

LINCOLN LORE

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FIVE RARITIES IN LINCOLN NUMISMATICS

Little occasion is offered in Lincoln Lore to discuss medallions featuring Abraham Lincoln but there is little doubt with reference to whose likeness has most often appeared on medals in the history of American numismatics. The Lincoln National Life Foundation has over 1200 separate pieces, all different, bearing the profile of Lincoln and catalogued under the King arrangement. It would appear to be of interest to note five rarities in the Foundation collection. However, one of them is a bronze instead of the gold one mentioned in the text.

Presidential Silver Peace Medal

One of the customs of long practice in relation to the Presidents of the United States with the Indians, was the presentation to Indian chiefs of medals bearing the likeness of each newly inaugurated President. They were primarily expressions of good will and apparently were cherished by the recipients. Executive document No. 47 in the House of Representatives dated February 2, 1865, and entitled "Medals for Indian Chiefs" asks for an appropriation for \$5,000 "to provide for the usual distribution of medals to the Indians." It also stated that, "In the year 1861 a fund of five thousand dollars was provided for this purpose. The medals purchased with that appropriation have been for some time exhausted."

The medallions struck in silver were to be presented to "leading and influential Indian chiefs." A copy in the Foundation collection is pierced with a hole enabling the chief who once owned it to suspend it from a necklace as it was usually worn on the breast. The obverse side reveals a portrait of Lincoln looking to the left with the inscription "Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States." It also bears the date "1862." The reverse side depicts an Indian plowing in contrast to two Indians, the one scalping the other. The sculptor's name "S. Ellis" appears on the medal and it was made in two sizes, 77 mm and 63 mm.

French-Swiss Gold Medal

Students of numismatics would agree that the most valuable Lincoln medal ever struck from a die is the French-Swiss gold medallion presented to Mrs. Abraham Lincoln after the assassination of her husband. Shortly after the death of Lincoln a subscription list was circulated among the democratic constituency in France. A maximum limit of two sous per capita was set which allowed forty thousand French citizens to participate in the memorial gift. A letter of presentation accompanied the medallion, signed by twenty outstanding Frenchmen, with Victor Hugo, the concluding signer.

The obverse side of the medallion portrays a profile of Lincoln facing to the right with the inscription in French "Dedie Par La Democratie Francaise A. Lincoln President Deux Fois Elu Des Etats-Unis." The reverse side presents a female figure, Hope, who extends a wreath to two slaves. Many other symbols embellish the background with a tablet inscribed, "Lincoln L'Honnete Homme Abolit L'Esclavage Retablil L'Union, Sauva La Republique Sans Voiler La Statue De La Liberté Il Fut Assasine Le 14 Avril 1865." The piece of gold is 83 mm in diameter.

Objection of Emperor Napoleon III to have the democratic memorial struck in France caused the dies to be sent to Switzerland where the work was done, and which

caused it to be known as the French-Swiss medal. The name of the die-sinker "Franky Magniadas" appears on both sides of the medal. Robert Lincoln, son of Mary Todd Lincoln presented this memorial piece to the Library of Congress. The Foundation is fortunate to have a copy from the same dies struck off in bronze.

A.M.A.S. White Metal Medallion

Shortly after the death of President Lincoln the American Numismatic and Archaeological Society resolved that a medal "creditable alike to its distinguished subject and to the society should be struck." Mr. Emil Sigle, the sculptor cut the dies of "unusual thickness and great relief" so that only sixteen impressions in white metal had been struck before the dies broke. This inscription on the sixteen original medals identifies them; "Emil Sigle Fecit."

The portrait of Lincoln looking right with the inscription "Salvator-Patriae" is on the obverse side while the reverse side within a wreath there is inscribed these words, "In Memory of the Acts and Death of Abraham Lincoln. Born February 12, 1809. Died April 15, 1865." Other dies were prepared and later copies were struck on planchets already cast, to relieve the pressure on the dies. These medallions were at least 5 mm thick and 83 mm in diameter.

Chicago Sanitary Fair Bronze Metal

A memorial medallion issued by the Chicago Sanitary Fair at Chicago in 1865 presents a strange coincident. In the die for the obverse side of the medal a slight crack developed which is distinguishable in most of the medallions. It extends from the base of the brain to the right eye following almost identically the same course of the bullet fired by Booth. The obverse side in addition to the profile of Lincoln facing right carries this inscription above the figure, "Memoria in Aeterna" and this inscription "Abraham Lincoln." Also under the bust is the name of the die-sinker "Paquet F." The bronze medal is 57½ mm in diameter and 500 of them were struck off.

Roiné Centennial Silver Medal

The Lincoln Centennial observances in 1909 were responsible for the appearance of a large number of medals bearing that date. *The Numismatist* magazine for February 1924 lists 105 different specimens for which dies were used in the striking of Lincoln centennial medals for that year. The most desirable one from the viewpoint of the collector is the Roiné Silver Medal encased in a book of seventy pages and limited to 100 numbered copies. There was also an edition published in bronze.

A statement issued with the preliminary announcement of the medal advises one that "on the 12th of February 1909 the dies of the medal are to be cancelled and then deposited in the collection of the American Numismatic Society." The obverse side shows a profile of Lincoln looking to the left with the inscription "1809" and "1865". The reverse side contains an ornamental wreath in which there is inscribed, "Liberator Emancipation Proclamation signed January first 1864." Under this inscription a facsimile signature "Abraham Lincoln" appears. Under the wreath the date "1909" is inscribed and the words "Centennial Commemoration." The sculptor was Edouard J. Roiné of Paris and his medallion measures 63 mm in diameter.