

## Early U.S. Auction Sales Containing Colonial Coins: Part Three – The Early Civil War Years

by David F. Fanning

### Introduction and Background

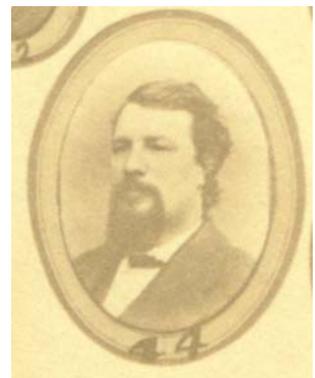
On April 12, 1861, forces of the newly formed Confederate States of America launched an attack on Fort Sumter, a U.S. military installation located in Charlestown Harbor off the coast of South Carolina. Though the fort was occupied by only about 100 men, they withstood a day and a half of shelling before Major Robert W. Anderson, the commanding officer, was forced to surrender. The assault began the American Civil War, in which over 600,000 soldiers and about 80,000 civilians were killed. Transportation routes were disrupted, commerce badly affected, and hard money quickly began to disappear from circulation.<sup>1</sup> For the next four years, little was stable or assured in American life.

One would expect, in such circumstances, that a leisurely and scholarly pursuit like numismatics would be put aside to await better times. A hobby may have seemed like an indulgence in a time when so much was at stake and so much devastation was being wrought. Surprisingly, however, numismatics thrived during the War between the States, with auction sales becoming more frequent, the number of professional dealers multiplying, and various publications proceeding apace. Martin Gengerke<sup>2</sup> lists 94 auction sales with numismatic content as having taken place in the United States prior to the Civil War; during the War itself, 108 were held, which seems counterintuitive at best.

Why did the hobby not only continue but actually thrive during the war? There are several possible explanations. On a psychological level, people perhaps felt the need for a diversion more acutely. On a strictly material level, there were fewer products available for purchase in the marketplace; as rare coins were pre-existing products with a good store of value, putting some of one's money into them was not a bad financial move.<sup>3</sup> Third, while the war disrupted many parts of the economy, it stimulated others, making some wealthy in the process. Finally, as the war threatened the nation itself, its form of government and the ideals upon which it was founded, interest in preserving material representations of U.S. history was increased. Indeed, this last factor meant that coins, medals and tokens of our early historical periods were very avidly sought. Far from being in danger of perishing, the nascent numismatic scene flourished during the Civil War.

This is not to imply that there were not ways in which the hobby was disrupted. A number of prominent numismatists were among those who fought in the war, including Augustus B. Sage, Ebenezer Locke Mason, Dr. Mark W. Collet, William Leggitt Bramhall, Richard Wistar Davids and Joseph N.T. Levick.<sup>4</sup> Collet was killed in action on May 3, 1863, during the Battle of Chancellorsville, while Davids perished on July 2, 1863, during the second day of the Battle of Gettysburg. Bramhall sustained a serious head injury at the Battle of the Wilderness (May 6, 1864) that continued to affect him after the war; while he apparently continued to collect coins, his active involvement in the hobby more or less came to an end.<sup>5</sup> While Sage survived the conflict, he does not seem to have retained his interest in numismatics, and spent the years following it in other pursuits. With the deaths of Collet and Davids, and the loss of Bramhall's and Sage's contributions, the numismatic field was much the poorer.

On a happier note, early coin dealer Ebenezer Locke Mason (Figure 1) and numismatist Joseph N.T. Levick (Figure 2) both survived the war and, indeed, continued their numismatic activities during their service. Mason (1826–1901) served during the conflict as an “aeronaut,” a soldier who would ascend into the air in a balloon and report upon the activities of the enemy troops he could see from this vantage point. This was an unusual assignment, and Mason likely was drawing upon prior experience with hot-air balloons gained during his career as a traveling showman in the 1850s. Mason had turned his professional attention to coins shortly before the outbreak of hostilities. J.N.T. Levick (c. 1828–1908) was active in numismatic circles before the war, having consigned coins to an auction by Edward Cogan in 1859. He enlisted on June 15, 1861 in



the Union Army, where he soon became an officer with the 70th New York Volunteers (Infantry). He was promoted to 1st Lieutenant on May 6, 1862 and eventually attained the rank of Captain. Mason and Levick were friends, having been acquainted since 1855.<sup>6</sup> In the September 1882 issue of *Mason's Coin Collectors' Magazine*, Mason recalled meeting up with Levick during the war:



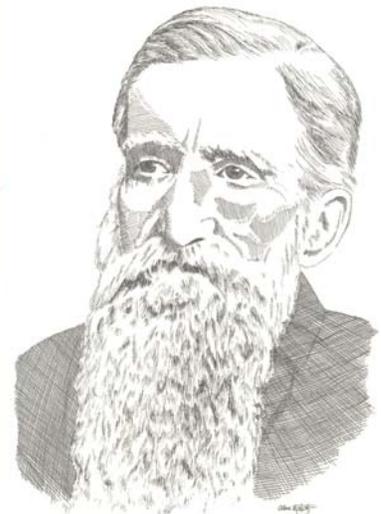
“While up in the balloon about 150 feet high ... through the long rows of soldiers attracted by the unusual spectacle, his [Mason’s] attention was attracted to an officer in a bright blue uniform and silk sash, waving his sword and crying at the top of his voice: “Hello! Is that Ned Mason up there?” By the use of a field glass we discovered our coin collecting friend, whose appearance had changed considerably, and whose title was Lieut. Levick, of Sickles’ Brigade, New York. The next salutation was, “Have you got any coins?” We replied: “Come up to our balloon camp, front of Yorktown, and see.” The next morning, bright and early, the orderly announced “Lieut. Levick wishes to see Capt. Mason,” and our curiosity tent was honored by a visit from our old chum.”<sup>7</sup>

