

Jackpot Coins

by Vince Migliore

Most of the coins you find with your metal detector are worth no more than face value. Every once in a while, however, you can find a coin that has collector value. And on an extraordinary occasion you may even find an exceptionally rare coin that has tremendous value to the coin collector. These are the Jackpot Coins.

Older coins are generally more desirable, but what really adds to a coin's value is its rarity or scarceness. In coin collecting, the rarest and therefore most valuable coins are those with limited editions, mint die errors, double strikes, and unusual designs. Coins are also rated by a grading system based on the wear and appearance of the coin. With so many denominations, variations, and grades, it can be tough to search through the mountain of information on American coins. Fortunately (or maybe not so fortunately) for the metal detectorist, the grade of coins found in the ground is going to be pretty low, with a grade of Fine (F-12) being about as good as it gets for buried currency. The F-12 grade corresponds to moderate or considerable wear with the design still visible.

The chart below summarizes the most outstanding of the Jackpot Coins. Make no mistake, though; there are volumes of books on numismatics (coin collecting) and there is no easy way to cut through all the clutter. The chart simply calls your attention to the coins that require further investigation. If you have a large number of coins your best bet is to buy a price guide, such as "A Guide Book of United States Coins, 2012" by R.S. Yeoman, the Official Red Book. Such books provide pictures and references to help identify grade levels and design variations. Even if you don't hit the jackpot, some of these older coins can be worth hundreds of dollars

In the meantime, it's best to treat all your finds as if they have collector value. You can start by being careful not to scratch the coins when you retrieve them, and don't rub the dirt off or use cleaning agents. A simple soap and water rinse will generally get them clean enough to see the date and denomination, and then you can see if you have a winner on your hands.

The chart classifies coins into three broad categories; those valued at about \$1,000 or more; those valued about \$10,000 or more; and the truly rare coins valued at over \$50,000. Before you quit your day job, be sure to check out more reliable sources and descriptions than we have room for here. Remember too there are many replicas, fakes, and hoaxes for the really rare coins. More often than not, however, you will be pleasantly surprised at finding how many of your coins have collector value.

Coin Values for Metal Detecting

Vince Migliore, Jan. 2012

USING Fine F-12 - Features are worn but visible.

COIN	DATE	Over ~ \$1,000	Over ~ \$10,000	Over ~ \$50,000
COLONIAL & CONTRACT				
- Pre-1800 coins	Pre-1800	Most	Many	Few
HALF CENT				
- Liberty Cap	1793 - 1797	All	1796	1797 gripped edge
- Draped Bust	1800 - 1808	1802 2 over 0 DD 2nd reverse; 1805 small 5, stems	-	1802 2 over 0 DD reverse of 1800
- Classic Head	1809 - 1836	1811 ~ \$800	-	-
- Braided Hair	1840 - 1857	-	-	-
LARGE CENT				
- Flowing Hair	1793	1793 Wreath reverse	1793 chain reverse	1793 strawberry leaf
- Liberty Cap	1793 - 1796	1794 w '93 head; 1796	1793; 1794 starred reverse; 1795 Jefferson hd, plain edge	-
- Draped Bust	1796 - 1807	1796 LIHERTY error; 1804; 1807 sm date, 7/6 DD blunt 1	1796 stemless; 1799 & DD; 1803 lg. date, sm. fraction	-
- Classic Head	1808 - 1814	-	-	-
- Liberty Head	1816 - 1857	1839 9/6 DD plain cords	-	-
SMALL CENT (PENNY)				
- Flying Eagle	1856 - 1858	1856	-	-
- Indian Head	1859 - 1909	1877; 1888 8/7 DD	-	-
- Lincoln Wheat	1909 - 1958	1809-S VDB; 1922 no D; 1955 DD date	-	-
- Lincoln Memorial	1959 - 2008	-	-	-
2-CENT				
- Two Cent	1864 - 1873	1873 open 3 restrike DD	-	-

