

Six Fantastic Coins Recently Handled By DC Numismatics

Coin One - 1860 Half Dime NGCMS67

This specimen looked as though it had been dipped into a pot of melted Skittles (the candy). Completely lustrous and frosty across all surfaces, the toning was original and vibrant. Strike was razor sharp and there were absolutely no marks in the fields or on the devices. Some people say they like these issues “white” but I would take a colorful coin like this one over a “white” coin any day of the week. The wreath, grain and corn on the reverse were so well struck that you could count every kernel of corn.

With regards to scarcity, there are a handful of 1860 half dimes that reside in PCGS or NGC MS67 holders. Currently PCGS has graded 19 in MS67 with 5 MS68's as the finest known. PCGS has graded 27 in MS67 with a single MS68 as the finest known. In the last major rare coin bull market of 1989, this coin had bluesheet levels of \$10,800 at both PCGS and NGC. At today's levels this coin sells for significantly less than \$4,000 and would seem to be a fantastic buy!

Coin Two - 1863 \$10 Judd-350 PCGSPR65BN

I am a major believer in collecting the gold denomination patterns struck in off-metals (copper and aluminum being the most practical). The opportunity to be had in these patterns is huge and they are patterns that can be collected and invested in with a lot of pride and passion. This 1863 copper eagle in PCGSPR65BN is a die pairing of the regular obverse die with a reverse die that is regular except for the words “God Our Trust” on a scroll above the eagle's head (*the motto “In God We Trust” was not put on regular federal issue eagles until 1866 via the Act of March 3, 1865.*). Classified as a Rarity 6 issue, PCGS has graded a total of 16 pieces in all grades with 4 in PR65 BN and 2 in PR66BN as the finest known. NGC has graded only 6 specimens, with a single PR65BN as the finest known.

In comparison, the 1863 federal issue eagle is a rarity with a mintage of only 1,248 pieces. It is extremely difficult to find and the last piece I handled was a low AU coin that was sold for around \$30,000. PCGS has graded 20 1863 federal issue eagles in all grades with a single MS63 coin as the only mint state example and the finest known. NGC has graded 14 coins total with a single MS63 as the finest and one other mint state coin, a MS60. Therefore around 30-40 1863 federal issue eagles exist in mint state at both PCGS and NGC. There are about 20 or so proof federal issue 1863 gold eagles graded at PCGS and NGC. They tend to come in the Proof 63 to Proof 64 grade range and they are very expensive.

Therefore, if one wants to acquire a federal issue 1863 business strike eagle they will have to most likely settle for an XF or AU specimen and it will cost anywhere from \$15,000 to \$40,000. For a federal issue proof 1863 eagle, we are talking \$25,000 + easy. This 1863 pattern Judd-350 eagle in copper is a great deal and a great purchase when one considers you can buy it in gem condition (as one of the finest) for a price less than

\$10,000! Please note that the only off-metal offering of the 1863 pattern is in copper, no aluminum strikings are known.

(For more information on gold denomination die trials please read my upcoming article on this subject)

Coin Three - 1865 \$20 Judd-453 Type I \$20 PCGSPR64BN

This is probably one of the coolest coins I have handled in the past 4 months. Not only is this piece bizarre and beautiful in appearance, it is rare and represents several numismatic landmarks. First, historically speaking, the 1865 double eagle is the last issue of the Type I double eagles (Type I double eagles did not have the motto "*In God We Trust*" on the reverse above the eagle). Philadelphia and San Francisco both struck double eagles in 1865. The San Francisco double eagles are generally known as *S.S. Brother Jonathan* dates due to their recovery from the *S.S. Brother Jonathan* shipwreck. When minted in 1865 at San Francisco, 1,042,500 were produced. Over 500 1865-S double eagles were recovered from the *S.S. Brother Jonathan* and now the 1865-S is a relatively easy issue to find.

The Philadelphia 1865 double eagle is another story. Only 351,175 were minted and this has always been a relatively hard issue to locate in the mid to higher AU grades. In mint state, the 1865 double eagle from Philadelphia is extremely hard to find and MS61 coins are Condition Census. Interestingly enough, the numismatic and shipwreck communities are on the verge of another find, the *S.S. Republic*. This wreckage is thought to be carrying a large quantity of coins from the year 1865 and it is entirely possible that the composition of the 1865 double eagle population could be substantially increased.