While this break from combat must have been welcome to Levick and Mason, it goes without saying that most numismatic activity during the conflict was farther removed from the battlefield.<sup>8</sup> The Civil War years saw few periodicals or books published on coins, but they witnessed a considerable growth in auctions. This growth was not only quantitative, but qualitative: the sales being held were, speaking broadly, of much better material and were much more ably catalogued. The standard work on nineteenth-century numismatic auction catalogues is John W. Adams’s masterly 1982 volume, *United States Numismatic Literature, Volume One: Nineteenth-Century Auction Catalogs*.<sup>9</sup> In this work, Adams grades the content of the sales he enumerates: a sale may be given a B in large cents, an A– in early silver, a C in fractional currency, and so on. In addition, each sale is assigned an overall grade, based on the quality of both the contents and the cataloguing. Out of the hundreds of nineteenth-century sales listed by Adams, only 34 receive an A for colonials. Table 1 (see last page) lists these sales, with information on cataloguers, dates and consignors for each. These are the cream of the crop for colonial enthusiasts.<sup>10</sup>

Perhaps the most striking thing about Table 1 is that of the 34 sales listed therein, a solid 10 of them take place during the Civil War. In no other four-year period throughout the century would such a number of amazing sales of colonial coins take place. Just when one would expect the hobby to come to a grinding halt, it instead takes off.

### **William Strobridge’s First Sale**

William Harvey Strobridge (Figure 3) was born on January 9, 1822, in Barnet, Vermont. He moved to New York City in 1853, where he was a representative for Fairbanks scales, a job that took him shortly before the war to Baltimore, Maryland. Following the assault on Fort Sumter, he returned to New York, soon setting himself up in the coin trade.<sup>11</sup> Strobridge enjoyed a fine reputation: Adams describes him as “easily the best 19th century student/cataloguer of ancient coins and probably of European coins as well.”<sup>12</sup> His obituary in the *ANS Proceedings* of 1899 recalls him as being “ever courteous, refined in his tastes, and scholarly in his attainments.”<sup>13</sup> The series of 29 auction catalogues issued by him are of exceptional quality (though they do include a handful of non-numismatic sales).<sup>14</sup> Tragically, the rigors of quickly attributing coins and writing often very lengthy catalogues (his sale of the Stenz collection ran to 3,871 lots) robbed Strobridge of his sight, and he



was forced to retire in 1878, with more than two decades of his life remaining. His son, T.R. Strobridge, published eight auction catalogues afterwards, presumably with some input from his now-blind father, but they are unremarkable efforts and underscore the loss to the hobby suffered by Strobridge's plight.<sup>15</sup>

Strobridge's first sale was of coins from the William A. Lilliendahl collection. Lilliendahl was "actively engaged in mercantile business," according to Emmanuel Joseph Attinelli, who goes on to describe him as a "gentleman of affable and genial disposition, abounding in good humor, of very sanguine temperament, with fine cultivated tastes, which directed him promptly in the selection of fine or rare pieces for his cabinet."<sup>16</sup> Strobridge and Lilliendahl already had a numismatic relationship by this time, as Strobridge had sold Lilliendahl the bulk of his collection of ancient coins. Indeed, Strobridge would conduct two sales from the Lilliendahl collection, both of them excellent: the first on May 26–28, 1862, and a second on December 15–17, 1863. While the latter sale earns Adams's highest praises (an A+ for overall content), it is the 1862 sale (which earns an A in colonials) that is of interest to us here.

The sale's early lots are relatively uninteresting, featuring a largely mediocre offering of U.S. federal coins interspersed with the occasional exceptional piece. Some strong cents and early proofs are to be found, but little else worth mentioning. A *Libertas Americana* medal sold for \$12. Washington material brought strong prices, typical for the time: two varieties of 1791 Washington Large Eagle cents brought \$10.25 and \$10.00, while a Small Eagle example ("a magnificent specimen, strictly a proof impression") brought \$26.50. A 1792 Washington Hancock silver piece brought a very strong \$90 despite the cataloguer's pointing out that it had been "worn as a medal."

