

Madison County Coin Club

of Huntsville, Alabama



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The President's Corner

Thanks to all who participated in our coin auction last Month. Many collectors added to their collection while other benefited from selling theirs.

Join us on Tuesday for a presentation from a long time coin collector, Jack Gulden. Jack started his collection as a paperboy. This should be a great presentation for all.

Kurt

Assay Medal Bought at Coin Show

By

Bob Jaques

While attending the annual FUN Show in Tampa, Florida last January, I was looking at a coin dealers' table that had a few odd and end medals.

While I normally don't collect medals, I do have a few that I have in my collection because of their beauty and artistic value. As I was looking thru an assortment of medals, my eye caught a beautiful silver-looking medal with the portrait of Martha Washington on the obverse.

I picked up the medal, which is 3" long and 1/4" thick, and saw the engraving of the Mint as it was in 1792. The wording across the top is "Annual Assay Commission" and is dated 1977. I decided to purchase the medal and do some research into the "Assay Commission", which I was not familiar.

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The following information is what I learned about the Assay Commission. It was an agency of the U.S. Government from April 2, 1792 to March 14, 1980. Its purpose was to supervise the annual testing of gold, silver, and base metals used in coins by the U.S. Mint to make sure the proper specifications were met.

Members of the Commission were generally appointed each year and consisted of prominent Americans and Numismatists. Members appointed to the Commission each received a commemorative Assay Commission medal.

These medals are extremely rare and were different each year. The last medal was made in 1977 and for the first time were sold to the Public. The mintage is quite low with only 1,250 sold and were sold for only \$20 each. The medal is made of a silvered bronze.

Beginning in 1977, President Carter appointed no members to the Assay Commission, and in 1980, he signed legislation abolishing it. The 1977 medal I purchased is the culmination of a long-running historical Governmental Agency.

So now I am proud to have included this unique medal in my collection that I found going thru some miscellaneous medals at a dealer's table.

Part of my numismatic interest is finding something, either a coin or a medal, that has an interesting story behind it. This "Assay Commission" medal meets my criteria.



Assay Commission Seal



Obverse of 1977 Medal



Reverse of 1977 Medal

Wrong Picture!

Peter Symes

On 15 July 1973 the Central Bank of Yemen, when it was the issuing authority for North Yemen, issued three banknotes in the denominations of 1, 5 and 10 rials. These banknotes were complemented by a 50-rial banknote on 15 August 1973 and a 20-rial banknote on 15 September 1973. These five notes constitute the first issue by the Central Bank of Yemen, as the previous issues had been placed into circulation by the Yemen Currency Board on behalf of the Government of Yemen.



The 5-rial note issued by the Central Bank of Yemen in 1973. The buildings climbing up the steep face of the hill are not found in North Yemen (the Arab Republic of Yemen).

The peculiar feature of this issue is the image on the front of the 5-rial note. According to the Annual Report of the Central Bank of Yemen for 1972-73, the image depicts 'The seat of the Zabeid Government together with ornamental patterns and designs.' Zabeid is a town between al-Hudaydah and al-Mukah in what was then North Yemen.

In fact, the image on the 5-rial banknote is of a village in the Wadi Du'an in the Hadhramawt (or Hadhramaut), which in 1973 was in South Yemen – a completely separate country. The image is copied from a photograph in a book by

the German adventurer Hans Helfritz, called *Land Without Shade*, published in 1936. That a building in another country should appear on a banknote issued in North Yemen is surprising. Most of the images which appear on the banknotes of Yemen were selected by the banknote designers from illustrations in books and magazines published in the west. It appears on this occasion sufficient care was not taken in identifying the origin of the image.



This photograph by Hans Helfritz is of buildings in the Wadi Du'an, in South Yemen (the People's Republic of Southern Yemen), and the image was copied onto the banknote issued in North Yemen.



North Yemen seceded from Turkey in 1918.

