feathers; and it would have to be changed. He redesigned the dies, which ultimately resulted in some spacing alterations in the lettering. Using the new master the previously hubbed working dies were re-impresed. This created a large number of varieties – to the great joy of collectors to this day.

position typically with wings lifted from body back-to-back.

Fig 8 1921 Alabama Centennial

Fig 9 1918 Illinois Centennial

Fig. 10 Pan Pac 2 ½

## PERCHED

On a branch or object without in a clear indication that flight is imminent.

Fig. 11 2008 Bald Eagle commemorative

## SOARING AND VOLANTE

Soaring is flying upwards. Volante is flying more or less horizontally.

Fig. 12. Bald eagle 50c commemorative

Fig 13. American Eagle Bullion coins

Figure 14. Interestingly enough, due to rotations of the dies, the gorgeous Gobrecht dollar can be found Soaring and Volante.

## COLLECTING EAGLES ON COINS

As you can see, the topic of eagles on U.S. coins is an extended subject; and rapidly leads the reader into other fields of study. The real joy of this is that you don't have to be a numismatist to enjoy this topic. It's a great way to share your coin collecting with your children. Every American has an opinion about the designs on their coinage. One of the fun things to do is to drag out the Redbook, share it with a group of friends; and have everyone pick the design they like best and the one they like least.

Narrowing the best down to one is tough, but I lean to the naturalistic eagle and probably like the soaring eagle used on the Bald Eagle

commemorative.

The one I like least is easy: XXVI

Olympiad Torch Runner \$5 gold coin. I think this eagle could give "Grumpy Cat" some tips on being grouchy.

These two articles are just to get you started on a fun and inexpensive journey. I hope you learn more about Heraldry, symbols and the difficult tasks faced by the artists, designers, engravers and minters who brought us our exquisite currency.

I couldn't come close to listing all of the different designs. I hope this intrigues you and leads you to enjoy the varied and incomparable beauty of United States Coins as well as the richness of their histories.

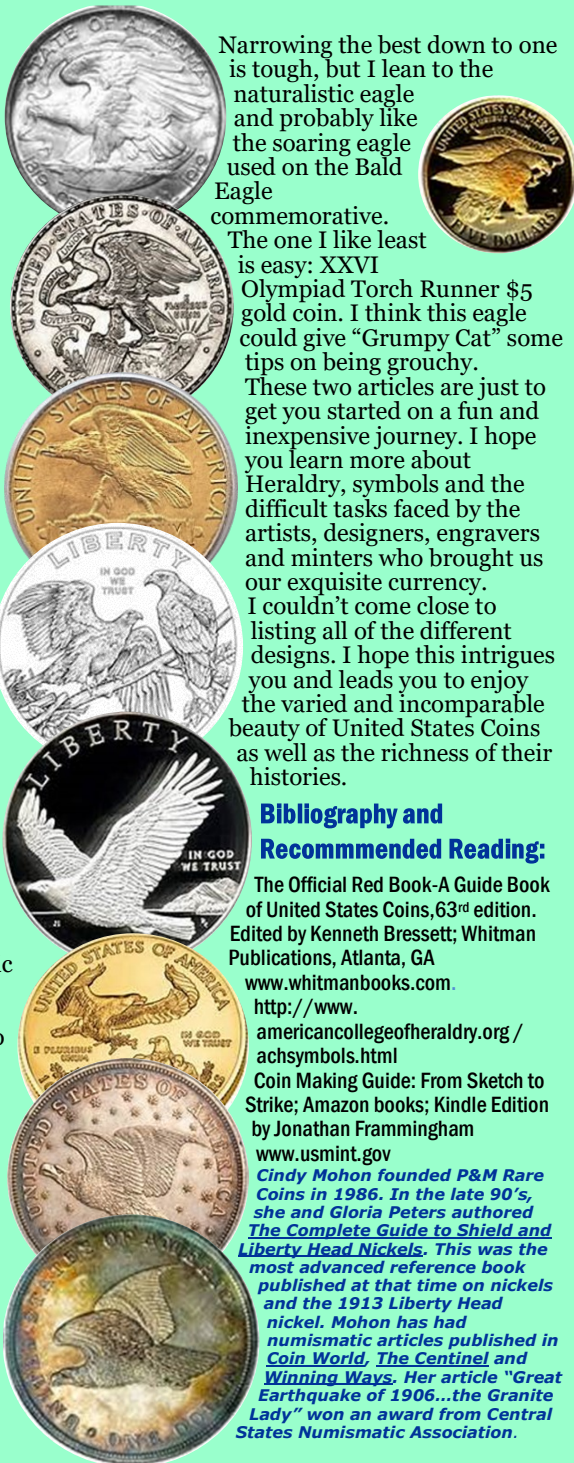
## Bibliography and Recommended Reading:

The Official Red Book-A Guide Book of United States Coins, 63<sup>rd</sup> edition. Edited by Kenneth Bressett; Whitman Publications, Atlanta, GA [www.whitmanbooks.com](http://www.whitmanbooks.com)

<http://www.americancollegeofheraldry.org/achsymbols.html>

Coin Making Guide: From Sketch to Strike; Amazon books; Kindle Edition by Jonathan Frammingham [www.usmint.gov](http://www.usmint.gov)

*Cindy Mohon founded P&M Rare Coins in 1986. In the late 90's, she and Gloria Peters authored The Complete Guide to Shield and Liberty Head Nickels. This was the most advanced reference book published at that time on nickels and the 1913 Liberty Head nickel. Mohon has had numismatic articles published in Coin World, The Centinel and Winning Ways. Her article "Great Earthquake of 1906...the Granite Lady" won an award from Central States Numismatic Association.*



# My Favorite Things

## Penny for Your Thoughts

By Charmy Harker

*Raindrops on roses  
and whiskers on kittens  
Bright copper kettles  
and warm woolen  
mittens  
Brown paper  
packages tied up with  
strings  
These are a few of my  
favorite things*

I recently heard this song by Julie Andrews from the *Sound of Music* and it got stuck in my head, then it also got me thinking, “What are a few of MY favorite things?” Well, of course, my Indian cent collection came to mind. I can’t think of anything else (besides my family and little kitty) that brings me more joy. So I thought I’d like to share a few of my favorite Indian cents from my personal collection. (Photos are courtesy of Todd Pollock at BluccPhotos.com.)

Many of those who know me know that I love toned copper, both Indian and Lincoln cents, and most of the coins in my personal collection have, in my opinion, beautiful toning – blues, greens, silver, rose, magenta, etc. However, some of my most favorite coins have interesting and unique errors or varieties. And if they happen to also have pretty toning, all the better. This first favorite is one I recently acquired at auction and happens to have

beautiful toning in addition to its amazing error.

### **1880 PCGS MS-65 BN Snow-1, Doubled Die Obverse, Off-Center Clashed Die Reverse**

As Rick Snow stated when he wrote the auction description: “This is one of the most intriguing varieties known to collectors irrespective of denomination or type. There are clashmarks on the reverse from the obverse die, but instead of being enplaced in the corresponding area they are widely off center. Such is the position of the clashmarks, in fact, that the letters ICA in AMERICA and



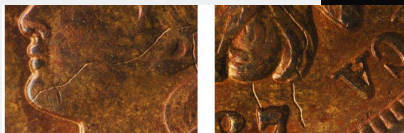
the surrounding denticles are clearly visible sweeping down through the reverse field between the right wreath and the shield to the letters NE in ONE. One theory as to the cause of this off-center clash is a quick hardness test by the die maker. By smacking the soft die with another die, the impression left would show whether the die was soft enough to accept a digit punch.” I



just love the beautifully toned double die off center die clash and am proud to have it in my collection.

### **1886 Type 1 NGC MS65 RB Clamshell Lamination**

This is a coin I bought several years ago from a so-called vest pocket dealer at the Long Beach show. It was in a 2x2 cardboard flip at the time and I didn't notice the clamshell planchet until I removed it from the holder. Wow, what a nice surprise on a really high



quality better date Indian cent! I've kept it raw until recently when NGC

introduced their new EdgeView holders where the rim is still visible inside the holder. It was authenticated as a "Clamshell Lamination" and I was even more please when NGC again agreed with my grade of MS65 RB!