The colonial coins offered in this sale of the Lilliendahl collection were not outstanding in breadth, but they did include some truly incredible pieces, such as the following three lots:

- 1074 Lord Baltimore Shilling, struck during the reign of Charles the First of England, for the Colony of Maryland; almost a miracle of preservation; every hair perfect. A piece of great rarity in any condition. [sold for \$32.50]
- 1075 Baltimore Town Three Pence. Obv. Head of Standish Barry, "Baltimore Town, July 4th, 90;" rev. "Standish Barry Three Pence." In fair preservation, and extremely rare; not above five of these pieces are known to be in existence. [sold for \$22]
- 1076 The Annapolis Coins, a set of three pieces, viz.: One Shilling, Six Pence, and Three Pence. This set of coins is of the highest rarity, having never before been offered in this country. The shilling and threepence are very fine; the sixpence is the rarest of the series, in poor condition, but seldom met with. Will be sold in one lot, or separately, at the option of the owner. [sold as a set for \$40]

The significance of the above three lots is greater than most of what follows, however. A smattering of Massachusetts silver brought uninspired prices, while a Continental Currency piece in tin brought \$5.25, a lower price than usual at the time. An *Immunis Columbia* copper sold for \$9 (but the description of the piece tells us nothing more about its identity). An *Exclesior/Eagle* copper brought \$26, showing that these pieces were appreciated even at this early date. State coppers brought lower prices, with even a New Jersey copper described as "a fine proof, perhaps *never* seen as fine" (italics in the original), bringing but \$4. A "bright and uncirculated" example of the "head of Gov. Bradford" Connecticut copper (what we now generally call a Mutton Head variety), sold for \$2.75, to give some idea of the prices of even exceptional state coppers.

The Lilliendahl collection was one of the finest offered at the time, and brought \$2,241 according to Attinelli.<sup>17</sup> As an indicator of the importance in which the catalogue was held at the time, a post-sale edition was published, with the prices realized printed alongside each lot. It was, however, only the first of a remarkable series of sales to be held in a short space of time.

## W. Elliot Woodward's Finotti Sale

The sales of W. Elliot Woodward were introduced in the last installment of this article.<sup>18</sup> Those first few sales, denoted A, 1, 2 and 3 by Woodward later in life, were inauspicious at best. This all changed with his catalogue of the Finotti collection, which was sold at auction from November 11–14, 1862 (Figure 4). The sale's total proceeds of \$3,751.43 set a new record for an American numismatic auction.<sup>19</sup> This was the first sale held in the U.S. to feature a collection of colonial coins that was simply breathtaking.

Woodward was born in Maine in 1825, though he moved as a young man to the Boston area and made that his home for the rest of his life.<sup>20</sup> An apothecary by trade, Woodward had apparently always had an academic mindset, despite a lack of higher education. He lectured on mnemonics as a young man and by 1858 had joined the New England Historic Genealogical Society.<sup>21</sup> The apothecary business must have been a success, for Woodward purchased the Finotti collection outright before cataloguing it for sale. Woodward himself collected books, forming important libraries and selling them more than once.<sup>22</sup> The success of the Finotti sale allowed him the luxury of focusing his attention more on his numismatic interests, and the result was a stunning series of early sales that are equally noteworthy for their intensely detailed cataloguing and the quality of the material they offered.<sup>23</sup>

Joseph M. Finotti was a Roman Catholic priest, born in Italy in 1817. A noted antiquarian, he is best known outside numismatic circles for his religious writings, the most important of which, *Bibliographica Catholica Americana*, was only partially published at the time of his death in 1879.<sup>24</sup> His numismatic activities prior to the sale of his collection to Woodward must have been considerable, though they appear to have been largely forgotten.

The Finotti sale begins with an introduction by Woodward, who signs the catalogue, in contrast to most sales of the day. In deference to his seeming inexperience as a cataloguer, Woodward follows his introduction with a letter written by Edward Cogan, the dean of American numismatics at the time, in which Cogan praises the collection and the cataloguing of it by Woodward. Of interest to collectors of colonials are the following comments by Cogan:

I would remark, in reference to the Colonial pieces, what I mentioned in one of my former Catalogues, that many may be fairly termed *fine*, referring to the relative condition of the piece, rather than to the coin itself, as it is well known that but very few specimens of the Colonial coins are to be found in any cabinets, which are really in an uncirculated condition.

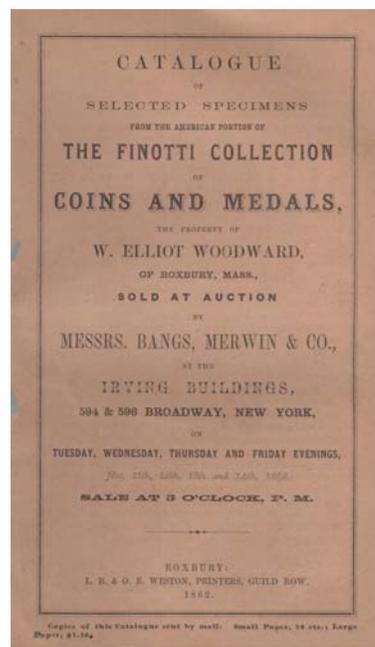
It would seem that the grading of colonials has always been a matter of some controversy.

Federal issues were very well represented in the sale, which featured only American pieces (which is surprising, coming from a classically trained, European-born priest). The colonials begin with lot 1329. Up to this point, the highest price brought by a lot was \$26 for a brilliant 1838 Gobrecht dollar. The colonials start with a flourish, with an NE shilling and sixpence selling for \$25 and \$24, respectively. Other Massachusetts silver follows, with lot 1332 being of particular interest to us today:

1652 Pine Tree Shilling; very fine specimen, doubly struck — tree of remarkable description, quite unlike the pine or oak, more nearly resembling the palmetto, a cross over the tree; one of the rarest varieties.