It was the Yemen Arab Republic (Y.A.R.), San'a, between 1918 and 1990 and merged in 1990 with South Yemen to become unified Yemen.

This error of identification was detected when Peter Symes, Murray Hanewich and Keith Street were conducting research for their book *The Bank Notes of Yemen*. Curious to know if the official description of 'The seat of the Zabeid Government' held any truth for the description of the illustration, Murray Hanewich ventured to Zabeid and inspected the buildings in that location. Murray's description of the trip is recorded as:

I remember arriving in al-Hudaydah in late afternoon in a shared Peugeot taxi crammed full with qat-chewing Yemenis, exhaust fumes wafting back inside through the half open back hatch – half open due to the twine wrapped luggage and huge sacks of fresh qat in the back. It was the beginning of Ramadhan so I was desperate for a drink of water or anything, since prudence prevented the partaking of anything on the drive from Sana'a. I remember finding a rat hole of a funduq with a mattress of springs but no actual mattress. Later that evening once everyone had broken their fast, I found some kebabs and flat bread washed down with many glasses of water and juice. I expected to reach Zabeid some time the next day and I was interested and hopeful that I could find and take a picture of the 'seat of the Zabeid Government' taken in the same angle as depicted on the 5-rial note, P-12. Hopping into another crammed Peugeot I set off for Bayt al-Fiqh. I was mildly curious while viewing the coastal plain and waiting to see some sort of elevation ahead, since we were still under the impression that the Bank of Yemen annual report was actually correct. Arriving in a sweltering Bayt al-Fiqh I still could only view

a flat plain in all directions with some well tended irrigated fields of green. The road was inland and far from the coast, you could not see the Red Sea or even hope for any comforting breeze.

My tattered Michelin map showed it was only about 25km further to Zabeid so I was sure that we would be heading for some elevation or at least a lone plateau with a cliff side to match the scene on the front of the 5-rial note. If Bayt al-Fiqh was sweltering, then the approach to Zabeid was steaming hot, and I mean 'Djibouti Hot!' Arriving at the centre of Zabeid passing many crumbling buildings and bright whitewashed mosques, I realized there is no possible way the buildings depicted on the 5-rial note could have anything to do with Zabeid. The Zabeid area is barely 50 metres above sea level. Other than a few minarets there were no tall structures. Most buildings were one and two stories. The lone exception was a five story whitewashed residence or government building with circular fortifications on two sides with an adjoining brick wall. Attached to the one side was an addition which reached four storeys. I did not find out the name of the structure but it was well maintained in comparison to all those around it. I thought the combination of the slender structure attached to the side of the taller with its pairs of windows for each floor could have been confused as looking similar to the Hans Helfritz photo, but it is a moot point after seeing the cliff or mountainside on the note and in the original picture.

Did the Central Bank of Yemen ever detect the error? Interestingly, the 1-, 10- and 50-rial notes were issued with a second variety with a new signature, but the 5- and 20-rial notes were never re-issued. Coincidence perhaps ...

MCCC is now on Facebook



The Madison County Coin Club is now on Facebook. The newly created Facebook page has pictures of recent meetings, schedules of upcoming events like the Huntsville Coin show, and post from members. Navigate to:
<http://www.facebook.com/MadisonCountyCoinClub> .

Post comments - Visit the page and don't forget to "Like" us.

Members' Notices

Rules for users of the member notice page: All notices are free and should be directed to the editor of the Madison County Coin Club newsletter (see back page for address). Notices will be limited to a maximum of 8 lines, including the name and contact information. The person entering the notice must answer all responses to notices. Preference will be given in the following order to notices when the page is oversubscribed in a single month:

1. Research Notices
2. Wanted Items
3. Trades Offered
4. For Sale Items

Looking for Alaskan Medals and Tokens. Contact: Richard at ANALMRJ@gmail.com or 256-337-5092

Looking for numismatic information concerning the Island of Jersey, Channel Islands. Especially interested in magazine or newspaper articles. Contact: Harold at hkfears@knology.net or 256-881-6268.

