



# YN-SIDER

A Monthly Publication of the Ozarks' Coin Club's YN Program

## JANUARY 2024

### MEET THE SHIELD NICKEL

The Shield nickel was the first United States five-cent piece to be made out of copper-nickel, the same alloy of which American nickels are struck today. Designed by James B. Longacre, the coin was issued from 1866 until 1883, when it was replaced by the Liberty Head nickel. The coin takes its name from the motif on its obverse, and was the first five-cent coin referred to as a "nickel"—silver pieces of that denomination had been known as half dimes.

Silver half dimes had been struck from the early days of the United States Mint in the late 18th century. Those disappeared from circulation, along with most other coins, in the economic turmoil of the Civil War. In 1864, the Mint successfully introduced low-denomination coins, whose intrinsic worth did not approach their face value. Industrialist Joseph Wharton advocated coins containing nickel—a metal in which he had significant financial interests. When the Mint proposed a copper-nickel five-cent piece, Congress required that the coin be heavier than the Mint had suggested, allowing Wharton to sell more of the metal to the government.

Longacre's design was based on his two-cent pieces, and it symbolizes the strength of a unified America. The nickel proved difficult to strike and the reverse, or tails, design was modified in 1867. Even so, production difficulties continued, causing many minor varieties which are collected today. Minting of the Shield nickel for circulation was suspended in 1876 for a period of over two years due to a glut of low-denomination coinage and it was struck in only small quantities until 1882. The following year, the coin was replaced by Charles E. Barber's Liberty head design.

The Shield nickel series has yielded a large number of varieties. Specialists have found more than sixty different doubled die varieties, caused by misalignment when the heated die was repeatedly pressed against the hub to transfer the design. There are several different kinds of repunched dates, including a variety in which the numeral "1" is much smaller than usually found on the Shield nickel.

As with many denominations of United States coins, there are two major varieties of the 1873 piece. The initial variety, known as the "close 3" or "closed 3", was struck first. These coins led to a complaint by the chief coiner, A. Loudon Snowden. Snowden stated that the numeral "3" in the date too closely resembled an "8". The Mint prepared new date punches, in which the arms of the 3 did not curl around toward the center, creating the second variety, the "open 3".

The final year of production saw an overdate, 1883/2, with a visible "2" under or near the digit "3". This variety was caused by the use of 1882-dated dies which were not destroyed at the end of the year, but were instead repunched with a four-digit logotype, "1883". Five different dies are known to have been so re-used.



To the left is the obverse of the Shield nickel.



To the left is the reverse that was used until 1867.



To the right is the reverse that was used until 1883.

# YN Assignment for February 2024

## EAGLES

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

1. When was the \$10 gold eagle first minted? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Who is depicted on the obverse on the \$10 gold eagle? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Who designed the Indian Head gold eagle in 1907? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Who is depicted on the obverse of the Indian Head Gold Eagle? \_\_\_\_\_
5. The 1907 Gold Eagle was missing what motto? \_\_\_\_\_
6. When were the first double eagles coined? \_\_\_\_\_
7. How many coins were minted in 1849? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What coin is thought by many to be the most beautiful U.S. Coin? \_\_\_\_\_
9. The high relief double eagle of 1907 had what kind of numeral? \_\_\_\_\_
10. What explains the high value for coins that, judged only by their initial mintages, would otherwise be more common? \_\_\_\_\_

If any YN is unable to attend the meeting, the assignment may be mailed to:

YN Advisor  
PO Box 3913  
Springfield, MO 65808

10 correct	3 YN dollars
9 correct	2 YN dollars
8 correct	1 YN dollar



Left: reverse of American Eagle from 1986-2021

Right: reverse of American Eagle from 2021 to present