This piece — a Willow Tree shilling, unrecognized as a separate type at the time — sold for a bargain \$5, less than what a few of the actual Pine Tree shillings brought in the sale.<sup>25</sup>

Other oddities of the period are also to be found, including Woodward's detailed description of a 1652-dated Pine Tree Twopence he takes as proving that Massachusetts began striking all



denominations during that year. For the most part, however, the reader is struck by the sheer number of important pieces and the excellence of the cataloguing. A Carolina Proprietors Elephant token brought \$24, while a Lord Baltimore shilling, sixpence and groat sold respectively for \$16.50, \$21 and \$15.50. A Rosa Americana penny described as a “proof impression” brought a strong \$12.

Lot 1385, a Higley VALUE ME AS YOU PLEASE / J CUT MY WAY THROUGH copper (presumably undated, as no date here is given), sold for \$50, nearly twice what the Gobrecht dollar mentioned earlier had brought. Coming on its heels, however, is one of the more perplexing lots in the sale, lot 1393:

1778 Non Dependens Status. For a description and engraving of this coin, see “Dickeson,” p. 90. This piece is in the most beautiful condition, perfectly *unique*, and is perhaps the most remarkable and valuable coin in the entire collection. Its origin is traced, with a tolerable degree of certainty, to the staunch old Revolutionary patriot, Paul Revere, of Boston.

The piece — now regarded as a fantasy piece of the 1850s<sup>26</sup> — sold for \$70, a very high sum at the time. It’s worth noting that Dickeson shies from declaring the piece genuine, and makes no mention of Revere.<sup>27</sup>

Happily, a more suitable coin was about to steal the show, with lot 1397, an Inimica Tyrannis America / Confederatio pattern piece selling for \$77.50. A 1785 Immune Columbia piece followed at \$33.

State coppers were represented in abundance in the sale, though as these generally brought under \$1 each, descriptions were usually more muted than for some of the more notable coins. Even here, though, there were exceptions, such as Woodward’s description of lot 1466:

1788 [Connecticut Cent]; struck over a “Nova Constellatio,” the wreath of which appears on the head of the bust, starting from just above the eye, and forming a most elegant fillet; a projection like a horn from the top of the head. The legend reads “Tuctopi;” on the reverse, the stars and rays form for the goddess a most remarkable drapery. It is believed that no specimen of this coinage can be produced combining so many peculiarities. In fine condition, and without doubt unique.

This lengthy description takes up about a quarter of the page on which it is found, and Woodward was rewarded with \$1.63 for his efforts.

More valuable pieces were still to be found, however. A 1787 Liber Natus Libertatem Defendo / Excelsior piece sold for \$44, while a 1787 Immunis Columbia “in splendid condition” brought \$13. It was lot 1521, however, that stole the show by bringing the highest price of the sale:

1787 George Clinton Piece; obv. name and bust of George Clinton; rev. arms and motto of State of New York, with the date. The piece is in almost proof condition. Apart from its excessive rarity, it possesses a peculiar interest, from the fact that it was the first one of the kind discovered, and was for a long time considered unique. But four others are known, and it is believed no one of them is quite equal to this.

The piece sold for \$115, a remarkable sum for the period. It’s worth noting that Woodward’s description of this piece is one line shorter in the catalogue than his description of the \$1.63 overstruck Connecticut copper mentioned above. No one could accuse Woodward of focusing exclusively on the monetary value of the coins he sold.

### **The Benjamin Haines Collection**

The Haines sale, held January 19–23, 1863 at Bangs, Merwin and Company in New York, easily broke the Finotti’s sale record for most valuable collection sold at auction, bringing in a very strong \$5,375.30.<sup>28</sup> Surprisingly little seems to be known today about Haines. He was obviously very active in the hobby, but he does not appear to have been involved in the early American Numismatic Society or

contributed to publications. Like many of our own age, he may have been satisfied to simply acquire coins, taking little interest in the social life of the numismatic fellowship; or perhaps he limited his numismatic activities to correspondence. His name isn't to be found in Bowers's book on the era, and Attinelli mentions only that he was a "a thriving merchant, as well as an antiquarian."<sup>29</sup> He was known to William C. Prime, with whom he consigned coins to an 1860 auction,<sup>30</sup> and who makes reference to his collection in his 1861 book.<sup>31</sup>

One person who did know Haines was dealer Edward Cogan. Much as he had done for Woodward's Finotti sale, Cogan wrote a letter intended for public circulation about the Haines auction. The letter, dated December 26, 1862, was issued separately, not as a part of the catalogue (as the Finotti letter had been). clearly written as a favor to Haines by Cogan. Haines catalogued his collection for sale himself, which was nearly as unusual at the time as it is today. Cogan wrote that "the American portion is of a very highly interesting character, from the fact of its containing a great number of fine Proofs in Silver and Copper, of the regular series, and also from the very rare and splendid impressions among the Colonial and Washington pieces."<sup>32</sup>

The sale is indeed important for colonials, which begin with lot 1916. New Jersey coppers are covered first, though they are mostly unremarkable. Indeed, the most remarkable coin among these is a piece that somehow confounded a number of numismatists of the day, here described as lot 1935:

"Kart Hago." This copper coin was sold in a sale of coins belonging to A.C. Kline, of Philadelphia, in 1855, and described, "New Jersey Penny, copper, horse's head facing left, XLII. Rev. 'Kart Hago,' Indian standing. Very fine and exceedingly rare." It was valued by its former owner at \$100.