### **1887 NGC MS63 RB Obverse Struck Thru**

This is another coin I found raw on Ebay and sent it in for grading at

NGC. I initially had thought the foreign material had to be a wire or possibly a hair because I thought the object that was struck thru had to be something strong or hard in order to sustain the pressure of the powerful metal dies pressing onto the planchet. So I posted these photos on some message boards to solicit ideas as to

what had been left on the die that was struck thru, and the consensus was that it was probably a piece of thread left over from a cleaning cloth used to



wipe the dies. Interesting piece, don't you think?

### **1864-L AU Reeded Edge**



This is another piece that I found on Ebay about 10+ years ago (yes, I love to peruse Ebay and have been lucky to find some very unique items). In addition to it being a nice quality better date 1864-L, I just thought this coin was so unique and couldn't imagine at the time how it got

*sacrifice stock is placed on either side of the host coin, (like a sandwich) the knurling tool can then be applied to create the reduced diameter decorative edge design. Any gun manufacturer from the Civil War era on would be able to create an example as such.*

*Knurling is commonly done on a lathe in a machine shop. This coin was obviously done by hand by a skilled craftsman in the pre machine tool days. Very similar to the old "hand checkering" that gunsmiths do. Pure art and skilled hands.....and a dying skill at that with the age of modern CNC equipment. Below is an example of a knurling head that goes into a CNC or manual lathe, and is adjustable to fit the diameter of the workpiece.*

*Even though most likely manmade, I am crazy about this unique Indian cent and am pleased to be able to show it to others thanks to Todd's great photos.*



the reeded rim. Also, if you look close at one of the photos, you'll see a nice reverse die break that goes from the wreath at about 10:00 down and across the C and E in CENT. I again posted photos on the message boards and

### 1861 NGC MS64 10% Curved Clip

I found this gorgeous error last year in another dealer's case in Chicago. It was raw and just caught my eye in because the dealer had all kinds of coins and but only a couple of Indian cents. I also recently sent this



received some very plausible explanations, including the following:

*This edge can be accomplished with a simple knurling tool on a lathe. Smaller diameter*

*in to be graded and was happy that NGC agreed with my assessment of MS64. I think it is pretty rare to find a high*

think it is pretty rare to find a high quality Civil War period cent with such a large error – obviously, someone must have



noticed in way back then and removed it from circulation. There is also some die clashing evident in front of the portrait.

**1873 PCGS MS64 RB  
Closed 3 Snow 2 Double  
Liberty**

And here is a beautiful 1873 Snow 2 Double Liberty. This coin is extra special to me because, if any of you have read “The Penny Lady” article that was first published here in the Ledger several years ago (and is also posted on my website), you may recall that I mentioned an unc 1873 Closed 3 that I had won off Ebay for



\$110. It was a beautiful coin, probably MS64 RB, and at that time I didn’t know much about the double

Liberty. Right after the auction ended, I received an email from another Ebayer offering to buy it for an additional \$100. I told him I would have to wait until I had the coin in hand to see it for myself before I would sell it. That email made me suspicious, so I decided to take a good close look at the coin when I got it to see why this guy was eager to pay so much more for it. So as soon as the coin arrived, I pulled out my Flynn variety book (I

didn’t have Rick’s books back then) and compared this coin to all the 1873 varieties, and, yes, I’m sure you guessed it, it was the double die variety –

unfortunately, not the Type 1, but almost as good - it was the Type 2 variety with most of the letters in

Liberty strongly doubled. Of course I hooted and yelped and was so excited that my family wondered what was going on. I can sincerely say that that was the moment my husband and kids finally understood the true value of a penny! Any way, a short time later, I took this coin to the Long Beach show and ended up selling it raw for \$2,000.

Well, fast forward many years later. I recently saw this 1873 S-2 on Rick's website, and I'd swear it was the same coin I sold all those years ago. So, of course, I just had to have it - and now I do, and this is a photo of my old/new 1873 S-2!

### 1877 NGC MS65 RB

I've saved the best for last! What can I say.... I have looked for many years to find a pretty toned high-end 1877 Indian cent, and until now the only

one I found was one Rick had a couple years ago, except that it was MS66 RB and very out of my price range (it's the same one Rick had imagined onto his mouse pads). Then, at the ANA, I saw this in Rick's case and immediately fell in love with it. I even told Rick, "Now that's a Charmy coin!" So I went back to my table and began figuring out how I can acquire this gorgeous piece. So with a little finagling and a little dickering and some kind concessions from Rick, this fantastic key date is now in my collection!