July is Obsolete Denomination Month

July is obsolete denomination month. So whether if you wish to trade, sell, or buy some two cents, three cents, or twenty cent pieces, the coin club's July meeting is the place to be!



An 1833 half dime

Please bring a coin, medal, note, or something for Show-and-Tell.

2016 Madison County Coin Club Program Refreshments and Programs Schedule

NOTE: Meeting Day is the 4th TUESDAY of the month

Meeting Date	Refreshments- Name	Program- Title and Name
January 26	TBD Door Prize- Silver Eagle	ANA Numismatic DVD presentation Kurt Springfield
February 23	Harold Fears Door Prize- Silver Eagle	The State of the Coin Market- Charles Cataldo
March 22	Richard Jozefiak Door Prize- Silver Eagle	15 Years of the Madison County Coin Club- 15 th Anniversary Celebration Richard Jozefiak
April 26	TBD Door Prize- Silver Eagle	Remembering my Father Through his Coin Collection Jim Kidd
May- NO MEETING		
June 28	4th of July Pot Luck, Bourse Night, and Auction Door Prize- Silver Eagle	
July 26	TBD Door Prize- Silver Eagle	Collecting Coins for Fun and History- Crossing the Generations Jack Gulder
August 23	TBD Door Prize- Silver Eagle	Prestige Coin Set- Daryl Gahm
September 27	TBD Door Prize- Silver Eagle	TBD Bob Jaques
October 25	TBD Nomination of 2015 Officers Door Prize- Silver Eagle	TBD Harold Fears
November 22 Subject to Change	Holiday Pot Luck , Bourse Night, and Auction Election of 2015 Officers Door Prize- Silver Eagle	
December- NO MEETING		

2016 Regional Coin Shows near Huntsville

Date	Area	Location	Contact Info	Richard's Rating
Feb 27 May TBD Sept TBD Nov TBD	Pelham, AL	Central Alabama Coin Show Pelham Civic Complex 10 am- 4 pm 500 Amphitheater Road Pelham, AL (I-65, Exit 246, follow signs)	Carl Shory 205-612-5538 cbshory@gmail.com	+
Mar 4-6 Nov 4-6	Chattanooga, TN	Tennessee State Numismatic Society Camp Jordan Arena I-75, Exit 1 Chattanooga, TN	Gayle Pike 901-327-1703 901-210-7669 (cell) pikegk@aol.com www.tsns.org	++
April 15-17	Dalton, GA	52nd Georgia Numismatic Association Coin Show Northwest Trade Center I-75 exit 333 2211 Dug Gap Battle Road Dalton, GA Fri- Sat 10 am – 6 pm Sun 10 am – 3 pm	Chip Cutcliff 770-421-8387 chascoins06@yahoo.com www.gamoney.org	+++
July 15-17	Bessemer, AL	Alabama State Coin Show 1130 Ninth Ave SW Bessemer, AL Bessemer Civic Center 10 am – 6 pm	Corbitt Chandler 205-939-1178 corbitchandler@bellsouth.net	++
Aug 26-28	Dalton, GA	57th Blue Ridge Numismatic Association Coin Show Northwest Trade Center I-75 exit 333 2211 Dug Gap Battle Road Dalton, GA Fri-Sat 10 am – 6 pm, Su 10 – 3 pm	Ron Blackman Rblackman@cfl.rr.com 321-258-0325 www.brna.org	+++

NOTE: Before traveling any distance, it is recommended to check with the show contact to see if there are any changes.
Currently there are no local coin shows in Huntsville or Madison County

Richard's Rating:

- Small coin show, no educational programs- **+**
- Medium/Large coin show, no educational programs- **++**
- Large coin show, educational programs and/or exhibits. Worth the drive- **+++**