The piece brought \$29. To solve this mystery, we have to go back to the Kline sale in question. By coincidence, I happen to have with me as I write the copy of the Kline sale that belonged to Winslow J. Howard, who attended the sale and bought the piece in question. In his heavily annotated copy of the catalogue, Howard wrote, "Not a New Jersey coin, but a coin of Carthage." He tipped into his catalogue a description of the piece with an illustration of it (Figure 5). He later notes, "Afterwards sold by Howard to Curtis & bought of Curtis by Haines." The "Curtis" in question is dealer John K. Curtis, of New York. How exactly an ancient coin could have been taken as a piece less than 100 years old is frankly a puzzle to me, but Howard's copy of the Kline sale allows us to shed some light on this interesting bit of confusion.



The "Kart Hago" piece aside, there are some genuine colonial delicacies to be found in the Haines sale. A 1785 Auctori Vermon/Immune Columbia piece brought \$20. One of the highlights of the sale followed soon after: the silver "Kentucky token." This is number 1164 in the Breen *Encyclopedia*, where he simply lists it as "unverified," and is the same coin that was sold in the May 1860 Cogan sale discussed in Part II of this article. It cost Haines \$35 in the 1860 sale and here brought \$92.50, providing a tidy profit.

Maryland silver brought some good prices. A pierced Chalmer's shilling sold for \$4.75, while more intact examples of the sixpence and threepence brought \$10 and \$16, respectively. A Lord Baltimore shilling went for \$17, a sixpence brought \$19, and a rare groat brought \$22.50.

The most valuable pieces included a New England shilling, which sold for \$26 and a Carolina Proprietors Elephant token, which brought \$29. These were but a prelude to the George Clinton copper "in excellent condition," which fetched \$77.50. A 1787 Immunis Columbia with the eagle reverse, ("perfectly uncirculated, and by far the finest the owner has seen in any cabinet in the country") brought \$20, while a 1785 Immune Columbia / Nova Constellatio brought \$37.50. One of this writer's favorite

coins, the 1787 Liber Natus Libertatem Defendo, sold for \$29, which isn't bad for a piece described as "considerably rubbed."

The Haines sale included two Higley (or Granby) coppers: an undated (1737) VALUE ME AS YOU PLEASE / J CUT MY WAY THROUGH example sold for \$67.50, and a 1737 THE VALVE OF THREE PENCE / CONNECTICVT specimen went for \$55. Top billing, however, was reserved for a 1785 Confederatio copper with eagle reverse, which brought \$125, a very high price for the time period in question. The sale concluded with colonial and Continental paper money, but these brought very low prices. Despite going out on that weak note, the sale was a huge success, setting a record that would stay in place for over a year.

### The Henry Smith Sale

The March 24–26, 1863 sale of the Henry A. Smith collection is listed under both Strobridge's and Woodward's name by Adams, despite Strobridge's being the only name given on the catalogue's cover.<sup>33</sup> Attinelli mentioned Woodward's involvement in the sale,<sup>34</sup> and Woodward himself listed it as Sale B in listings of his catalogues, acknowledging his involvement, but not assigning it a number in his series.<sup>35</sup> The style of the cataloguing points to Strobridge as the author, and any involvement by Woodward in the sale was likely peripheral. About Smith, little appears to be known, with even his hometown being subject to disagreement.<sup>36</sup>

The sale is a good one, with decent (but not great) federal coins, as well as a wide representation of those series that were more popular then than now, including storecards, presidential medals, political tokens and temperance medals. The colonials begin with lot 540, and are unexceptional at first. There are a few interesting Rosa Americana pieces, including an "Ameri. farthing" that brought \$4 and one described as "Americana in silver, 1723, rose and stem crowned, from a new die; proof, rare," which sold for \$2. Massachusetts silver follows, with Strobridge making some token efforts to distinguish between die varieties, but failing to raise much enthusiasm for the pieces among the bidders. A pewter Continental Currency piece that brought \$6 when it was sold as part of the Finotti sale here brought \$10. A Chalmers shilling sold for \$6. So far, the colonials are mostly run-of-the-mill, with a few nice pieces thrown in now and then.

Then things get exciting. Under the heading "Coins and Tokens Belonging Exclusively to New-York State," we find lot 588:

"Liber Natus Libertatem Defendo," Indian standing with bow and hatchet; on the opposite side, an eagle standing on an hemisphere; legend, Neo Eborocus, 1787, Excelsior; condition good; one of the rarest and most interesting of the Colonial coins.

The piece brought very spirited bidding and sold for \$67.50 to William Sumner Appleton, a wealthy Boston collector who left many of his coins and medals to the Massachusetts Historical Society (this particular coin was later deaccessioned and sold through Stack's 1976 ANA sale<sup>37</sup>). The excitement continued with the next lot, a 1787 Immunis Columbia with Eagle reverse described as being in "very fine condition, and very rare" selling for \$20.13.

State coppers followed, with the sale featuring a number of New Jersey and Connecticut coppers, some described as unlisted in the Dickeson reference, and many with die varieties described to some extent. Prices were mixed. A "perfectly uncirculated" Connecticut copper of the "Bradford Head" variety brought \$5.25. A New Jersey "dog cent" (Running Fox) sold for \$4.50. A Vermont "Baby Head" described as "*uncirculated*, though on an imperfect planchet" brought only \$1.50. Other, more significant, pieces followed. A Lord Baltimore shilling ("remarkably fine") sold for \$21, followed by a Carolina Elephant token at \$18.50 and a Vermon Auctori/Immune Columbia at \$20.50.