Now.....we come to this pattern. The Judd-453 is a die pairing of the regular federal issue 1865 obverse die with a Type II reverse die (a die with the motto "*In God We Trust*" above the eagle, adopted in 1866). Therefore, this pattern is what is called a "transitional issue". The Judd-453 comes in three varieties J-453, J-453A and J-453B. These varieties represent coins struck in copper, silver and aluminum, respectively. The Judd-453 handled by DC Numismatics was the copper issue. Classified as a High Rarity 6 issue, PCGS has graded a total of 11 coins and NGC has graded a total of 5 coins. PCGS has graded 2 PR64BN specimens and 4 PR64RB specimens with two gem coins finer (a Proof 66 BN the finest).

It is the appearance of this coin that is amazing. The copper surfaces have aged with a mixture of sea-green color and gun-metal blue spread across the fields like someone stirred the color. Tan to sand color highlights are on the highpoints and luster exists in the fields. Truly one of the coolest coins I have seen in a while.

Coin Four - 1872 \$20 Judd-1251 NGCPF61BN "Amazonian"

An extremely popular design by Barber and referred to as the "Amazonian" double eagle. The year 1872 saw the creation of Barber's Amazonian series of United States coinage. These designs were found on the quarter dollar, half dollar, silver dollar, gold dollar, quarter eagle, three dollar, half eagle, eagle and double eagle. The "Amazonian" design for the silver coinage depicted Liberty sitting in a throne with her left arm resting on the butt of a sword and a shield and her right arm atop the head of an eagle. The design for gold coinage was, as you can see from the photo, a portrait of Liberty's head with flowing hair and a reverse design of a large eagle with shield. Barber's "Amazonian" designs are one of the most famous and sought after of pattern coinage. The present piece is no exception.

Struck in copper, this double eagle has reddish-brown surfaces with some light spotting in areas. Graded Proof 61, I actually think this grade is a little conservative as there are no major marks and the hairlines are slight. Truly a beautiful obverse portrait and a very liquid coin in this grade. The reverse is just as strong as the obverse. Some light spotting underneath the EN of TWENTY.

This coin is rare! PCGS has graded 2 coins, an AU specimen in BN and RB specimen in Proof64. NGC has graded 3 coins as well, a Proof 64, a Proof 66 and this specimen. A serious High Rarity 7 coin that is amazingly cheap from my perspective considering I recently sold this coin for less than \$17,500. *Note that this issue does come in Gilt copper as well.*

Coin Five - 1871 BG-717 25c PCGSMS67

Tied for Finest Known for the issue and one of only 9 Period II quarters that exist in MS67. PCGS has currently graded 2 BG-717's in MS67. Personally, I cannot imagine a coin being finer than this piece and I consider this the Finest BG-717. Completely proof-like fields and original gun-metal blue toning in the upper obverse fields. Die State III. Frontier & Co. produced these dated reverses from 1864 to 1871. As stated earlier, there are only 9 MS67 quarters in the entire California Fractional Gold Series and they are all octagonal quarters. In all, there are only 11 California Fractional Gold pieces that grade MS67 (*the other two being half dollars and the BG-907 being the next highlighted coin*). What you are looking at is one of the Finest California Fractional Gold pieces known to exist!

Coin Six - 1869 BG-907 50c PCGSMS67 Finest Known!

This is the finest known BG-907 half dollar and one of only two half dollars in the entire California Fractional Gold Series that is graded MS67. In fact, this is one of only two large denomination issues that exist in MS67 (half dollars and dollars). This specimen in MS67 is a little more impressive than the only other known half dollar in MS67 due to overall rarity. The other MS67 half dollar is a BG-1010 which is one of the most common half dollars in the Cal Gold Series. There are only 37 BG-907 issues graded at

PCGS versus 132 BG-1010 issues graded. The luster on this piece is mind-boggingly beautiful and there are absolutely no problems on the planchet or in the fields.

Perfection!

I consider this to be Finest Known and most significant high grade half dollar in the California Fractional Gold Series. This is a serious coin for the collector/investor. In a segment of U.S. numismatics that many consider to be undervalued, this coin could not be any more attractive as a sound investment!