

Sale Name: \$1 1798 DRAPED DOLLAR, KEY DATE MORGAN SILVER DOLLARS AND PEACE, PCGS OLD GREEN HOLDERS, SILVER BULLION, UNITED STATES TYPE COINS, CURRENCY. JUNE 9TH

LOT 37 - STUNNING UNCIRCULATED 1935 BUFFALO NICKEL



Description

The Franklin Half Dollar: A Legacy of Design and Controversy

The Franklin Half Dollar, minted from 1948 to 1960, holds a unique place in American coinage history. It replaced the Barber Half Dollar, which had been in circulation since 1892, and introduced a bold new design featuring Benjamin Franklin, one of the Founding Fathers.

Here's a comprehensive look at the Franklin Half Dollar's history and specifications:

Historical Context:

- **Post-War Change:** Following World War II, the U.S. Mint sought to modernize the designs of its coinage. The Barber Half Dollar, with its elaborate wreath and flowing hair on Liberty's portrait, was deemed outdated.
- **Shifting Focus:** The Mint aimed to celebrate prominent American figures on its coins. Benjamin Franklin, a polymath known for his scientific pursuits, political contributions, and role in the American Revolution, was chosen for the new half dollar.

Design Features:

- **Obverse (Heads):** Designed by John Ragnar Hoversen, it depicts a right-facing bust of Benjamin Franklin with his bifocals perched on his nose. This was the first time eyeglasses were featured on a U.S. coin, sparking some initial controversy.
- **Reverse (Tails):** Designed by Mint sculptor Gilroy Roberts, it showcases a Liberty Bell inscribed with the date and surrounded by 13 stars, representing the original colonies.

Specifications:

- **Diameter:** 30.6 mm (approximately 1.2 inches)
- **Weight:** 12.5 grams (approximately 0.44 ounces)
- **Composition:** 90% silver, 10% copper
- **Edge:** Reeded (with vertical lines)
- **Designer:** Obverse - John Ragnar Hoversen; Reverse - Gilroy Roberts
- **Mints:** Philadelphia (mintmark "P"), Denver (mintmark "D"), San Francisco (mintmark "S")

Production and Controversy:

- The Franklin Half Dollar was minted for 13 years, with a total mintage of over 370 million coins.
- The design choice, particularly the inclusion of eyeglasses, wasn't universally embraced. Some collectors found it unconventional, while others believed it didn't project the desired grandeur for a coin featuring a Founding Father.

Collecting Franklin Half Dollars:

- Despite the initial controversy, the Franklin Half Dollar has become a popular collectible for several reasons:
 - **Relatively Short Mintage:** Compared to some long-running series, the 13-year production period makes these coins somewhat scarcer, especially in higher grades.
 - **Variety:** There are subtle die variations within the series that collectors can pursue.
 - **Historical Significance:** It represents a transitional period in U.S. coinage design and features a prominent American figure.

Value:

The value of a Franklin Half Dollar depends on several factors:

- **Condition:** As with all coins, condition is paramount. Coins in higher grades (MS63 and above) from reputable grading services like PCGS or NGC can hold a significant premium.
- **Mintmark:** Early issues from the Philadelphia mint (no mintmark) or scarcer issues from the Denver or San Francisco mints can be more valuable.
- **Variety:** Certain die variations within the series can be more valuable for collectors who specialize in such nuances.

Where to Find Franklin Half Dollars:

- You can find Franklin Half Dollars at coin shops, online marketplaces like eBay, or through auctions.
- When considering a purchase, ensure the coin is authentic and has been graded by a reputable service if it's in potentially higher condition.

The Franklin Half Dollar's legacy is one of innovation and a reflection of changing tastes in American coinage. While initially met with some resistance, it has become a sought-after collectible for its unique design and historical significance.

Quantity: 1