Washington material, as always, brought strong prices, with a silver Washington Funeral Urn medal selling for \$9.50, a silver Washington Skull and Crossbones funeral medal bringing \$20, a copper

Westwood medal going for \$15, a bronze Hero of Freedom medal bringing \$16, and a 1791 Small Eagle cent selling for \$22.50.

In the area of early paper currency, the following issues printed by Franklin or Franklin and Hall were offered in the sale: Delaware, February 28, 1746, 20 shillings; Pennsylvania, July 1, 1757, 20 shillings; Delaware, May 1, 1758, 20 shillings; and Pennsylvania, May 1, 1760, 15 shillings. Indicative of the paucity of interest expressed at the time in early American paper money, these sold for between 35 and 85 cents apiece.

Bidders in the colonial section of the sale included Appleton, J. Carson Brevoort, John F. McCoy, Joseph W. Mauterstock and Joseph Zanoni, among others. The sale brought a little over \$2,000, including the prices realized in a short addenda that opened the sale.

### Edward Cogan's April 1863 Sale

Edward Cogan's April 1863 auction sale was his eleventh, making him the most experienced of the cataloguers under discussion.<sup>38</sup> Taking place at the halfway point of the war, the sale's coins are advertised as being Cogan's own property, not shedding any light on provenance. Beginning with some fairly nice federal issues, Cogan first gets to colonials at lot 515. The coins offered here are mostly average, a 1787 Excelsior copper that sold for \$22 being the exception. The catalogue then lists some Washington pieces, including a 1791 Small Eagle cent and a 1792 issue that sold for \$21 and \$25, respectively. A few "miscellaneous coins" follow, after which a second group of colonials is listed, including some decent collector coins, but nothing to make us sit up and take notice. More federal issues follow, as well as some foreign coins. While some of the federal coins are very nice, the sale as a whole is so far unexceptional.

Beginning with lot 1033, however, Cogan lists a third group of colonials, starting off with a Lord Baltimore groat that brought \$19. Interspersed throughout the colonials that follow, all of which appear to have been nice, are some truly exceptional coins. A group of Rosa Americana pieces brought very strong prices for the period: a 1722 penny without crown (an "unusually fine uncirculated impression") brought \$15.50; a 1723 halfpenny with crown in similar condition brought \$9; a 1723 farthing without crown brought \$10.50. These are followed by the highlight of the sale so far, lot 1040:

1737 Granly Copper, *ob.* "Value me as you please," *rev.* I am good copper, poor impression, but the only one that I have known to be offered of this type, being the rarest of any of this series

Misspellings and selective punctuation aside, the piece sold for \$46, a very high price at the time. It was followed by a Pitt token, "the finest impression I have known to be offered," that brought \$13.50, evidence that at least two bidders agreed with Cogan's assessment of the piece. A 1783 Annapolis sixpence brought \$20. New Jersey coppers are listed in terms regrettably unhelpful to us in determining die varieties, especially since Cogan thought so much of the group that he closed their description by saying "The foregoing Nova Caesareas are the best I have ever known to be offered for sale, and to which I call the especial attention of the collectors."

Some very interesting Immune/Immunis Columbia pieces were also sold at strong prices:

- 1052 Immune Columbia, *ob.* Vermon Auctori, head rubbed, *rev.* very fine for this exceedingly rare type. [brought \$25]
- 1053 Immune Columbia, *ob.* Georgius III, Rex, head same condition as preceding, *rev.* very fine, equally rare. [brought \$27]
- 1057 1786 Immunis Columbia, *rev.* New Jersey Shield, E. Pluribus Unum, in fine condition and very rarely met with. [brought \$56]
- 1066 1787 Immunis Columbia, *rev.* Eagle E. Pluribus Unum, unusually good impression and very scarce. [brought \$18]

Some Washington material closed the sale,<sup>39</sup> with a highlight being an Ugly Head specimen. Cogan introduces the lot description by writing, “The following is the most curious Coin ever offered at Public Sale, and for a more accurate description see Snowden’s account of it in his Book on the pieces, in the Washington Cabinet, where he designates it as *Unique*.” The listing (lot 1116) itself is as follows:

Washington the Great D. G., Head, ugly, *rev*. A circle of Rings, with the initials of each State in one of the Rings. It is a good deal rubbed. An Arrow and Cross stamped on the reverse. The only one besides this, known, is the one alluded to above.

Ugly or not, the piece sold for \$60. (This piece has been thought by some to have been discovered in recent times.) Lot 1115, a Washington copper Getz “cent” sold for \$50, while a piece described as a “Washington Half Dollar similar to 1115,” which is added in manuscript in the copy of the sale in this writer’s library as lot 1116½, sold for \$85.<sup>40</sup> The sale was a great success, with some prices realized that were extraordinarily strong for 1863.

## Conclusion

It appears that when exceptional coins are being offered for sale, it doesn’t matter all that much that there’s a war on. In the final part of this article, I will examine the second half of the Civil War years and discuss how they set the tone for the remainder of the 19th century for coin collecting and, in particular, the study of colonial coins.