*Charmy acquired her passion for coins late in life after inheriting a group of coins from her aunt. Not knowing anything about coins, she chose one type of coin - Indian cents - and learned everything she could about them. She eventually turned her passion into a fulltime business known as "The Penny Lady®," dealing in all things pennies and sets up at most of the major coin shows around the country. She currently serves as President of Women in Numismatics and has written several articles for coin publications and forums. Charmy received the prestigious ANA Presidential Award in 2014 for her outstanding service in the numismatic community.*

## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

### Thursday Dec 8

12:00 noon Dealer Registration and Exhibitor Set-up  
12:00 noon Visiting Dealer Admission  
7:00pm Show Closes to Dealers

### Friday Dec 9

9:00am Dealer Entry  
10:00am Open to Public  
6:00pm Show Closes to Public  
6:30pm Show Closes to Dealers

### Saturday Dec 10

8:00 Boy Scout Merit Badge Workshop  
Las Vegas Stamp Club  
9:00am Dealer Entry  
10:00am Open to Public  
10:30am Civil War Sutler Tokens  
Susan Trask

12:30 noon - 4:00pm

Young Collectors Activities

12:00 noon Silver Dollar Die Variations:

Top 100 VAMs

Jeff Oxman and Mike Faraone

2:00 Penny Exonomia

Charmy Harker "The Penny Lady"

6:00pm Show Closes to Public

6:30pm Show Closes to Dealers

### Sunday Dec 14

9:00am Dealer Entry

10:00am Open to Public

1:30pm ANACS Submission Center

Closes

3:00pm Show Closes to Public

7:00pm Show Closes to Dealers

# The Fantastic 1804 Dollar

*By Joe Cavallaro*



Sometime in 1941, noted coin dealer B. Max Mehl said, "In all the history of numismatics of the entire world, there is not today and there never has been a single coin which was and is the subject of so much romance, interest, comment and upon which so much has been written and so much discussed as the US dollar of 1804."

That was in 1941. Volumes more have been written since then and millions of dollars

have been spent pursuing the great "King" of American coins. It wasn't long after we all started collecting. By coins, I for sure was one of them, that we heard about and then started dreaming about the 1804 silver dollars. It wasn't until 1962 that the first real attempt to sort out all the mysteries surrounding these dollars was finally put to print in **The Fantastic 1804 Dollar** by Eric Newman and Kenneth

Bressett with research by Walter Breen and Lynn Glaser. Fast forward now some 50 plus years to the present time and we find ourselves still asking the questions as to how, when, where, and why did these great American rarities come into existence.

Born as numismatic oddities, these coins were not struck in the dated year they bear, although mint records indicated some 19,570 pieces were struck in 1804. An act of legislation dated April 2, 1792 specified that pieces contain "the year of coinage." Reverse dies could be reused lawfully, but not the obverse unless they had the proper date. Thus the practice of overdating was started. So what happened to these 19,570 dollars? Were they ever struck? To cover up their disappearance, several stories

have circulated about them being melted along with Spanish dollars, and another

tale that they were on board the frigate *Philadelphia* which was captured by Barbary Pirates!

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To date, no substantiating facts have come to light to support any of the theories regarding the existence or disappearance of these coins. What we do now know is that sometime during the administration of President Andrew Jackson (1829-1837), the State Department requested that several complete sets of American coins were to be assembled and used as gifts of state. One was to be given to the King of Siam, and another to Sultan of Muscat. The request was dated November 11,

1834. These first strikes are known as Class I specimens and they are the only 1804 dollars that could possibly be considered legal coins. For certain 8 exist, although it is possible there are a few more are out there.

