

# Cumberland Coins

## The Volunteer Coin Club Newsletter January, 2019

# HAPPY NEW YEAR

### Next Meeting

Our next meeting will on Tuesday January 8<sup>th</sup> starting at 6:30. The meeting will be held at the 127 Senior Center on Highway 127 (Main Street) South of town. Doors open at 6:00.

It's back to business after the busy holidays. The end of the fiscal year is coming up in March and the 2019 club dues will be due in April. I will be accepting dues at the meeting if you want to get them paid early. Dues are still \$10.00, \$15.00 for couples and \$5.00 for juniors.

We will have our business meeting, show and tell, raffle, member prize drawing, and auction. I hope we have a good turnout in spite of the questionable weather this time of year.

### Coin Lore

#### Death to Traitors

*by Bill Groom*

A few years prior to the outbreak of the Civil War, famed abolitionist, John Brown, attacked and took possession of the U.S. Arsenal at Harper's Ferry, West Virginia (then Virginia). His intent was to arm slaves and start a revolt. The insurrection failed, with many of Brown's followers being killed or captured. Brown was hung on a gallows. The contemporary medal below, dated 1859, commemorates that event.



The obverse portrays a bust of Brown with the surrounding legend: *SLAVERY, THE SUM OF ALL VILLANY*. The reverse illustrates Brown, hanging on a gallows, surrounded by the words: *GIVE ME LIBERTY OR GIVE ME DEATH*. The words within the perimeter read: *RESISTANCE TO TYRANNY IS OBEDIENCE TO GOD - 1859*. This 31.9mm medal, struck in white metal, was a product of George Hampden Lovett.

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In 1861, the Scovill Company of Waterbury, Connecticut produced the below medal in response to the secession of the Confederacy and election of Jefferson Davis. Davis, hanging from a gallows, was portrayed as no less a traitor than John Brown. These were produced in brass and measured 24mm. Many of these “medalets” or small medals were “silvered” or zinc-plated. Many were holed in order to be worn on a lapel.

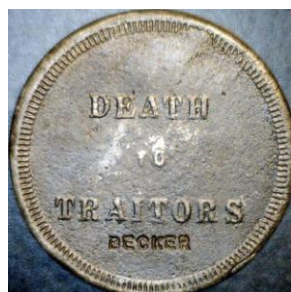


Given their Civil War connection and their subject matter, collectors have long prized these Brown and Davis pieces. As with coins, condition is of paramount concern. That said, their scarcity in the market- place tends to drive prices upwards; this, even for those in lower grades.

### An Aside ....

During the centennial years of the Civil War, 1961-65, many original tokens and medals were copied. Note that this occurred prior to the Hobby Protection Act of 1973. This required that copies be marked as such, stamped **COPY**. Arguably one of the best engravers of the twentieth century was a NY City man, named Peter Rosa. He reproduced many coins, tokens and medals, dating back to ancient times. He saw his work as a means for collectors to own copies of pieces that they might never otherwise be able to afford. Rosa, who died about twenty years ago, was an honorable man. He had admired the work of an early German engraver, named Carl Becker, so Rosa used a **BECKER** counterstamp on many of his products in order to distinguish them from the originals. Yes, Rosa's copies were that good!

Pictured below is a **BECKER** stamped copy of the above “Death to Traitors” piece. Note that it's not brass and appears to be made of lead or some pot metal. Still, the detail is quite convincing, and these will fool most collectors and dealers who fail to research them. Also pictured is Rosa's copy of the rare Higley, colonial copper. Note the **BECKER** counterstamp on the rim of this most deceptive coin.



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These BECKER pieces have been gaining collector recognition in recent years. It's not unusual to see them sell for \$100 or more. On the downside, Peter Rosa's dies still exist and are believed to be in the hands of a family member. The future will tell where they travel. To research these and similarly uncommon tokens, medals and the like Google searches can reveal much. Use quotation marks to narrow the scope and results for key words .... for example: "Jefferson Davis", 1861, "Becker", "Peter Rosa", token. Happy hunting!

### Area Coin Shows

**January 5 Knoxville;** Coin Show, Rothchild Conference Center, 8807 Kingston Pike (I-40 exit #378).

**February 2-3, 2019 Knoxville;** 54th Annual Coin Show. Rothchild Catering and Conference Center, 8807 Kingston Pike.

**February 17, 2019 Cookeville;** Coin Show, Upper Cumberland Coin Club. County Parks and Recreation Building. 240 Carlen Road #B.

**March 1-3 Chattanooga;** Tennessee State Numismatic Society (TSNS). Spring Coin Show. Camp Jordan Arena, I-75, Exit 1.

### This Month's Raffle Prizes

		<b>Est. Grade</b>
1921	Morgan Dollar (Semi-Proof-like)	AU-Unc
1907-O	Barber Half	Good
1845	Large Cent (Nice Type Coin)	VF
1866	Shield Nickel (1st Year Type w/RAYS)	Good
1899	Liberty Nickel	Fine
1937-D	Buffalo Nickel (Beautiful Type Coin)	AU-Unc

### **Door Prize**

1955-S & 1937-S Silver  
Dime (Better dates)

BU & Fine