## Endnotes

1. The pace at which coins were withdrawn from circulation varied. Banks suspended specie payments in December 1861, causing silver and gold coins to essentially vanish from circulation. To the surprise of Mint officials, the copper-nickel small cents also began to disappear from the marketplace, despite having been present in 1860 in such numbers as to be regarded as a nuisance. The (generally) copper tokens which took their place circulated widely until the Mint began striking cents in bronze in 1864, finally creating a circulating medium that would remain in the marketplace. The U.S. Congress passed prohibitions on the manufacture of private coinage on June 8, 1864. See Don Taxay, *The U.S. Mint and Coinage* (New York: Arco, 1966), pp. 227, 239 and 243.
2. Gengerke, Martin, *American Numismatic Auctions*, CD-ROM, 2002.
3. This argument has also been forwarded to explain the vitality of the U.S. numismatic market during the Second World War.
4. Fanning, David F., “Collectors Who Served in the Civil War,” *Numismatist*, Vol. 117, No. 11 (November 2004), pp. 44–48. Civil War soldiers who would later become significant numismatists include Édouard Frossard, Lyman Low, John Haseltine and George Massamore.
5. On Bramhall, see Bowers, *American Numismatics before the Civil War, 1760–1860* (Wolfeboro, New Hampshire: Bowers and Merena, 1998), pp. 145–149.
6. Mason, Ebenezer Locke, “Personal Numismatic Reminiscences: No. 2, The Numismatic Chums,” *Masons’ Coin Collectors’ Magazine*, Vol. IV, No. 2 (September 1882), p. 25.
7. *ibid.*, pp. 26–27.
8. It is intriguing (if ultimately fruitless) to speculate on how Civil War soldiers may have attempted to continue their numismatic pursuits. The author has in his library an 1862 fixed price list issued by John K. Curtis, a New York coin dealer, signed on the front cover by “J.N.T. Levick / Lt. U.S.V.” It is the only piece of numismatic literature of which I am aware that was signed by a Civil War soldier/numismatist during the war.
9. Mission Viejo, California: George F. Kolbe, 1982. An “Additions and Corrections” supplement was published by Kolbe in 2001. This work is absolutely essential to anyone interested in this subject.
10. Table 1 was compiled by the author with Adams as its basis, but with additional information derived from other sources.

11. American Numismatic Society, *Proceedings*, 1899, p. 15.
12. Adams, op. cit., p. 36.
13. ANS, op. cit., p. 15.
14. The figure of 29 sales includes Strobridge's 1873 descriptive catalogue of the George F. Seavey collection, which was catalogued for sale before being purchased outright by Lorin G. Parmelee.
15. Adams, op. cit., p. 37. As Adams notes, Strobridge's blindness was caused by detached retinas, easily repairable today.
16. Attinelli, Emmanuel Joseph, *Numisgraphics* (1876), reprinted as *A Bibliography of American Numismatic Auction Catalogues, 1828-1875* (Lawrence, Massachusetts: Quarterman, 1976), p. 25.
17. *ibid.* Bowers states (*American Numismatics*, p. 294) that this sum constituted a record price for a numismatic sale, but that appears only to be true if one disregards the addendum to the Bogert sale of 1859.
18. *The C4 Newsletter*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (Fall 2007), pp. 14–24. Part One can be found in Vol. 15, No. 2 (Summer 2007), pp. 34–41.
19. Attinelli, op. cit., p. 26.
20. Adams, op. cit., pp. 25–27.
21. Levine, Steve. "A Biography of W. Elliot Woodward." Available online at <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Ithaca/2594/woodward/wewoodwardbiography.html>. Levine is Woodward's great-great-grandson.
22. The *Bibliotheca Americana* sale of 1869 was the largest sale from Woodward's library, with 6,810 lots catalogued in 668 pages, though at least three other libraries were disposed by him at auction.
23. For more on Woodward, see Charles Davis, "W. Elliot Woodward, A Few Notes and New Plates," *The Asylum*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (Winter 1992), pp. 13–21.
24. On Finotti, see Edward P. Spillane's entry for him in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Volume VI (New York: Robert Appleton, 1909).
25. On the misperception of the Willow Tree coinage during this time, see Walter Breen, *Walter Breen's Complete Encyclopedia of U.S. and Colonial Coins* (New York: FCI/Doubleday, 1988), p. 12.
26. Though often ascribed to the 1860s, the piece is discussed and depicted in the 1858 issue of *Norton's Literary Letter*, one of the few publications in antebellum America to publish numismatic content.
27. Dickeson, Montroville Wilson, *The American Numismatic Manual of the Currency or Money of the Aborigines, and Colonial, State, and United States Coins. With Historical and Descriptive Notices of Each Coin or Series* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott and Co., 1860), pp. 89–90. Dickeson cites a Mr. Howard, of New York City, as owning the only specimen known to him. This was probably Winslow J. Howard, a notable collector.
28. Attinelli, op. cit., p. 27.
29. Attinelli, op. cit., p. 21.
30. *ibid.*
31. Prime, William C. (editor). *Coins, Medals, and Seals, Ancient and Modern. Illustrated and Described*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1861.
32. Courtesy of a Knickerbocker bibliophile.
33. Adams, op. cit., pp. 28 and 38. The author wishes to thank Dan Hamelberg for the use of his annotated copy of the Smith catalogue while preparing this article.
34. Attinelli, op. cit., p. 28.
35. Woodward regularly included listings of his past sales in his auction catalogues, such as in his Sale 50 (The Ralston Collection, October 16–18, 1882).
36. The cover of the sale catalogue gives Cleveland, Ohio as Smith's hometown, while Q. David Bowers gives it as Pawtucket, Rhode Island (*American Numismatics*, op. cit., p. 343).
37. Aug. 24–28, 1976 (lot 72). Thanks to Anne Bentley for providing this information.