		Over ~ \$1,000	Over ~ \$10,000	Over ~ \$50,000
3-CENT				
- Silver 3-cent	1851 - 1873	-	-	-
- Nickel 3-cent	1865 - 1889	-	-	-
5-CENT				
- Shield Nickel	1866 - 1883	-	-	-
- Liberty Head	1883 - 1913	1885 ~ \$800	-	-
- Buffalo Nickel	1913 - 1938	1916 DD date; 1918-D 8/7 DD; 1936-D & 37-D 3-legged	-	-
- Jefferson Nickel	1938 - date	-	-	-
HALF-DIME				
- Flowing Hair	1794 - 1795	1794, 1795	-	-
- Draped Bust	1796 - 1805	All	-	-
- Capped Bust	1829 - 1837	-	-	-
- Liberty Seated	1837 - 1873	-	-	-
DIME				
- Draped Bust	1796 - 1807	All		
- Capped Bust	1809 - 1837	1822; 1824 4/2 DD pointed 1	1829 curl base 2	-
- Liberty Seated	1837 - 1891	1871-CC to 74-CC (Carson City)	-	-
- Barber / Liberty Head	1892 - 1916	-	-	-
- Mercury Dime	1916 - 1945	1916-D	-	-
- Roosevelt Dime	1946 - date	-	-	-
20-CENT				
- Liberty Seated	1875 - 1878	-	-	-

		Over ~ \$1,000	Over ~ \$10,000	Over ~ \$50,000
25-CENT				
- Draped Bust	1796 -1807	1804, 05, 06	1796	-
- Capped Bust	1815 - 1838	1822 25 over 50-cent DD; 1824 4/2 DD date	-	1823 3/2 DD
- Liberty Seated	1838 - 1891	1849-O; 1854-O huge O; 1860-S; 1871-CC & 72-CC; 1872-S	1870-CC; 1873-CC;	-
- Barber / Liberty Head	1892 - 1916	1896-S; 1913-S	1901-S	-
- Standing Liberty	1916 - 1930	1916; 1918 8/7 DD		
- Washington Quarter	1932 - date	-	-	-
HALF DOLLAR				
- Flowing Hair	1794 - 1795	All	1794	-
- Draped Bust	1796 - 1807	1801 & 1802, 1806 E/A in States;		1796, 1797, 1806 nob 6 no stem;
- Capped Bust, Let. Edge	1807 - 1836	1812 2/1 DD lg 8; 1812 single leaf; 1815 5/2 DD; 1830 lg letters		1817 7/4 DD
- Capped Bust, Reeded	1836 - 1839	1836	1839 small letters rev.	
- Liberty Seated	1839 - 1891	1842 sm let & date; 1844-O DD date; 1847 7/6 DD; 1870-CC; 1873 open 3; 1874-CC; 1878-CC	1878-S	1853-O
- Barber / Liberty Head	1892 - 1915	1820-O micro O;	-	-
- Walking Liberty	1916 - 1947	-	-	-
- Franklin Half Dollar	1948 - 1963	-	-	-
- Kennedy Half Dollar	1964 - date	-	-	-
DOLLAR COINS				
- Flowing Hair	1794-1795	1795	-	1794
- Draped Bust	1795 - 1804	All	-	-
- 1804 Dollar (rarest)	1804	-	-	All (extremely rare)

		Over ~ \$1,000	Over ~ \$10,000	Over ~ \$50,000
- Gobrecht Dollar	1836 - 1839	Most circulated	Most uncirculated VF-20+	Some restrikes
- Seated Liberty	1840 - 1873	1854, 55, 58; 1871-CC & 72-CC	1851 orig. high date; 1852 orig.; 1873-CC	1870-S
- Trade Dollars	1873 - 1885	-	-	-
- Morgan Dollars	1878 - 1921	1889-CC, 1893-S	-	-
- Peace Dollar	1921 - 1935	-	-	-
- Eisenhower Dollar	1971 - 1978	-	-	-
- Susan B. Anthony	1979 - 1999	-	-	-
- Sacagawea Dollar	2000 - 2008	-	-	-

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