The mystery of the 1804 dollars gets even more intriguing, when sometime in either 1858 or 1859, mint employees took an 1857 Swiss Bern Shooting Thaler 5 franc and struck it into a plain edge 1804 silver dollar. There is only one known of this type which we call a Class II. This coin reposes in the National collection at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC. The story continues now to the Class III specimens when Chief Coiner Snowden found old hubs and dies in a vault. He had several impressions struck from these dies before they were destroyed. There are 6 known specimens today. So there you have it. Just like government and politics of today, cover ups and scandals were running rampant at the US Mint and Treasury during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The final chapters concerning the 1804 silver dollars have not been written, nor may they ever come to light. What we have today is 15 known specimens of 3 different classes of which only a few are in public hands. No wonder records are broken and hysteria abounds when one of these treasures is offered for sale. This is what dreams are made of, Happy collecting!

*Joe Cavallaro is the President of the Las Vegas Numismatic Society and has had a passion for history and antiques for most of his life. He owned an antique gallery and travelled the globe searching for unique and wonderful items.*

**The King & Queen  
Of  
Rare Coins  
Are  
Coming!  
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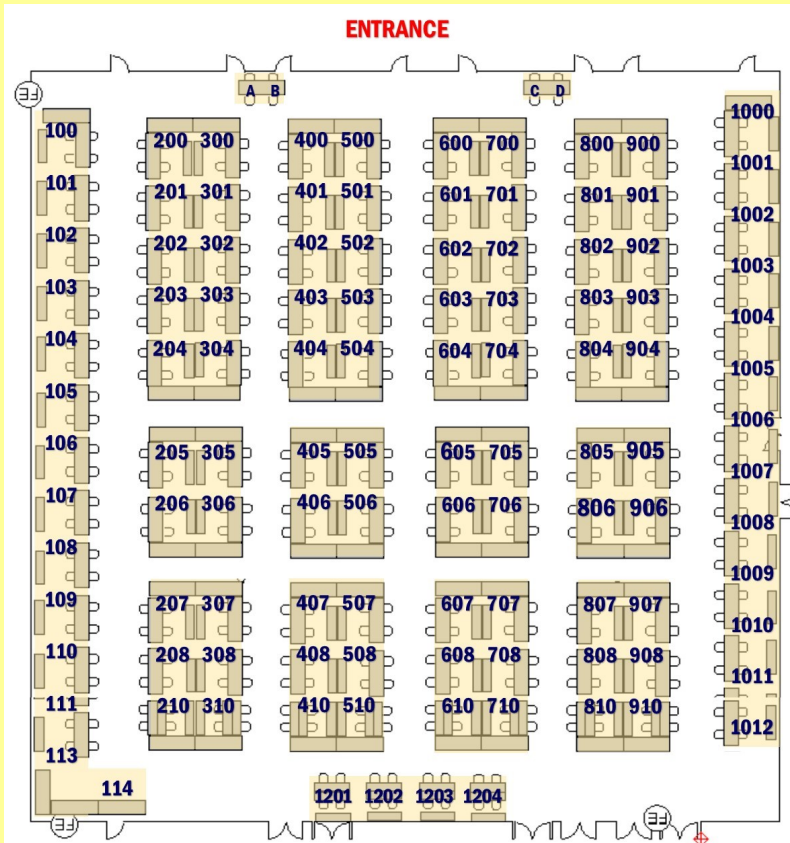
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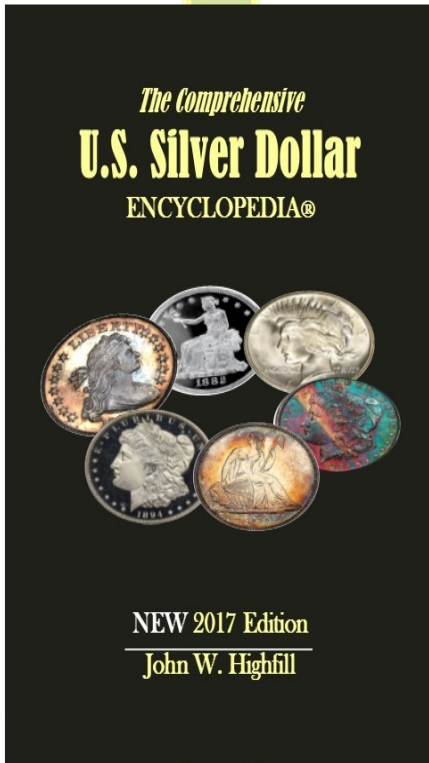
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