38. Adams calls this sale Cogan's eleventh, though it should be pointed out that the ninth sale is actually the descriptive catalogue of the "C. De Haven" collection, which was sold *en masse* to William Lilliendahl.
39. I find it necessary, despite the focus of these articles, to mention that this sale featured an excellent group of 1792 pattern coins that brought extremely high prices. A 1792 lettered edge Birch cent brought \$205, an absolutely amazing price for the time. The 1792 pattern piece usually described as a quarter (here described as a pattern cent, revealing it as one of the two known copper specimens) sold for \$110. A silver centered cent brought \$85, while a 1792 half disme ("the most beautiful impression ever offered at public auction") went for \$30.
40. Although the description of lot 1115 neither states the metal in which the piece was struck nor presumes to assign a denomination to it, the differentiation of the manuscript lot 1116½ as a "half dollar" similar otherwise to lot 1115 makes me fairly certain that lot 1115 is the copper Getz "cent."

### **Figure Captions**

Figure 1 — Early coin dealer Ebenezer Locke Mason of Philadelphia, as depicted in his "Photographic Gallery of the Coin Collectors of the United States" (published in the March 1869 issue of *Mason's Monthly Coin and Stamp Collectors' Magazine*).

Figure 2 — Pioneering numismatist Joseph N.T. Levick, whose activities spanned the period from before the Civil War to after the turn of the twentieth century.

Figure 3 — William H. Strobridge was one of the most sophisticated of the early American coin dealers. (Courtesy of George F. Kolbe.)

Figure 4 — Woodward's groundbreaking sale of the Finotti collection.

Figure 5 — Winslow Howard's sketch of the "Kart Hago" piece that some thought to be a New Jersey "penny."

See Table I on following page.

**Table 1: Nineteenth-Century Numismatic Auction Catalogues Rated A for Colonials by Adams (1982)**

<b>Catalogue Issuer</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Collection</b>
William H. Strobridge	May 26–28, 1862	William A. Lilliendahl
W. Elliot Woodward	November 11–14, 1862	Rev. Joseph M. Finotti
Bangs	January 19–23, 1863	Benjamin Haines*
William H. Strobridge and W. Elliot Woodward <sup>†</sup>	March 24–26, 1863	Henry A. Smith
Edward Cogan	April 7–8, 1863	
W. Elliot Woodward	April 28–May 1, 1863	Brooks, Colburn, Finotti, Field, Shurtleff
W. Elliot Woodward	October 20–24, 1863	Jeremiah Colburn
W. Elliot Woodward	May 17–21, 1864	John F. McCoy
W. Elliot Woodward	October 18–22, 1864	Levick, Emery, Ilesley, Abbey
W. Elliot Woodward	March 20–25, 1865	Bache et al.
W. Elliot Woodward	December 19, 1865 <sup>‡</sup>	Bertsch et al.
W. Elliot Woodward	October 28–November 2, 1867	Joseph J. Mickley
Ebenezer Locke Mason	October 4–7, 1870	William Fewsmith
Edward Cogan	February 27–March 3, 1871	Gov. Packer
William H. Strobridge and W. Elliot Woodward	December 5–7, 1871	Dr. Charles Clay
John W. Haseltine	December 18, 1872	
William H. Strobridge	1873	Seavey/Parmelee <sup>§</sup>
W. Elliot Woodward <sup>#</sup>	February 23–26, 1874	
William H. Strobridge	June 12, 1876	Parmelee/Brevoort
John W. Haseltine	May 21–24, 1879	Lyman Wilder
W. Elliot Woodward	October 13–16, 1880	Ferguson Haines
John W. Haseltine	February 23–24, 1882	T.B. Gregory
S.H. and H. Chapman	June 20–24, 1882	Charles I. Bushnell
John W. Haseltine	June 27–29, 1883	Sylvester S. Crosby
W. Elliot Woodward	January 8–10, 1884	Heman Ely
Ed Frossard	October 2–3, 1884	Ed Frossard
W. Elliot Woodward	April 2–3, 1885	Clark, Blake and Cochrane
W. Elliot Woodward	April 27–29, 1886	J.S. Twining
Harlan P. Smith	June 21, 1886	Dr. Edward Maris <sup>+</sup>
W. Elliot Woodward and Ed Frossard	May 21–25, 1888	George M. Klein (Vicksburg I)
New York Coin and Stamp	January 20–24, 1890	R. Coulton Davis
New York Coin and Stamp	June 25–27, 1890	Lorin G. Parmelee
S.H. and H. Chapman	August 10–11, 1893	C.T. Whitman
S.H. and H. Chapman	December 16–17, 1895	Richard B. Winsor

\* catalogued by the consignor

† while Woodward was involved with the sale, Strobridge appears to be the author

‡ and days following

§ descriptive catalogue of the

Seavey collection purchased by Parmelee

# catalogued by Strobridge

+ catalogued by Dr. Maris